

## BARRIERS TO INTEGRATIVE EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PRE-SERVICE PRIMARY TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

*[Las dificultades para la educación integradora desde la perspectiva de futuros maestros de inglés]*

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### Abstract

This article presents and analyses the findings of a qualitative study about the perceptions expressed by prospective primary teachers of English about integration and response to special educational needs in the mainstream. The analysis of the data, obtained in the course of the practice teaching period of their course, evidences their ideas on integrative education; besides, a frequent lack of experiences of genuine integrative practices in such a critical period of professional preparation is identified.

### Resumen

El presente artículo presenta y analiza los hallazgos de un estudio de naturaleza cualitativa sobre las percepciones que expresan futuros maestros especialistas de inglés en el transcurso de las Prácticas de Enseñanza sobre la integración y la atención a las necesidades educativas especiales en el aula ordinaria. El análisis de los datos textuales aportados por los informantes, además de revelar las ideas que éstos sostienen en torno a la integración, evidencia una frecuente ausencia de experiencias de enseñanza auténticamente integradoras durante ese período crítico de formación profesional.

### Keywords

Integrative Education; Pre-service Teachers; Pre-service Teacher Education; Teacher Attitudes; Special Educational Needs.

### Descriptores

Educación integradora; Profesorado en formación inicial; Formación inicial del profesorado; Actitudes del profesorado; Necesidades Educativas Especiales.

## 1. Introduction

Despite repeated statements by educational authorities in Spain that integration of Special Educational Needs (SEN) students is now – sixteen years after the *Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo* (LOGSE, 1990) established it as the regular schooling model in this country– a firm reality in the Spanish educational system, and now that many researchers,

scholars and members of other groups interested in the provision for diverse and special educational needs defend the inclusive model as a viable alternative to overcome the principles supporting the merely integrative approach dominating our educational system (e.g. Arnaiz, 1997; Balbas and Jaramillo, 1998, García Pastor, 1999; Giné, 1998; Peralta, 2001) other voices, notwithstanding, emerge to warn us that integration is still far

from reaching an optimal level of development. A series of barriers and difficulties are detected, such as school understaffing, poor teacher training in order to cope with diversity in the classroom, as well as certain attitudes within the teaching profession expressing varying degrees of opposition to the integrative process. These factors operate as obstacles to an effective implementation of the theoretical principles underlying the legislation in favour of provision for SEN pupils in mainstream schools.

Witnesses to this state of affairs, trainee teachers enjoy a privileged observation point during their prolonged stays at schools for their practicum periods. Their experiences as trainees in the schools often lead them to develop attitudes that are contrary to the assumption of responsibility in catering for diverse educational needs, and conceptions – either open or covert– against integration of SEN pupils in mainstream schools do emerge; this prevents the school from becoming an environment that provides all students – whether with SEN or not– with an adequate, high-quality attention that fosters proper development of their capacities. On the other hand, the growing expression of doubts as to the limits of, and implementing strategies to bring about, an inclusive educational model – see, for example, Warnock (2005)– should be taken seriously into account.

Both the literature on educational innovation (e.g. Fullan, 1982) and much research and reflection on integration of SEN pupils in mainstream schools (e.g. Larrivé and Cook, 1979; Opdal, Wormnaes and Habayeb, 2001; Alghazo, Dodeen and Algaryouti, 2003; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Dupoux Colman and Estrada, 2005), a key factor in the success of integration is the teaching staff who ultimately filters and interprets the norms according to their own conceptions and the particular demands of their professional context, and whose ideas, beliefs, presuppositions and knowledge –together with their specific working conditions–determine the didactic

application of the educational authorities' integrative philosophy.

This article endeavours to make public opinions and impressions by Primary-school, English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) trainee teachers about integration of SEN pupils in mainstream classrooms. Most of their classroom experience derives from a three-month stay at a school while completing their practicum period in their third –and last– course at university. Perceptions by these trainees – which we had access to as their supervisors within the programme<sup>i</sup>– will be analysed and explained in the light of current studies and theories.

## 1. Interpretative framework

### 1.1. Definition and types

Pedagogical ideas on the provisions for SEN pupils show an evolution towards overcoming situations perceived as of 'leaving out' a minority with different kinds of disabilities. This evolutionary path, as Brusling and Pepin (2003) point out, runs through the landmarks of, first, *segregation* –a form of specialised attention isolated from the mainstream educational system–, second, *integration* –intermediate strategies in which all learners share certain educational experiences, but not others, according to the perceived limitations in some of them<sup>ii</sup>), and, finally, *inclusion*, defined by Cook (2001:203) as “the physical placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms”, with all its consequences.

The term 'students with disabilities' is obviously too vague; it is reasonable to assume that it includes all categories of disability, which Opdal *et al.* (2001) classify into medical (both sensory and intellectual), learning, behaviour, and language and communication. Though still too inexact, this typology affords a first sight of the complexity inherent to the attempt to serve all educational needs associated to each and every category of disability.

The term ‘disability’ itself, as Andreu, Ortega and Perez (2003) remark, is not free from connotations –as, for example, biological or physiological inferiority, social exclusion, dependence, marginalization, etc. – which ultimately “determine our relationship with disabled people”<sup>iii</sup> (p. 77).

Although in the present study the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘integration’ are discussed and used, the fact that a fully inclusive approach has not been implemented as an educational model in this country –where integrative approaches in different degrees have prevailed– entails that allusions to the inclusive approach must remain on a theoretical level, whilst references to the integrative approach may be grounded in the reality of Spanish classrooms.

### **1.2. Justifying inclusion**

The inclusive proposal is justified through a rejection of a previous situation perceived as clearly unfair, for it classified and separated people confining some of them to institutions that do not offer an adequate support to their specific needs, at the same time keeping very low educational expectations from them (Warnock Committee, 1978). It is a long time since this radical statement was made, and it is difficult to maintain the notion that, even though they may be catered for in specific institutions, virtually no educational progress is expected from SEN pupils. On the other hand, it is not reasonable to assume that simply because SEN pupils share a common space with mainstream peers the progress of the former will automatically improve, as Mary Warnock herself (2005) has argued in a recent revision of the ideas expressed by the committee she headed more than twenty-five years ago. Radical position such as “One of the features of an inclusive approach is to question existing categories and language, including the validity of the discourse of ‘special needs’ and ‘special educational needs’” (Barton, 2005:4) do not contribute, we feel, to place the problem in an adequate framework.

The pillar supporting the defence of educational inclusion is the right to equality in education. Equality, however, should not be associated to uniformity, but rather to adaptation<sup>iv</sup>, and this necessarily implies considering each learner’s own needs, the best way to meet them with sufficient resources and the importance of offering enough socialization opportunities that help reduce the prejudice barriers against disabled population; all this, of course, exposing SEN learners neither to unwarranted stress nor to situations beyond their capacity to understand and manage<sup>v</sup>. Inclusion, thus, requires paying special attention to adaptation, to economic resources needed, and the kind of social interaction it originates (Chow, Jones and Loerke, 2002).

Education is a human right, and disabled learners are obviously entitled to it (UNESCO, 1994); however, it is the educational authorities responsibility that this right is fully effective, and that it is not compromised for the sake of politically correct idealism that soothes consciences without contributing viable, concrete solutions at a practical level.

### **1.3. Teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion**

The distance, in Barton’s words (2005), from praiseworthy rhetoric to real practice is in the origin of the most part of teachers’ attitude against inclusive measures in education. As a consequence, they are generally opposed to the integration or inclusion of disabled learners in mainstream classrooms (D’Alonzo and Ledou, 1992; Alghazo *et al.*, 2003). Spanish teachers are no exception to this pattern, both pre-service and in-service ones (Cardona, 1999).

### **1.4. Modifying teachers’ attitudes**

Different authors (for instance, Sales *et al.*, 2001) express the view that teachers’ negative attitude towards inclusion derives from widespread embracing of the deficit model, according to which the main variable for inclu-

sion is learner's disability and the limitations that accompany it, that lead to the development of unmatched curricula within a classroom. Leaving aside the discussion as to the adequate degree of integration in an educational system, the need to adopt effective integrative strategies is not to be denied, and this entails the importance of fostering positive teacher attitudes, without which the success of such integrative initiatives would be seriously at risk (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002), such positive attitude being a predictor of success in integration (Larrivee and Cook, 1979; Cook and Gerber, 1999; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden, 2000; Opdal *et al.*, 2001; Alghazo *et al.*, 2003; Dupoux *et al.*, 2005). As a result, it turns out to be particularly urgent to devise strategies to bring about such a change in attitude in trainees during initial teacher-training programmes (Sales *et al.*, 2001; Alghazo *et al.*, 2003).

## 2. Data gathering and analysis

### 2.1. Research targets

Our research aims at identifying impressions, perceptions and opinions of pre-service, primary school, EFL teachers on integration of SEN pupils in mainstream EFL classrooms. Data was obtained from informants during the term of their practicum period at regular primary schools.

### 2.2. Research design

**2.2.1. Method.** Taking into account the above targets, a method based on qualitative research principles was chosen (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goetz and LeCompte, 1984; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993; Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) as such methodology enables researchers to understand informants' impressions and perspectives.

**2.2.2. Participants.** Twenty-one trainees (18 females and 3 males) in their final year of the initial primary school, EFL teacher training

programme were included in the present project, having made in their reflective assignments –the topics of which were completely free– reference to the point in question. Nineteen out of the twenty-one participants completed their practicum in state schools; the other two in private school supported with public funds. All the schools concerned are located within the province of Malaga (Southern Spain), inner capital city, outskirts, and middle-sized towns around the territory. The participants belong to a group of sixty-two students supervised by one of the authors, enrolled in the primary school, EFL speciality, in the University of Malaga School of Education, during the academic courses 2004/2005, 2005/2006 and 2006/2007.

**2.2.3. Data gathering strategy.** Comments made by participants in their reflective assignments on integration of SEN pupils in mainstream classroom were identified and analysed. The data corresponded to investigation and reflection based on real events observed in the schools they were attending.

During the practicum period (March to May) all students enrolled were requested to keep a learning diary where data, episode descriptions, opinions, impressions, appraisals, etc. arising along the experience were consigned; every three weeks –as a part of their Practicum Personal Record– participants were asked to review the content of their diary for that period in order to identified salient issues, changes perceived in their own attitudes and performance, significant concerns, and so on. Based on this review, students had to write a short essay and submit it to their supervisor, from which those that dealt in any way with the topic of integration were selected and added to the data base for the present study.

**2.2.4. Data analysis procedure.** Content analysis (Bardin, 1986; Krippendorff, 1985) was used in order to identify fundamental categories, topics and trends in the data gathered from participants. Holsti (1969:14, quoted in Guba and Lincoln, 1981:240) de-

defines content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”; according to Guba and Lincoln (1981:240-274), coincidences among authors involved in the development of content analysis methodology make it possible to establish the following four features of this methodology for the treatment and organization of information:

- i. It is a process guided by norms, established procedures and definite criteria.
- ii. It is a systematic process in which once the norms have been established they are applied in the same way to each content segment.
- iii. It is a process that aims at generality in the sense that it seeks context knowledge in order for that knowledge to allow researchers, through comparison, to discover and set up relationships with dimensions beyond the current object of study.
- iv. It deals with the explicit content of documents; it is in a subsequent, interpretative process, that the researcher makes inferences on the latent content, reaching conclusions on the meaning of explicit content.

Bearing in mind the above features of content analysis, the type of analysis to adopt in the data processing was determined, the aim being to convert raw data into manageable subsets (Erickson, 1986; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993): once chosen the content analysis as the procedure through which to make sense of gathered data, words and noun groups pointing to relevant aspects to research objectives were selected as categories for analysis (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Data from each of the informants was analysed separately, and emerging topics from this separated analysis were identified, checked and, later on, codified according to provisional categories. As progress was made in the reading of the different documents, and along the four complete readings of each of

them, initial categories were being modified with the introduction of both new superordinate levels and divisions in existing ones. At this stage in the process, general trends began to emerge and be identified, as well as relationships between categories. These changes, in turn, implied the revision of information classified according to previously established categories, setting up a recursive process of analysis, checking and verifying (Goetz and LeCompte, 1985; LeCompte and Preissle, 1993).

As regards category identification, Miles and Huberman's (1994: 57-65) typology was chosen. These authors recognise three code types: descriptive codes –referred to in the present study as ‘categories’– assign a class of phenomenon to a text segment (p. 57); interpretative codes are those which imply interpretation by the researcher; and pattern codes, which entail a higher degree of interpretation and explanation leading to inferences on topics or trends.

In a first stage of the analysis, only descriptive categories were identified; while material was being coded notes and comments were being recorded in which trends and relationships between different information and segments within the same or different documents were recognized; these trends and relationships were to be used later on for the assignment of interpretative and pattern codes to some of the data previously coded by means of descriptive codes. This subsequent pattern identification was useful in order to compress data into a reduced number of categories, to formulate general interpretation schemes based on data registered in different categories, and, finally, to identify aspects and conclusions both individual and common to all informants in the study.

Data categorisation was carried out separately, and according to the information relative to each informant. At a later stage, starting on the report on each of the informants, an additional *inter caso* analysis was carried out,



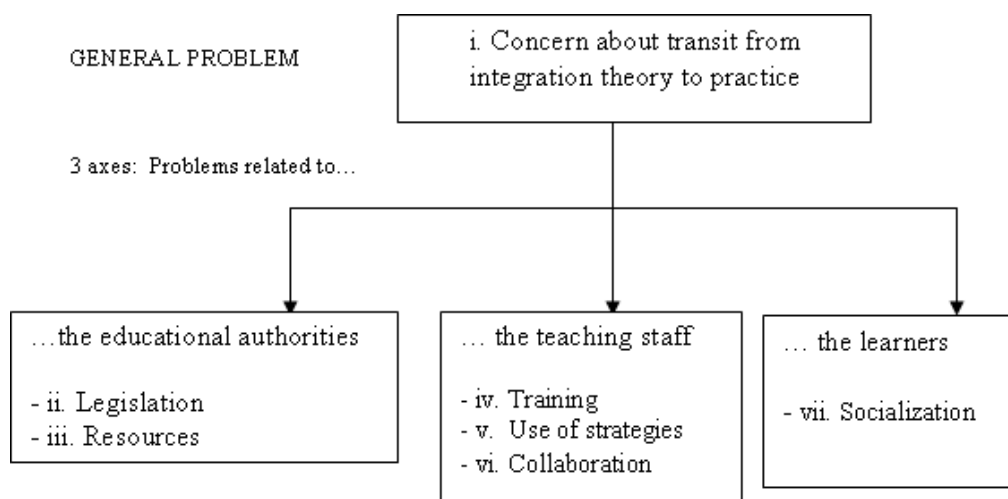
proceeding to the identification of the most frequent patterns and aspects within the data gathered from all participants.

### 3. Findings

The complexity of caring for SEN, the right to adapted education, teachers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, the shortcomings of most initial teacher-training programs, all of these are factors in the difficulties experienced for successful implementation of integrative education.

Different authors have systematically tackled a typology of obstacles for integration. Thus, for example, Sales *et al.* (2001) noticed eight possible themes that may be summarised in three axes: educational authorities, teaching staff, and learners. Chow, Jones and Loerke (2002) only take into account the two latter. Our research results, which will be discussed further on, show that pre-service teachers are aware of difficulties along Sales *et al.*'s three axes; therefore our treatment will reflect categories emerging from our own analysis, according to the following structure

Figure 1: A typology of obstacles perceived by pre-service teachers as regards integration / inclusion



In contrast to the models reviewed, we put forward one that springs directly from the opinions of twenty-one teacher trainees during their practicum experience, the analysis of whose comments on integration reveals the following general patterns:

i. Trainees show an attitude that is generally favourable to the philosophy and arguments sustaining the integration / inclusion of SEN pupils in the mainstream classroom; though, on verification of the serious deficiencies and shortcomings in the provision for SEN pupils, and in recognition of individual situations particularly hard to manage by just one classroom teacher, they tend to reconsider the advisability of integration in

certain cases arguing, on the one hand, that SEN pupils' own learning may benefit from a non-integrative approach, and, on the other, the damage that a seriously disrupted behaviour may cause to the academic progress of peers (see Table 1 in the Appendix).

ii. Informants perceive clear contradictions between philosophical principles on integration –and the norm inspired by them–, and real classroom practice (see Table 2 in the Appendix).

iii. Poor human and material resources are identified as factors severely affecting the implementation of a genuinely integrative

teaching practice; educational authorities are blamed for such a state of affairs (see Table 3 in the Appendix).

- iv. Trainees are aware of a lack in appropriate training for dealing with SEN pupils and carrying out integrative work in the EFL classroom; they also echo a similar perception in in-service colleagues they have been in touch with during their practicum (see Table 4 in the Appendix).
- v. Certain attitudes and methodological strategies used by in-service teachers to face SEN pupils are considered inadequate and/or ineffective; it is particularly dramatic the situations of physical isolation they have witnessed in some EFL classrooms where SEN pupils are seated apart, and the general perception that these learners are not given an acceptable attention (see Table 5 in the Appendix).
- vi. There is a noticeable lack of coordination – even of communication– between educators sharing responsibilities within the same school for the provision for SEN pupils (see Table 6 in the Appendix).
- vii. The degree of acceptance of SEN pupils by their peers is uneven, and this tends to create heterogeneous situations as regards socialization in the class-group; teachers are sometimes blamed for this because of the unfair attitude they show to SEN pupils in conflict situations (see Table 7 in the Appendix).

#### 4. Discussion

The difficulties discussed above, perceived by primary student teachers, represent serious barriers to the effective provision for SEN. If solutions need to be found, blaming the teachers for the relatively limited success of such provision will not help. Although it cannot be denied that teachers are greatly responsible for the indispensable change of attitudes, trying to understand the reasons that lie behind negative atti-

tudes is of paramount importance. Therefore, the issue of explaining teachers' perceptions must necessarily be addressed. In the following analysis we discuss possible reasons for such negative attitudes.

##### 5.1. *Distance between theory and practice in the provision for SEN*

As some studies have found –including the one reported in this article–, teachers tend to hold moderately positive attitudes towards the principles and values underlying integration and inclusion, whereas the practical issues involved give rise to concerns, doubts, and even more openly negative attitudes towards the model adopted by our educational system (Arguis, 1999; Arnaiz *et al.*, 2001; García Pastor, García Jiménez and Rodríguez, 1993; Pallisera and Fullana, 1992). Besides, in agreement with other studies (Junkala, 1986; Feliciano, 1993; Feliciano and Riera, 1994; Cook, 2001), our research concludes that attitudes towards the integration of SEN pupils in mainstream classes differ as a function of the severity or obviousness of students' disabilities.

This tension between the positive attitude towards the overall principles and values on which integration and inclusion of pupils with SEN in mainstream education are founded, and the negative attitudes towards the implementation of such ideas at classroom level is –in our view– the expression of the clash between two interpretations of the provision for SEN: on the one hand, some authors –surprisingly Warnock (2005) is among them– start from the assumption of the difference as a fact, unquestionable and neutral in connotations, and from the need to treat it adequately for the benefit of all those concerned; this position advocates the implementation of special and specific educational procedures for situations and conditions which are likewise specific and special, and places a strong emphasis on the practical issues at classroom level that the provision for these needs originate. This vision also insists that ignoring the differences does not equate to inclusion, and that, in many cases, just the opposite occurs,

since the specific needs of many pupils tend to be neglected, due to either lack of resources in inclusive schools or to an ideology that, in its effort to promote equality, chooses to ignore the evidence of such differences.

In opposition to this view, another interpretation of SEN provision starts from the basic premise that all pupils are equal, and suggests –as a solution to the need to accommodate diverse needs<sup>vi</sup>– the adoption of essentially similar educational procedures. The emphasis here lies on the theoretical aspects, while the classroom concerns and problems that arise in trying to implement integration/inclusion are disregarded. And, from our viewpoint, it is precisely these problems, together with the stubborn persistence of differences and with the difficulties inherent to SEN provision in mainstream schools where teachers are not appropriately prepared and where financial and other resources are lacking, which lies at the root of the teachers' concerns and negative attitudes.

Thus, teachers hold negative attitudes to inclusion because they think that instructional adaptations to address a wide range of needs are simply not feasible under normal classroom conditions. Cardona (1999) provides an illustrative example of Spanish teachers' dichotomy with respect to SEN provision in mainstream schools: 87% of the participants in this study hold that inclusion is a basic right and that teachers should be prepared to teach all pupils in mainstream classes (in agreement with the latter vision discussed); nevertheless, they prefer to send SEN pupils to special classes (71%) and consider that options should be kept open as to the placement of SEN pupils in special schools (83%) (these opinions are closer to the former vision of SEN provision discussed above).

A plausible explanation for this paradox is offered by Sales *et al.* (2001), who suggest that the distance between theory and practice in inclusion is reduced when a process of 'effective modelling' operates, which proceeds in three stages, from a conceptualization of diversity

through an effective evaluation of it and up to an adapted performance. However, this process is interrupted –or does not even start– when beliefs close to the deficit model –i.e. a vision of differences focused on shortages and limitations– prevail. Again, the latter view of SEN provision refuses to admit the need for specific educational approaches, thus placing all the blame for the failure of the implementation of an inclusive policy on one of the three stages of the effective modelling. The responsibility for the three stages is held by teachers, as Opdal *et al.* (2001) discuss when they mention three crucial factors in teachers' attitudes to SEN: cognitive factors (what I know about SEN), affective factors (how I feel towards SEN), and behavioural factors (what preparation I have to address special learning needs and issues), to which a further one could be added: social factors (which relationships between those involved I consider acceptable). Again, the second vision discussed tries to negate the need for a specific approach to SEN, thus blaming thus blaming one of the three stages of effective modelling for the failure of the practical implementations of inclusion.

Several studies (in Opdal *et al.*, 2001; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) coincide in identifying some correlations between these factors and teachers' attitudes; the following are particularly interesting:

- Cognitive factors: the more specific training and preparation a teacher has, the more positive attitude towards inclusion he or she expresses (e.g. Center and Ward, 1987; Marchesi, 1998; Alghazo *et al.*, 2003).
- Affective factors: experiences of personal contact with people with disabilities facilitate the development of positive attitudes towards SEN<sup>vii</sup> (Leyser, Kapperman and Keller, 1994; Roberts and Lindsell, 1997), although results from other studies (e.g. Alghazo *et al.*, 2003) do not find this correlation. Also, there seems to be an inverse relationship



between the nature and severity of the disability and the development of a positive attitude (Opdal *et al.*, 2001); thus, in the Clough and Lindsay (1991) study, the majority of teachers surveyed ranked the needs of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties as being most difficult to meet, followed by the needs of children with learning difficulties, with those of children with visual impairment in the third place, and those of children with a hearing impairment being considered as the least obtrusive. Clearly, teachers express less favourable attitudes to disabilities which are potentially more disruptive for the development of social and instructional dynamics in their classrooms. Also, Forlin (1995) and Clough and Lindsay (1991) found an inverse relationship between the disabled pupil's age and the teacher's attitudes towards integration<sup>viii</sup>.

- Performance factors: when the teacher sees him or herself as efficient, s/he tends to develop more positive attitudes towards SEN (Soodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998); this is also the case when s/he perceives support from her or his school and from the overall educational system (Opdal *et al.*, 2001); however, less favourable views are held when the anticipated workload (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002) and particularly the conceptualization of the subject and of the subject learning (Taverner, Hardman and Skidmore, 1997) are regarded. In the case of the teaching/learning of a foreign language, two rather distinct approaches can be identified: the one that considers it as a linear, graded and hierarchical process, which facilitates the development of negative attitudes towards SEN due to the cognitive and formal demands it places on the learner and the rigid treatment it favours, and the one that regards teaching/learning as a spiral, recursive and cumulative process, more likely to fa-

vour the development of positive attitudes towards SEN since it lends itself to an adapted treatment.

All factors and subfactors considered make up a constellation of possible obstacles to the successful translation of the theory of SEN provision to the implementation at classroom level. In the next two sections they will be analysed in greater detail, following the classification in Figure 1.

## **5.2. Obstacles related to the support provided by the Educational Administration**

The educational authorities are indirectly identified by the informants as responsible for two barriers for the successful implementation of an inclusive policy. The first barrier, of a more abstract nature, refers to the legislation which enforces the provision of educational opportunities in an inclusive system on theoretical grounds which are far apart from practical concerns. The second barrier is significantly more tangible in classrooms: the lack of resources to implement an educational approach which meets the requirements of the legislation.

**5.2.1. Obstacles related to legislation.** Three theories are usually put forward about the solution that must be given to disability (Andreu, Ortega Ruiz and Pérez Corbacho, 2003): the first one lays emphasis on social protection as a strategy to avoid that the disability leads to social and economic deprivation; the second theory focuses on personal development as a way of overcoming disadvantages through the development in the disabled person of as many functions as possible; lastly, a third vision revolves around social integration, by promoting interaction between able and disabled people and fostering the assumption of social obligations and responsibilities by both groups.

It is reasonable to assume that the educational legislation related to inclusion needs to integrate the three previously discussed views; likewise, it is reasonable that, in trying to do so, legislation is likely to present an extremely

complex panorama which is perceived by teachers as irrelevant and rather distant from their day- to-day classroom concerns.

Also, it is well known that the teachers' attitudes towards integrative or inclusive initiatives are a function, among other factors, of the current legislation on this issue (Bowman, 1986), in the sense that, the more specific, concrete and aware of the inevitable practical limitations it is, the more positive the teachers' attitudes to those educational initiatives will be. It is obvious that these conditions can only be met if the opinions of those affected have been taken into account in order to develop a legislative framework that gives answers to practical situations; teachers, however, feel that inclusion has been imposed from above and that their opinions have been ignored by policy-makers (Cardona, 1999). In the same line, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) highlight the following three factors for the development of teachers' negative attitudes towards inclusion:

- integration is conducted in an *ad hoc* manner;
- integration is effected without systematically modifying the school organizational structure; or,
- integration is imposed and disregards the teacher's instructional expertise.

We believe that these three conditions have applied and still apply in the implementation of the inclusive policy in the Spanish educational system and that they partly explain the teachers' attitudes towards it.

**5.2.2. Obstacles related to lack of resources and support.** The perception of a lack of resources and support personnel in the classrooms and the schools observed by our informants is shared by the majority of practising teachers surveyed in other studies, (Arguis, 1999; Arnaiz *et al.*, 2001; Pallisera and Fullana, 1992). If teachers do not perceive that the educational authorities are seriously committed to guarantee the continuing provision of the necessary resources and support to implement inclusion,

they are likely to develop negative attitudes (Cardona, 1999; Avramidis and Norwich, 2002; Dupoux *et al.*, 2005). The institutional support is a precondition for the formation and consolidation of teacher's favourable attitudes to inclusion; this support includes government backing (Brusling and Pepin, 2003), more support personnel, more resources and a better school organization (Marchesi *et al.*, 2005).

Among the shortages of support and resources to implement inclusive practices mentioned by studies and reports are the lack of necessary classroom adjustments (Cardona, 1999; Sprecht *et al.*, 2001; Warnock, 2005), the excessively high student ratio in the groups (Sprecht *et al.*, 2001; Dupoux *et al.*, 2005), the extreme difficulty posed by the fact that the same school has to provide for all kinds of needs and disabilities (Warnock, 2005), and the teachers' feelings of lack of interest and commitment in the educational authorities (Sprecht *et al.*, 2001; Marchesi *et al.*, 2005; Barton, 2005). These limitations and shortages are attributable either to the implicit resistance to change found in teachers and educational authorities (Barton, 2005), or to the excessive demands placed on the system as a result of an idealization (Warnock, 2005).

### **5.3. Obstacles related to teachers' performance**

We believe that educators are responsible for acting in ways that best promote their own personal and professional development, alongside with the pupils' development of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Individual efforts to prepare to respond to SEN, the implementation of inclusive practices and the cooperation with colleagues in order to offer an adequate and coherent educational response can be considered as part of such responsibility. This, of course, does not preclude educational institutions of their responsibility to provide adequate training to their teaching staff; at any rate, it stresses the need for individual responsibility even in the absence of such training, since this attitude is an essential constituent of teacher's professionalism.

### 5.3.1. Obstacles related to insufficient preparation.

The findings in this study show evidence that the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools has not resulted in many cases in a significant methodological transformation in areas such as student grouping, use of graded tasks in which particular objectives and contents are developed at different levels of difficulty, or collaboration among the support teacher and the regular classroom teachers. These findings are in line with other studies carried out on this issue both in Spain and in other contexts (Arguis, 1999; Oliver, 1992; Vlachou, 1999). Thus, the analysis of supposedly integrative practices reveals the adoption of an essentially undifferentiated methodology which does not cater for diversity, that adopts segregationist procedures and that interprets integration as mere physical access of SEN pupils to ordinary classes.

From a different perspective, this obstacle could have been included among the barriers related to the educational authorities since they are also responsible for providing in-service teachers with preparation and training opportunities. However, we have chosen to include this factor in this section so as to underline the fact that professional development is only effective on condition that the recipient feels the need for it and assumes some responsibility for it.

The importance of adequate teacher preparation in the provision for SEN is indisputable (Taverner *et al.*, 1997; Sales *et al.*, 2001; Warnock, 2005). As one of its objectives, professional development in this area must address the promotion of positive attitudes, adequate skills, specific knowledge, a genuine interest and a capacity for creating appropriate materials (Brusling and Pepin, 2003); among the necessary knowledge and skills, Sales *et al.* (2001) emphasize the following: knowledge about the classification of disabilities, familiarization with adequate methodological strategies and issues related to establishing relationships and communicating with the families.

Faced with the complex demands that inclusive education places on them, teachers tend to express a negative self-perception of their own preparation, which is aggravated by the ignorance or confusion about the nature of their own needs or shortages (Sales *et al.*, 2001), lack of time, support and preparation (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996)<sup>ix</sup>.

The perception of insufficient preparation can also be interpreted as mere justification for not assuming the provision for SEN. Thus, teachers express reluctance to accept the challenges posed by inclusive education on the grounds that they lack adequate skills and/or preparation and that they do not trust their own competence (Cardona, 1999), particularly to deal with intellectual disabilities and with behaviour problems (Marchesi *et al.*, 2005); so, the type of disability and the ignorance of its classifications and particularities, along with its educational demands, are reasons expressed by teachers to justify their unfavourable attitudes towards integration (Ward, Center and Bochner, 1994). In any case, resistance to inclusion increases as the teacher becomes more professionally involved with it (Forlin, 1995), and this resistance is expressed in terms of preference for several degrees of segregation (Sales *et al.*, 2001).

### 5.3.2. The use of inadequate strategies to deal with SEN.

The Spanish policy on education (LOGSE, 1990) established the inclusion of all children in mainstream classrooms; more than 15 years later, however, the informants of our study perceive that their teaching practice tutors –classroom teachers with a speciality in English as a Foreign Language– do not seem to assume their part of responsibility in the provision for SEN. As Echeita (1998) points out –in agreement with the findings of our study– some teachers simply do not assume their function and responsibility of catering for the instructional needs of SEN pupils on the grounds – expressed in varying degrees of explicitness according to our data– that such function should be assumed by the SEN support teacher (presumably without any other support and that human and material resources are insufficient.

Deficient teacher preparation may cause the implementation of inadequate inclusive practices; these are, in fact, a most evident manifestation of such lack of training. Moreover, insufficient preparation is also partly the reason why teachers perceive SEN as extremely difficult to cater for. A preliminary proposal for improvement in this area is put forward by 82% of the pre-service and in-service regular classroom teachers surveyed by Cardona (1999), who think that pupils with SEN would have more opportunities and better results if their classroom teachers adopted strategies typically implemented by special needs support teachers.

Leaving aside the previous solution (which requires a sound knowledge of types of disabilities, corresponding features and educational treatments), we are convinced that adaptation is the main guiding principle when provision for SEN is concerned. It is in the adapted treatment that the aspiration for equality is achieved: the profound understanding of the difference and of the right way to compensate for it.

Thus, the teacher's ability to respond to a range of categories of SEN in his or her classroom is a predictor of success in integration (Cardona, 2002; Dupoux *et al.*, 2005). However, this finding must not overshadow the difficulties a response to SEN implies. On the one hand, there is a need for more individualized instruction (Sales *et al.*, 2001); teachers, however, tend to show a preference for working with a homogeneous group of pupils (Sales *et al.*, 2001). It can be hypothesized that this reaction is simply the product of insufficient preparation. A more careful analysis of this issue leads us to think that resistance to adopt and implement a variety of objectives, procedures, tasks and materials is an indication that demands on teachers to cater for diversity must be realistic –that is, restricted to a certain range–; that his or her capacity to deal simultaneously with multiple situations and demands is limited; and that the tension to be subject to a constant change of conditions and foci of attention is exhausting in the short term.

All practices that are recommended as effective and efficient to deal with a range of needs in the classroom –e.g. modifications to student grouping (Sales *et al.*, 2001), heterogeneous grouping (Brusling and Pepin, 2003), emphasis on cooperative learning and collaborative problem-solving (Sales *et al.*, 2001; Brusling and Pepin, 2003), cooperative teaching and individual adaptations fitted into the ordinary curriculum (Brusling and Pepin, 2003)– are considerably difficult to implement and require a relatively high level of preparation and training. As Cardona (2002: 4) states, “one of the critical factors which can help understand teacher reticence and/or resistance to adapt instruction is the cost of adaptation”. The requirements for an integrative/inclusive education, therefore, run counter to the general tendency to maximise the applicability of methodological and managerial strategies, which necessarily imply a tendency to minimum adaptation.

Also, the tenets of the tolerance theory (Cook and Semmel, 1999; 2000, reported by Cook, 2001) contribute to provide an explanation to the difficulty of implementing instructional adaptations.

- teachers can adapt their instruction to a limited variety of learning characteristics;
- in a classroom with SEN pupils the learning characteristics vary significantly; therefore,
- teachers cannot optimally meet the needs of all pupils at any given time.

The situation characterised by these conditions results in different degrees of acceptance and rejection by the teacher and the classroom peers towards pupils with SEN, as we will discuss later.

### **5.3.3. Lack of collaboration among teachers.**

Closely linked to the absence of professional assumption of the responsibility in the provision for SEN is the lack of a culture of collaboration and coordination that the participants in our study –prospective primary teachers in the prac-



tical component of their course— detect among educators involved in the provision for SEN, which has also been reported in other studies (Arguis, 1999; Arnáiz *et al.*, 2001); this, in turn, contradicts training experiences in which cooperation among teachers and collaborative reflection have proved to be facilitative strategies to adequately respond to diversity (Ainscow, 1997; Parrilla, 1999).

Teaching has traditionally been an isolated profession; however, as in many other educational areas, only advantages can be obtained from working in collaboration with other teachers in the provision for SEN. As Eiser (1994) discusses, attitudes are the product of the self and the environment; consequently, other teachers' attitudes are significant predictors of particular teachers' attitudes towards SEN (Dupoux *et al.*, 2005). In the provision for SEN, a high level of collaboration among regular classroom teachers in the same school (or school network) and among regular and special needs support teachers must inevitably be promoted (Sales *et al.*, 2001). Reality, nevertheless, seems to be rather different. The vicious circle of poor collaboration originates in many teachers' resistance to change and innovation, which drives them to develop negative attitudes towards inclusion; these attitudes, in turn, lead to a perception that collaboration is unnecessary and, in this situation, contacts with other teachers only reinforce their resistance to inclusion. In the case of regular classroom teachers and specialist needs support teachers, Sales *et al.* (2001) mention the confusion about their differentiated roles as a further barrier to collaboration.

#### **5.4. Obstacles related to the pupils' performance**

A remarkable finding in our study is the range of experiences reported by the informants related to peer acceptance of included students with disabilities in the schools and classrooms where they were doing the teaching practicum, which, in some cases, contradict expectations both from the administration and from teachers in the sense that integration would favour the

understanding, tolerance and acceptance of differences (García Pastor *et al.*, 1993; Arguis, 1999). Nevertheless, several well-identified factors (certain openly segregationist practices and attitudes, the lack of cooperative work dynamics, the shortage of adequate interaction patterns between classmates, and SEN students' physical isolation within the classroom -all of which have been described by our informants-), are operating in such a way as to ensure that physical proximity between SEN and regular students does not end up in real integration, in the development of mutual respect and in the tolerance and appreciation of difference, despite the fact that teachers hold learners' socialization as a paramount objective, even above learning achievement (Arguis, 1999).

The development of satisfactory relationships between ordinary pupils and pupils with SEN is regarded an indicator of success in the implementation of inclusive practices (Shanker, 1995); in turn, the implementation of an inclusive system undoubtedly facilitates opportunities for socialization (Lupart, 1998; Chow *et al.*, 2002). However, contradictory evidences exist as to the beneficial effects of socialization among peers (Chow *et al.*, 2002). On the one hand, more opportunities for peer tutoring exist (Chow *et al.*, 2002), and the ordinary pupil can contribute to control possible behaviour problems caused by pupils with a disability (Chow *et al.*, 2002). This relationship seems to be beneficial both to the former (Sales *et al.*, 2001) and to the latter (Lupart, 1998). However, teachers' perception of the effects of socialization among peers differ from this view, since they tend to be of the opinion that the social and learning environment of the ordinary pupils is significantly altered by the presence of pupils with SEN (Sprecht *et al.*, 2001).

The nature and way in which socialization operates among ordinary pupils and SEN pupils can be explained in terms of a model of differential expectations (Cook and Semmel, 1999; 2000, reported by Cook, 2001), according to which ordinary pupils and teachers develop specific expectations about student with dis-



abilities depending on the severity or obviousness of the specific disability they exhibit. Pupils with mild or hidden disabilities are expected to conform to modal performance and behavioural standards; when they manifest atypical behaviour, they are frequently rejected, perhaps due to the fact that teachers and classmates find it difficult to explain such behaviour in terms of disability. Consequently, these pupils with hidden disabilities are rejected by teachers and classmates. In contrast, the atypical behaviours exhibited by pupils with severe and/or obvious disabilities accord with teacher's and peer's expectations, and, therefore, do not generate rejection for them.

## 6. Conclusions

In the light of the study findings, a profound evaluation is required of teacher's pre- and in-service training and preparation regarding issues related to the response to diversity and, more specifically, to SEN, since many studies have evidenced the relationship between teacher's preparation and attitudes to integration and inclusion, and the contribution of the former not only to the achievement of professional competences to address SEN but also to the formation of favourable attitudes (Corman and Gottlieb, 1987; Illán, 1986; Dengra, Durán and Verdugo, 1991; Taverner *et al.*, 1997; Brusling and Pepin, 2003; Warnock, 2005; Dupoux *et al.*, 2005).

With respect to initial teacher training, we are convinced that absence of exposure to valid samples of inclusive experiences in schools and classrooms represents a serious obstacle to gaining insight into the meaning and implications of adopting an inclusive approach to educational practices. Current university-based training seems to be deficient and restricted to specific modules which focus on SEN, that is, inclusive education is not in fact regarded as the standard mode of education whose development requires a whole-school and whole-curriculum approach in which all areas are involved. Besides, this training is bound to have an extremely low impact if it is not coupled with ex-

periences in real classroom conditions where inclusive methodological and managerial practices are implemented. These experiences –in our opinion– can contribute to providing prospective teachers with procedural knowledge related to SEN. From this perspective, the collaboration in initial teacher training of practicing teachers who are committed to inclusive education is of paramount importance.

The analysis of the perceptions expressed by prospective primary teachers of English about the placement of SEN pupils in mainstream classroom indicates that a serious barrier exists to educational change in this area since, during their teaching practice, many of them have just not had experiences of genuine inclusive schooling. Besides, the access to information about what is happening in classrooms with SEN pupils, which depicts a situation in need of a profound transformation, should make teachers, educational authorities and teacher educators assume their part of responsibility and evaluate, ideally in collaboration, both the training, resources and support that teachers are supplied with and the opportunities for social and intellectual development that our education system is providing pupils with SEN.

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## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This practicum period is the responsibility of the Language and Literature Teaching Department, School of Education, University of Malaga, where both authors carry out EFL teacher-training duties.
- <sup>2</sup> Within integration several degrees are recognized (Warnock Committee, 1978): from sharing the same school facilities –though placed in different classrooms–, to co-participation in certain activities as a means to fostering a wider socialization, to, finally, the proposal to share a range of common educational activities –though by no means all of them. The tension in the binomial ‘school-SEN learner’ introduced by integrative initiatives is either solved in favoured of the first – in an ‘assimilationist’ approach (Thomas, 1997), where the SEN student must adapt to school provisions–, or the second –in an ‘acomodationist’ perspective (Avramidis and Norwich, 2002), where responsibility for adaptation falls squarely on the school.
- <sup>3</sup> Authors’ translation.
- <sup>4</sup> These two views of equality match the philosophical concepts of ‘equality of results’ and ‘equality of opportunity’ (e.g. Roemer, 1998; Rawls, 1999; Risse, 2002), each focusing either on the product or the process of education, an issue worth exploring but beyond the scope of the present article.
- <sup>5</sup> Radical inclusionists would consider this statement patronising; obviously, as soon as SEN are held in question there automatically follows suspicion and rejection of initiatives precisely based on the reality of such a concept.
- <sup>6</sup> We will not use here the term ‘special needs’ or ‘special educational needs’ since this vision denies the existence of these concepts (Barton, 2005) and regards them as evidence of the unacceptable segregationist bias that characterizes the competing view of SEN provision.
- <sup>7</sup> It should be borne in mind that experience of personal contact with SEN (such as, for example, having a disabled sibling) does not equate to professional experience in teaching SEN pupils. Therefore, expectations as to the attitude developed in either case must contemplate a certain degree of mismatch (e.g. Forlin, 1995).
- <sup>8</sup> Marchesi *et al.* (2005) report that the teachers’ positive attitudes towards integration decline from 77.6% in infant education (pupils aged 3-5), to 63.2% in primary education (pupils aged 6-11) through to 48.8% in secondary education.
- <sup>9</sup> With respect to this issue, as Marchesi *et al.* (2005) point out, perceptions held by teachers and parents of SEN pupils are strikingly discordant: Although 56% of teachers surveyed claim to be trained to have students with SEN in their classrooms, only 15.8% of parents perceive that teachers are qualified to have them.
- <sup>10</sup> Comments are reproduced verbatim
- <sup>11</sup> All names are pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality



## Appendix

Table 1: Attitudes towards integration

<p>"En mi opinión, creo que los alumnos con NEE no deben ser separados en un aula aparte, tal y como demandan algunos de los profesores del centro. Yo he estado impartiendo clase durante un mes y, aún con muchas dificultades, han seguido el ritmo de la clase, aunque a más bajo nivel, eso sí es cierto. Sin embargo, considero una barrabasada el apartar a estos alumnos de su grupo de clase. Lo principal es integrarlos en la vorágine de la clase. Estos alumnos deben sentirse útiles, y debemos intentar integrarlos en el grupo."<sup>x</sup> (Manuel)<sup>xi</sup></p>
<p>"El problema está en que debido a su enfermedad [se refiere a un alumno diagnosticado -según sus palabras- de "hiperactividad acompañada de problemas de conducta muy graves"], su comportamiento se caracteriza por la agresividad hacia sus compañeros, gritos y movilidad constante. Esto hace que la profesora pierda los nervios, que los compañeros pierdan la concentración respecto a lo que se está aprendiendo o las tareas que se están realizando y que la clase sea por lo tanto interrumpida constantemente. El resultado de esto es que de los tres 4º de primaria que hay en el centro, este sea el que va más retrasado. Yo estoy de acuerdo con la integración de alumnos con problemas en aulas pero creo que deberían haber excepciones porque no todos los niños de integración tienen los mismos problemas y por lo tanto no todos son iguales." (Antonio)</p>
<p>"... pero en el caso de Javier, (el alumno hiperactivo) considero que debido a sus graves problemas de conducta, no debería asistir a ninguna clase." (Antonio)</p>
<p>"Por una parte, estoy de acuerdo con la ideología de repartir los alumnos de forma que acojan en clase a un compañero con deficiencia, pero pasar a la integración de niños con problemas tan graves como puede ser un Síndrome de Down como el que hay en el quinto A, agresivo, hiperactivo y desobediente, altera de una manera bastante considerable el transcurso de la clase y, por tanto, la evolución de sus compañeros." (Gaspar)</p>
<p>No obstante, si añadimos al trato que reciben los de integración, la poca información que poseen los especialistas (me estoy refiriendo en este caso a la profesora de inglés) acerca de ellos para saber cómo enseñarlos, debido a la escasa relación que existe entre los maestros, sacamos como conclusión que la única alternativa que les queda a estos niños para poder aprender igual que los demás es la asistencia a Centros Especiales, pues en los Centros Normales, por así decirlo, la gran mayoría está discriminada. (Teresa)</p>
<p>"También los alumnos de integración son ignorados por completo. En este sentido, por lo que veo la integración no sirve para nada actualmente, porque estos niños aunque están integrados en las clases no aprenden nada en ellas, ya que necesitan una atención que los profesores no pueden darles." (Irene)</p>
<p>"... en clase distraen a los alumnos. Estos dos niños concretamente, no pueden alcanzar los mismos objetivos que los demás (ni siquiera los mínimos) y lo único que hacen durante el tiempo que están en clase es jugar con otro alumno que se encarga de cuidarlos.... Creo que esto perjudica de cierta manera a los demás alumnos "normales", ya que el tiempo que están cuidándolos no pueden atender a las explicaciones de los maestros, descuidando así su aprendizaje" (Carmen)</p>
<p>"Lo peor de todo es que por culpa de este niño la mayoría de las clases en las que se pueden realizar juegos, actividades divertidas, etc., la maestra tiene que darles fichas a sus compañeros de colorear para poder mantener este niño tranquilo sin que agrede a ninguno de sus compañeros." (Gema)</p>
<p>"Con respecto a los alumnos que van con un retraso considerable, he de decir que es donde más he notado la diferencia entre la teoría (más bien mi teoría) y la práctica. Es casi imposible poder atender a la vez las necesidades educativas de tantos alumnos: los niveles son tan dispares que, cuando se consigue llegar al alumno que tiene más retraso, el resto se ha descontrolado considerablemente. ... " (Cristina)</p>
<p>"Realmente atender en condiciones a uno de estos alumnos implica desatender a los demás, y es especialmente difícil en aquellos casos en los que en un grupo de veinte alumnos más de tres presenta algún tipo de necesidad." (Elena)</p>
<p>"Es casi imposible poder atender a la vez las necesidades educativas de tantos alumnos: los niveles son tan dispares que, cuando se consigue llegar al alumno que tiene más retraso, el resto se ha descontrolado considerablemente. Eso, sin tener en cuenta que, si a este alumno en concreto al que me refiero, no se le presta atención, comienza a manifestar conductas disruptivas que perjudican seriamente el funcionamiento de la clase. Hay que tener en cuenta que también hay ciertos alumnos con algo de retraso que se limitan a no atender y no molestar. La situación es menos molesta pero igual de frustrante." (Cristina)</p>

Table 2: Principles vs. Classroom practice

<p>"Es decir, a pesar de que a partir del día 27 de Noviembre de 1990, el Colegio Público "Santa Begoña"<sup>8</sup> fue reconocido como Centro de Integración, el trato que reciben estos niños deja mucho que desear. ¿A qué nos estamos refiriendo con la palabra "Integración"? Según he podido observar durante este período de tiempo que llevo realizando las prácticas, la palabra "Integración" se reduce a que estos niños con NEE convivan, simplemente, con los demás, es decir, con el resto de compañeros sin NEE" (Teresa)</p>
<p>"Cuando veo esto en clase te cuestionas si la integración existe realmente, o si simplemente es algo que se hace porque así se exige." (Ana)</p>

"La ley habla de la integración escolar de los alumnos con NEE. Y establece que estos alumnos deben integrarse, en la medida de lo posible, en el aula con el resto de compañeros, para alcanzar los objetivos establecidos con carácter general. ... Pero la realidad es otra..., porque como dice el refrán del dicho al hecho hay un trecho." (Antonio)

"Particularmente mi opinión sobre la integración es bastante crítica, y no porque esté en contra, sino porque creo que una cosa es hacer un planteamiento correcto de la Educación Especial, y otra es hacer una chapuza para que la sociedad permanezca aletargada. Hay una cosa clara, y esa es que la integración en los colegios no se lleva a cabo de forma óptima... Realmente ante esto, te das cuenta de que hay mucho camino por recorrer. Y realmente no es que yo sea pesimista ¡al contrario! Simplemente es realismo, y creo que para hacer frente a esta demanda social deberíamos involucrarnos todos y abrir bien los ojos, porque lo que se hace hoy en día en la mayoría de los colegios no se puede catalogar como integración, sino como "estacionamiento temporal" de una serie de personas. ... " (Nuria)

Table 3: Available resources

"... los alumnos/as con NEE suelen tener muchos problemas cuando tienen que aprender con el resto del grupo. ..., pero lo cierto es que en el aula de 25 alumnos/as sólo hay un docente el cual debe atender a todo el grupo y al alumno/a con NEE el cual necesita una enseñanza individualizada y adaptada junto a un profesional..." (Elisa)

"Lo cierto es que los centros de integración como este, no están preparados para tratar a este tipo de alumnos, una hora al día de dedicación especializada es insuficiente del todo." (María)

"Las horas de refuerzo son muy importantes, por ello creo conveniente elaborar programas serios de refuerzo adaptados al alumno en cuestión e impartidos por profesionales en ese campo. Pero claro, estos profesionales escasean en los centros y los profesores se ven forzados a sustituirlos, más mal que bien, todo hay que decirlo. El problema es económico. Como siempre, las trabas económicas hacen que todo falle. La LOGSE preconiza la comprensividad, la diversidad del alumnado, la integración de los alumnos con NEE, etc. Todo queda genial sobre el papel, pero es a la hora de implantarlo en los centros cuando todo da su justa medida. Los centros necesitan dinero para poder poner esto en práctica, dinero que no suelen tener. Por ello, en mi opinión, la LOGSE es sólo un espejismo de lo que debería ser." (Manuel)

Es una verdadera lástima que hoy, aún no exista un equipo profesional en cada escuela que pueda tratar los casos aislados de estos niños, y que en la mayoría de las veces no puedan recibir una atención personalizada adecuada a su medida, puesto que este tipo de personas suelen ser muy voluntariosas, por lo que se le ha de abrir las puertas desde jóvenes en lugar de restringir sus camino profesional, ya que nunca se puede saber a que puesto laboral podrán acceder el día de mañana." (Julio)

Table 4: Teacher training/education

"Los profesores reconocen no estar preparados para tener en sus clases un alumno/-a de integración y aunque tengan intención de integrarlos en su clase, que no todos la tienen, no saben cómo hacerlo." (María)

"Viendo este caso (se refiere al de una alumna de la que comenta que tiene una necesidad educativa especial) me doy cuenta que la preparación que recibimos en la Facultad sobre este tipo de alumnos es insuficiente y cada día son más los alumnos de integración en las aulas y debemos aprender a convivir con ellos y buscar una mejor respuesta a sus necesidades..." (María)

... al pensar en toda la información que nos llega de la integración de los alumnos, en ninguna o casi ninguna parte hace referencia a la cantidad de cosas que tienes que hacer para "controlar" a un solo alumno, y de cómo tienes que hacer frente a situaciones que pueden desbordarse, sin una preparación adecuada en este campo, porque ¡seamos realistas!, con lo que hemos estudiado en la facultad no tenemos ni para empezar, y no hablemos de los planes antiguos que no tenían ni una sola asignatura que abordara estos temas." (Nuria)

Table 5: Adequacy of teaching strategies and/or attitudes observed

"Además, en la enseñanza del inglés se complica aún más la situación y en lo observado el docente opta por dejar que haga alguna ficha de lengua ya que apenas saber escribir en español. Frente a todo esto puedo decir que cada alumno/a con NEE es distinto/a por lo que hay que investigar y adaptar ya que he observado que hay alumnos/as que sí serían capaces de aprender inglés pero el maestro/a no lo intenta..." (Elisa)

"... ahora que se ha puesto en marcha la "integración" (que tan mal funciona por falta de la dedicación y el tiempo que necesita para que sea efectiva), el "ayudante" sería muy útil tanto para el profesor que ante tanta diversidad y escaso tiempo muchas veces se ve saturado de trabajo y muy a su pesar atiende "mal" o como no debe a este tipo de niños, como para el propio alumno que recibiría toda la atención y el tiempo que necesita." (Inés)

Son (se refiere -según sus palabras, a "niños con NEE) como jarrones (sin la intención, por supuesto, de insultar a nadie), están de adorno en la clase pues la atención que reciben estos niños por parte del profesor es nula, sólo se les echa cuenta cuando están alborotando para mandarlos a callar. Comprendo perfectamente que cuesta mucho trabajo mantener el orden en una clase de 25 alumnos y que tampoco se puede estar todo el tiempo encima de los alumnos con NEE, sin embargo, sí se les podría echar un poco de cuenta, al menos, mientras que el resto de los compañeros está realizando

actividades. (Teresa)
"También quería mencionar la actitud que la profesora muestra ante los niños de integración, en cuatro clases aparecen niños con NEE, uno de ellos puede seguir, aunque con mucha dificultad, el ritmo de la clase, pero los demás no entienden nada de inglés. La profesora se limita a sentarlos al final de la clase, y no les da ninguna actividad para que se entretengan, simplemente los deja allí, como si de un armario más se tratase. Al único niño que procura tener entretenido es a Javier, y es que este alumno también es agresivo, con él se molesta en dejarle algún libro para que pase el rato, y cuando no lo consigue se lo quita de encima mandándolo, por ejemplo, a la Biblioteca con nosotras." (Ana)
"En el aula de inglés, no se les hace caso porque la maestra opina que no puede conceder 5 minutos a cada uno. A los ordenadores no van porque el programa es difícil para ellos. Ellos se limitan a sonreír...y ni siquiera colorean. Vienen obligados al aula de inglés y están deseando irse." (Isabel)
"Estos niños pasan la mayor parte del tiempo en esta Sala de Integración, y se ve que están muy felices aquí, porque cuando, durante una hora al día, salen para ir a "su clase", están deseando volver a la Sala de Integración, que no se considera que es su clase, a pesar de estar ahí casi todo el día. A mí no me extraña que suceda esto, ya que, en "su clase" no se les hace "ni caso"; ellos siguen haciendo los cuadernos de cuentas o de escritura que traen de "integración"..." (Isabel)
".. hay alumnos de integración que asisten a las clases permitiendo que estas sigan su rumbo porque no molestan ni interrumpen las clases y respetan a sus compañeros y a la profesora. Otros son más inquietos y la solución de muchos profesores es colocarlos en un rincón de la clase e ignorarlos o regañarles constantemente, cosa que no me parece nada bien porque se sienten discriminados tanto por el profesor como el resto de sus compañeros que lo ven como un tonto, un imbécil, un idiota o cualquier apodo que se les ocurre y que muchas veces son incitados por el profesor." (Antonio)
"Caso aparte es una niña con retraso mental grave y problemas de psicomotricidad que está en 5º B. Hasta la llegada de los prácticos, esta alumna se limitaba a jugar con sus fichas y juegos educativo durante las clases en las que no acudía al aula de Educación Especial." (María)
"...los programas de refuerzo para alumnos con NEE... no presentan ningún tipo de planificación por lo que son bastante ineficaces en según qué casos" (Manuel)
"Una cosa que he observado, y que me llama tremendamente la atención es la existencia de varios alumnos con NEE en clase. ... Podría citar, a modo de ejemplo, un alumno de 6º B, que se pasa la clase en el fondo pintando y trabajando con la cartilla. ... este alumno, es un alumno totalmente marginado, ya que está totalmente fuera de la clase, ya que durante esta se dedica a hacer cosas que no tienen nada que ver con el transcurso de la misma. ..." (Mercedes)
"... y el alumno con NEE (alumno con necesidades especiales) vuelve a sentarse solo, para trabajar con su tarea específica." (Sonia)
"Es un grupo de 24 alumnos,... y uno de ellos junto a la profesora (con NEE). Más adelante me he dado cuenta de que no es el único que debería sentarse junto a la maestra,..." (Sonia)
"... para los de integración tienen unos cuadernillos aparte, lo que pasa es que la mayoría el tiempo lo pasan hablando y distraídos." (Nuria)
"Siguiendo con este tema, quería comentar que la profesora casi nunca hace actividades (aunque el libro las proponga) en las que los alumnos tengan que trabajar en parejas o en grupo por la misma cuestión, por tanto, estos niños no saben lo que es disfrutar de la enseñanza trabajando con sus compañeros. En las pocas ocasiones en las que realiza una actividad en la que los niños/as deben trabajar en grupos, deja que ellos mismos elijan a sus compañeros de grupo, lo cual no resulta muy óptimo porque por regla general suelen elegirse por amistad o por tener características intelectuales parecidas con lo cual el resultado es que hay grupos muy dispares: el de los más aventajados, el de los más revoltosos y, siempre quedan excluidos los que van retrasados o los niños/as con NEE (Nuria)
"Me parece muy negativo que estos alumnos carezcan de libro de texto (lo que llega a convertirse en un auténtico estigma) así como que no participen en la dinámica general de la clase, por este motivo o por el hecho de que "no van a comprender". Esto crea una sensación de rechazo que desde el punto de vista de los otros alumnos está "justificada por el propio maestro/a". (Elena)
... comentaré la situación de niños que bien sea por su carácter introvertido o porque al estar recibiendo apoyo en las aulas de integración, los profesores no les prestan atención, o la que debieran. ... tengo que comentar, en concreto, la situación de un alumno de la clase de mi profesora-tutora. Al comienzo de mi período de prácticas, este niños estaba sentado al final de la clase, un poco aislado y además sus compañeros se reían de él. La razón que la maestra me daba era que este niño estando solo al final de la clase y haciendo solamente lo que a él le apetecía en cada momento era feliz. Es decir, este alumno nunca atendía a explicaciones, no hacía ninguna actividad... sólo dibujaba, coloreaba, y copiaba de la pizarra de vez en cuando. Más razones de mi profesora también son que constantemente le da palabras de ánimo y mucho afecto porque es lo que el niño necesita y se encuentra en esa situación porque antes lo obligaban a hacer las tareas y como éste no quería, no asistía al colegio.... En mi opinión, creo que esta situación no es la más adecuada para este niño. ..." (Carmen)
"En cuanto a Vanesa, una alumna con una deficiencia auditiva de un 70 por ciento, recordaré que junto a un compañero que está realizando el practicum II con la especialidad de inglés, tengo la oportunidad de darle inglés tres veces a la

semana en sus horas de apoyo. Esto se debe a que su maestra de apoyo nos propuso darle clases de inglés para que se iniciase en el idioma porque Salvador decía que Vanesa no aprendía porque era torpe.” (Marta)
“Otro problema del que quería comentar es que en el curso de tercero hay un niño esquizofrénico. Este niño, a diferencia del otro, está tratado con medicamentos, pero también es bastante agresivo. Este niño sí está tratado por el gabinete psicológico del colegio y normalmente está con la educadora. Hace poco por pegar a un niño lo expulsaron del colegio y estando expulsado este niño le partió el brazo a otro niño de la zona marginal. Una cosa que no entiendo es ¿por qué expulsan a los niños? Nosotros en el colegio no lo podemos aguantar y descansamos de ellos unos días, cuando los padres de este niño viven en la zona marginal de Torre del Mar y todos los días ven los niños malos tratos, drogas, etc. ¿qué pueden aprender allí en el horario escolar? Pienso que se debería de poner otro tipo de castigos para estos niños ya que expulsando estos niños a la calle, cuando sus padres no lo van a corregir, me parece una tontería que expulsen a estos niños. Una cosa que me llamó la atención fue que este niño le pegó a otro estando en la clase y la maestra me dijo que lo llevara con la maestra de educación especial, cuando le expliqué lo que había ocurrido a esta maestra, intentó pegarle un coscorrón en la cabeza, pero se paró porque me vio la cara que yo había puesto. Esto es ya el colmo que una maestra le pegue a un niño de 8 años.” (Gema)
“Otro grupo que me parece realmente interesante es el formado por los <u>alumnos de apoyo a la integración</u> ; alumnos que no alcanzan el nivel del resto de la clase y realizan tareas aparte. ... Por lo que he podido observar y volviendo a los distintos tipos de alumnos, los pertenecientes a apoyo a la integración, (durante las clases de inglés concretamente) observan a sus compañeros con una mirada de deseo de poder alcanzar el nivel que tienen éstos ya que observan las actividades deseando poder integrarse como uno más; en este aspecto el interés que por ellos muestra la profesora me parece muy acertada ya que realizan tareas de inglés como el resto de sus compañeros (unas fichas que ella les reparte y explica como tienen que hacerla); de esta forma no los discrimina frente a sus compañeros.” (Charo)
“Como colofón, pienso que el problema de este tipo de alumnos es que suponen un estorbo para los profesores, ya que estos no pueden adaptarse a las circunstancias personales de estos niños, y por ello suelen estar confinados a la marginación.” (Julio)
“El problema se plantea cuando al no tener estos niños/as una ACI, deben ser evaluados con los mismos criterios que sus compañeros. De tal forma, que se da la paradoja que alumnos que durante el desarrollo de una unidad didáctica sólo realizan un par de actividades con la clase, ... y que a veces trabajan un núcleo temático diferente (siguen trabajando los colores cuando el resto está con la ropa), realizan la misma prueba de evaluación (es decir, sobre la ropa). Obviamente el resultado que logran estos alumnos/as está bastante lejos de ser satisfactorio, y la consecuencia lógica es que por mucho empeño que pongan, siempre van a recibir un estímulo negativo que va a reforzar la sensación de fracaso escolar.” (Elena)

Table 6: Coordination between educators involved

"Este caso (se refiere al de una alumna de la que comenta que tiene retraso mental grave y problemas de psicomotricidad) es un ejemplo de la desconexión y falta de comunicación e interés por compartir información existente entre los diferentes maestros y maestras. Sería mucho más fácil para los propios docentes y mucho más provechosos para los alumnos que los profesores se reunieran de vez en cuando, aunque sea de una manera informal, para intercambiar opiniones, experiencias y en definitiva información acerca de los alumnos que comparten." (María)
(Se refiere al método para enseñar inglés que emplea la profesora de apoyo en el aula de Educación Especial) "Quizás para esa edad sea un buen método, lo malo es que únicamente se usa por esta profesora en el aula de apoyo y entre ella y el profesor de inglés no existe comunicación." (María)

Table 7: Acceptance of SEN pupils by their peers

"La mayoría (se refiere, según sus palabras, a "los alumnos/as con NEE o llamados 'de integración'") se encuentran cómodos con los compañeros ya que hay muy buena aceptación." (Elisa)
"... y sufren con las burlas que los niños "normales" les hacen (cuando la maestra no mira). Esto no lo hacen todos, pero unos se contagian de otros y... los de integración están deseando volver a "integración". (Isabel)
"(se refiere a una niña sobre la que afirma que tiene una necesidad educativa especial)... durante las últimas semanas los alumnos de su clase se han organizado en turnos para ayudarla a subir y bajar las escaleras a la hora del recreo, ya que ella sola puede caerse. Quería destacar el compañerismo existente en esta clase,... (María)
"... en el quinto A los alumnos atienden y entiende a este alumno (se refiere a un alumnos al que anteriormente se refiere con "un chaval con Síndrome de Down"), mientras que los demás rehúyen un tanto de él (se nota su estructuración adrede por parte de los maestros). (Gaspar)
... comentaré la situación de niños que bien sea por su carácter introvertido o porque al estar recibiendo apoyo en las aulas de integración, los profesores no les prestan atención, o la que debieran. ... tengo que comentar, en concreto, la

situación de un alumno de la clase de mi profesora-tutora. Al comienzo de mi período de prácticas, este niños estaba sentado al final de la clase, un poco aislado y además sus compañeros se reían de él.” (Carmen)

“... comprendo a los padres de estos niños que quieren que sus hijos convivan y estén el día a día con niños de su edad, en este aspecto he de decir que los niños que he visto están muy bien integrados, sus compañeros hablan con ellos, se ríen de sus bromas, etc. Pero aparte de esto (que me parece muy importante), existe el tema académico, y estoy segura de que con más personal estos niños avanzarían muchísimo más.” (Nuria)

“Me parece muy negativo que estos alumnos carezcan de libro de texto (lo que llega a convertirse en un auténtico estigma) así como que no participen en la dinámica general de la clase, por este motivo o por el hecho de que “no lo van a comprender”. Esto crea una sensación de rechazo que desde el punto de vista de los otros alumnos está “justificada por el propio maestro/a”. (Elena)

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<b>Abstract / Resumen</b>	<p><i>This article presents and analyses the findings of a qualitative study about the perceptions expressed by prospective primary teachers of English about integration and response to special educational needs in the mainstream. The analysis of the data, obtained in the course of the practice teaching period of their course, evidences their ideas on integrative education; besides, a frequent lack of experiences of genuine integrative practices in such a critical period of professional preparation is identified.</i></p> <p>El presente artículo presenta y analiza los hallazgos de un estudio de naturaleza cualitativa sobre las percepciones que expresan futuros maestros especialistas de inglés en el transcurso de las Prácticas de Enseñanza sobre la integración y la atención a las necesidades educativas especiales en el aula ordinaria. El análisis de los datos textuales aportados por los informantes, además de revelar las ideas que éstos sostienen en torno a la integración, evidencia una frecuente ausencia de experiencias de enseñanza auténticamente integradoras durante ese período crítico de formación profesional.</p>
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