

**Una revisión teórica sobre la diversidad, factor preponderante en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la educación en América Latina**

**A theoretical review about diversity, a preponderant factor in the teaching-learning process in education in Latin America**

**Yeimer Prieto-López**

Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar | Universidad de Especialidades Espiritu Santo (UEES)  
Universidad Tecnológica ECOTEC - Ecuador  
yprieto@torremar.edu.ec

**Mario Fabricio Ayala-Pazmiño**

Universidad de Especialidades Espiritu Santo - Ecuador  
fayala2425@gmail.com

**Beatriz Annabell Loor-Ávila**

Universidad de Especialidades Espiritu Santo | Universidad Tecnológica ECOTEC - Ecuador  
bloora@ecotec.edu.ec

**[doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2021.6-1.930](https://doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2021.6-1.930)**

## RESUMEN

En esta investigación científica se realiza un estudio sobre la formación y desarrollo de la personalidad de las nuevas generaciones de la Educación Básica Elemental en América Latina. Aquí, la atención a la diversidad representa un desafío y una prioridad no sólo para el Departamento de Consejería Estudiantil (DECE) sino también para los docentes y directivos, realizando un análisis de términos claves como diversidad, individualidad, integración, segregación, homogeneidad, enfoque individual, diferenciado y personalizado, atención a las diferencias individuales y escuela abierta a la diversidad.

En el desarrollo de este artículo prevaleció la investigación cualitativa y teórica, destacando métodos como el histórico-lógico para determinar los principales fundamentos teóricos y metodológicos que sustentan las variables y la conceptualización y definiciones. Además, la sistematización teórica permitió obtener las últimas investigaciones sobre el campo.

A partir de la conceptualización de los niños y niñas con Necesidades Educativas Especiales (NEE) en América Latina, se realizan acciones para ofrecer una educación de mayor calidad a los alumnos con necesidades educativas especiales y a toda la población escolar en general. La atención a la diversidad es para los alumnos con una NEE específica y para todos los alumnos matriculados en una institución educativa ya que son diversos, y se debe dar igualdad de oportunidades a todos los alumnos.

Este artículo presenta el significado de educar en y para la diversidad desde las nuevas propuestas que este término está alcanzando en los últimos tiempos, especialmente bajo la perspectiva de la educación inclusiva. Esta nueva corriente defiende que la escuela debe ser para todos, que ningún alumno, sean cuales sean sus características, debe ser excluido de la educación. También define el concepto de inclusión, sus principales características y los principios que la sustentan. Por último, se ofrecen una serie de decisiones y estrategias al final de este estudio, y algunos cambios que deben aplicarse para que cada niño pueda asistir y aprender en su escuela.

**Palabras clave:** atención a la diversidad; procesos de enseñanza aprendizaje; educación, inclusión, estrategias pedagógicas

Cómo citar este artículo:

APA:

Prieto-López, Y., Ayala-Pazmiño, M., & Loor-Ávila, B., (2021). Una revisión teórica sobre la diversidad, factor preponderante en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la educación en América Latina. 593 Digital Publisher CEIT, 6(6-1), 649-657. <https://doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2021.6-1.930>

Descargar para Mendeley y Zotero

## ABSTRACT

In this scientific research, a study is carried out on the formation and development of the personality of the new generations from the Elementary Basic Education in Latin America. Here, attention to diversity represents a challenge and a priority not only for the Student Counseling Department (DECE) but also for teachers and managers, carrying out an analysis of key terms such as diversity, individuality, integration, segregation, homogeneity, individual, differentiated and personalized approach, attention to individual differences, and schools open to diversity.

In the development of this article, qualitative and theoretical research prevailed, highlighting methods such as the historical-logical for determining the main theoretical and methodological foundations that sustain the variables and the conceptualization and definitions. Furthermore, the theoretical systematization made it possible to obtain the latest research on the field.

Based on the conceptualization of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Latin America, actions are used to offer higher quality education to students with special educational needs and the entire school population in general. Attention to diversity is for students with a specific SEN and for all students enrolled in an educational institution since they are diverse, and equal opportunities must be given to all students.

This article presents the meaning of educating in and for diversity from the new proposals this term has been reaching in recent times, especially under the inclusive education perspective. This new trend argues that schools should be for all, that no student, whatever their characteristics, should be excluded from education. It also defines the concept of inclusion, its main characteristics, and the principles that sustain it. Finally, a series of decisions and strategies are offered at the end of this study, and some changes must be applied so that each child can attend and learn in their school.

**Key words:** attention to diversity; teaching and learning processes; education; inclusion; pedagogical strategies

## Introduction

We are currently witnessing a series of critical and significant changes regarding the denomination and characteristics of those people who have traditionally been the subject of Special Education. Denominations and characterizations have been linked to ideologies, policies, social, economic, and cultural factors. All these considerations have led to the fact that the term is widely used today. Diversity aims to end discrimination, pejorative expressions, and rudeness; and open a vast and rich range of differences among students and educational institutions.

Indeed, it is not enough that there are only changes in vocabulary and expressions. What is essential is that the change occurs in thinking and attitudes, and they are translated into new approaches to solidarity, tolerance, and new educational practices that bring with them a new way of dealing with plurality and multiculturalism of the students.

Thus, there is a need for all students to receive a quality education focused on attention to their individual needs. An objective that entirely coincides with the goal of inclusive education, since it pursues that diversity appears among students according to their characteristics by increasing learning possibilities for all (Ainscow, 2015).

The philosophy of inclusion defends effective education for all, and based on that, schools and educational communities must meet the needs of all students, whatever their personal, psychological, or social characteristics are.

Undoubtedly, diversity in all its manifestations represents a fundamental challenge for education systems. It will be difficult for schools to develop positive interaction between students that generates knowledge, acceptance, and appreciation if assimilation is placed before inclusion (Arnaiz & De Haro, 2004). Assimilation defends a single model educational and cultural whose objective is that all groups and minorities adopt that

model, with the contents, methodologies, values, and norms, the signs of identity of the dominant culture. This approach does not recognize that society is diverse and that the difference inhabits as a primary characteristic.

Therefore, we believe that one of the most significant challenges for the education system is “to understand and promote inclusive policies and practices that allow achieving the basic learning of compulsory education for all students” (Martínez-Domínguez, 2019). However, this objective is challenging to achieve if society does not meet the minimum equality and social justice conditions. In that sense, we are also aware that it cannot be claimed that the educational system ends social and cultural discrimination. Not by itself, but it requires the development and enforcement of policies that improve relations between education in the school and the environment (Andersen, 2018).

Consequently, given the diversity in society, we are committed to inclusive education because it supposes a philosophy of action that goes beyond the educational framework and emphasizes the construction of policies not segregating companies, avoiding exclusion processes, and betting on the inclusion of all citizens. We are convinced that inclusion is a process of school restructuring, change that takes time, and an inclusive historical responsibility that must be solved.

Therefore, we share a proposal to build an inclusive school in terms of a learning community (Ayala-Pazmino & Prieto-Lopez, 2021). The curricular project is done not from a technical or administrative perspective but fundamentally critical and transformative, with active participation and involvement of students, families, entities, and social agents.

Naturally, to achieve this tremendous socio-educational objective, a deep pedagogical-educational reflection that leads to intense training as lifelong education is needed (Dajani, 2016). A training-education finds its maximum expression in the offer of the school and the university, but which has to be consolidated in the institutions’

extracurricular educational programs, in the labor force, in civil society, starting from critical analysis of educational phenomena.

Different contradictions have arisen in the teaching-learning process, particularly, between the teacher who teaches and the student who learns. To solve these contradictions, with an explanation from the formation of students schooled and the facing of SEN. Unfortunately, Special Pedagogy, a subject that used to provide the main theoretical and methodological foundations about the different SENs, has been written off the Basic and Initial Education curriculum. Currently, they turn more problematic with the “Compulsory Teaching Act” until graduation, approved from the beginning of this century. The work with diversity turns of core importance with the Compulsory Teaching Act, given the universality of teaching (Genovese, 2018).

Segregation, among others such as integration, responds one way or another to law enforcement. It, however, intensifies such contradictions since they currently represent a significant upsurge among the scholars of pedagogy worldwide. Therefore, the concepts of integration, inclusiveness, segregation, and diversity complement and, to some extent, validate one another if we consider the following stand: In as much as we can achieve proper educational integration and inclusiveness in an integrating fashion, and from the scientific and reasonable points of view and parting from the pedagogical, psychological, anthropological and philosophical postulates, we will be achieving to respond to diversity as it is aspired by our institution.

Although a fact and not a dream that we consider perfectible, we recently organized a training session on classroom management, attention to positive discipline, and diversity from the teaching-learning process. Diversity is an inherent condition of the human being. It is based on respect for individual differences and considers them when learning. Therefore, in the educational process, we will find that students can present diverse ideas, previous experiences, and attitudes because each person has a diversity

of learning styles, interests, motivations, expectations, capacities, and developmental rhythms.

Due to the reflection carried out in recent years on what it is, it has been seen the need to respond to other diversities (cultural and linguistics) present in society and, consequently, in school. Educating for this pluralism entails educating from equality, respecting others, the different, the one who comes from another culture, speaks another language, practices religion or not, suffers a physical or mental disability, and suffers rejection. First, schools must consider and define their social, cultural, and pedagogical convictions to develop this pedagogical approach. Then, it must make explicit its values and goals to develop a proposal for action consistent with what has been expressed.

The new concept of special education has opened a new vision about people with some impairment because it shifts the center of attention of the individual towards educational interaction. From this consideration, each person’s level of development and learning depends not only on their ability and nature but also on the learning experiences (Golding, 2011).

Special educational needs associated with disability refer to those students who face the teaching-learning process with sensory limitations, cognitive or learning difficulties. These needs may be increased or diminished according to the teaching model carried out in educational centers since that it is imperative to consider their previous experiences, the type of curriculum designed, or its difficulty to get into the established learning rhythm. From this broader conception, many students with special educational needs may find themselves in this situation due to their cultural origin, social environment, or educational experiences (Renzulli & Reis, 2014).

## Development

In Ecuador, the professionals in education are trained for a school with a distinct trait in the homogeneity of groups and where the new

conception or educational trend is personalized attention. However, this has many limitations and insufficiencies, as it lacks differentiated and individual instruction for boys and girls with SENs. Therefore, educational institutions should consider the psychological school of Vygotsky (1987), the historical-cultural character of psychic development, the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), and the application of SEN's concept disregarding students' differences.

It is necessary to have schools that respond to all the individual peculiarities of their students and whose objective is to satisfy their educational needs. There is a need to have a system that promotes a school open to diversity and to the formation of a teacher who plans and executes the teaching-learning process based not only on a rigorous curriculum but also on the correspondence with the different learning needs and rhythms of its students. It is imperative to plan a new curricular design, thus making accessible accommodations needed for the students to reach their goals.

Then, one of the meaningful aspects of the present study is a detailed report on families and their integration in the teaching-learning process through tutor-parent interviews and differentiated and preventive work. Teachers must be able to characterize their students from the early stages of education to define their SENs, based on the criteria provided by the counseling department and the evaluation of the student's environment in the school, the family, and the community, and to elaborate a strategy of intervention that satisfies the educational needs. Of course, working with the family is not enough. Nevertheless, it represents an achievement for our institution in developing the teaching-learning process that revolves around the complete educational system.

The primary role of the school is to promote learning in students with SENs and create an environment in which the learning process is appropriate for everyone. In this respect, we have to be consequential with the scientific rigor of the pedagogy to address diversity and,

particularly, the attention to diversity as one of the areas of the terms that make segregation and integration part of the teaching-learning process. On the other hand, schools have ignored the focus on individual or differentiated instruction or attention to individual differences. Thus, we recognize that the attention to talents does not yet respond to the demands of the students. Nevertheless, this has already been identified as the strategical pedagogies to find better results in all the areas of knowledge that are to be resized for the following school years (Peterson, 2021).

It is currently recognized that children do not learn or develop homogeneously, that they do not own the same aptitudes or have been in the same developmental conditions. Therefore, every group unavoidably constitutes diversity. Schools, thus, have to be open to diversity. Nevertheless, what does it mean to have an open school to the diversity of the XXI century?

We do not only refer to the admittance of all students despite the differences and SENs, but the challenge is to guarantee the conditions and means so every child can learn and develop their skills. The intention is that all boys and girls are schooled in the most natural, normalized, developed, and socializing environment. Therefore, there is a need for schools where the teacher, the educational conditions, and classmates carry out an influential mediation role and development, guided by the counseling department, but with the participation of the whole system of educational influences, particularly, the family.

According to this stand, the boys and girls should not be the ones to adapt to the preconceived, general, unique, and rigorous demands of the school, but it is the school that should offer a variety of educational options (as shown in the present investigation, to be adapted to the needs and possibilities of each student) (Erevelles, 2015). Therefore, the student cannot work in function of an established method, but the methods must provide in the function of the student when the moment or circumstances require.

The authors of the present scientific investigation assume that within the current pedagogical tendencies of the XXI century, a notion of equality of opportunities needs to be addressed to achieve equality of opportunities. It does not mean to treat everyone similarly. Children are not equal, so they should not be treated as though. Therefore, what is needed is to translate the general principle of equality of opportunities to concrete actions, which are meaningful for the educational offer.

Furthermore, given the notion of a differentiated educational treatment and since children are different, they should be treated differently to reach a common goal. A situation that must be difficult to practice as it needs pedagogical and psychological decision-making that requires professional competencies and resources.

However, the referential framework is essential to attain the objectives set by the teachers within the group that works, taking into consideration the characteristics of each student. Based on our perspective and experience, we have advanced, but we have not reached our goal, which means a great challenge for us who dream to respond to diversity in every moment of the teaching process.

Currently, it is being analyzed and practiced to see if children with SENs will be able to acquire an education of quality in the traditional schooling system if this can facilitate the means and conditions. As a result, every child advances within their possibilities and with the scaffolding needed if the teachers prepare themselves to educate diversity and facilitate the learning and development of every child to the extent of their capabilities and aptitudes by considering their individualities.

### **Methodology, analysis, and discussion**

In this research, a qualitative methodology prevails, highlighting the use of scientific methods such as historical-logical to determine the main antecedents of research in terms of educational inclusion in Latin America,

theoretical systematization, and scientific modeling.

This means that the teacher, to provide adequately for diversity, must have attitudes that in one way or another complement the pedagogical and psychological knowledge acquired during pre-graduate studies, of which we will further explain, but with specific influences to our judgment on:

Acceptance of the child with learning difficulties or with high abilities.

Creativity in the teaching-learning process.

Flexibility in the criteria about the aspects determining or influencing the teaching-learning process.

The optimism of success on his task.

As it was previously mentioned, the successful fulfillment of this task needs to possess pedagogical and psychological knowledge that has repercussions on the quality of activities, such as:

Knowledge on the SEN problematic per se and its peculiarities, on the learning difficulties and on the characteristics of the basic foundations of Evolutionary Psychology.

Technical preparation to work with the parents of both children with disability and children without it.

Appropriate management of the resources in the society where the schoolers develop.

Domain of techniques to work with the families in differentiated instructions.

Management of the specific material utilized to facilitate the learning of children with learning disabilities and with SENs.

All the information aforementioned is reflected in the classroom. Likewise, the work done with the family is a fundamental tool in the integral development of the students'

personalities at all grade levels and a fundamental cell of the teaching-learning process, especially within it as the scaffolding or help the teacher should provide to their students.

This openly reflects the comprehension and assimilation levels acquired by the educator when the help matches the complexities of the student's tasks and needs. It is often enough with a brief orientation or suggestion on proceeding and beginning. However, sometimes, more than this may be needed. For example, completing a task or demonstrating how to solve an exercise.

It is crucial that the teacher can identify how much help the student needs, so this is not excessive, and the child attains independence that constitutes a stimulus to the development of his potentialities. In addition, to the adequate unfolding of his creative capacity and in search of alternatives to problem-solving. It is clear that, as it has been previously mentioned and following the real potentialities of each student, but imperative that the teacher can specify and work on this context. Unfortunately, steps about these issues are still insufficient (Baker, 2012).

Arduous work has been done to refine the general teaching and its subsystems, beginning with the structural aspects to establish the guidelines of the educational policies of the Ministry of Education, as well as the methodological preparation that teachers must attain. Acquiring adequate preventive and integral work leads to everybody's participation in decision-making, which impacts planning and programs of study and on the independence and flexibility that allows the teacher to successfully achieve the more general objectives on the different grade levels.

It is of utmost importance to highlight the inclusion or integration of all this work in the universities of the Ecuadorian Republic to prepare a competent and skilled professional. However, this is a reality that is still far from reaching what is expected in education focused on training, growth, and reassessing of the educators and obtaining better levels of pedagogical formation. Therefore, necessary actions may be carried

out to consolidate an Ecuadorian school that is based on the principles historical-cultural paradigm of Vigostky (1987), which provides adequate treatment of the individual potentials and with complete knowledge of the family and community environment of the student. Nevertheless, the transitional situation we are facing, where the theoretical approach seems to advance faster, demands efforts on practicing, studying, reflecting, and researching integration through the actual protagonists, the school, the family, and society.

### **The inclusive school**

Attention to diversity and the achievement of real equal opportunities should be a permanent challenge for educational institutions. Therefore, it is necessary to review the very idea of inclusion and its implications for compulsory schooling. As Ferri (2016) expressed, "It also supposes a real commitment to educational democratization, by making the training intentions explicit and extending the benefits to all the students." It makes sense to say that educational centers are a basic change unit for a more global transformation.

We are convinced that building inclusive schools is a tremendous challenge if we really want empathic relationships in the classroom, ending the lack of solidarity and discrimination. Moreover, educating from an inclusive perspective means preparing people to live in a society where diversity is legitimate and appreciated as a value (Portera, 2019).

Graham (2006) summarizes the characteristics of an inclusive and democratic school:

- a) It is open to all students, regardless of their socio-personal characteristics. A school that does not discriminate against anyone.
- b) It is a school managed by the community that seeks self-management and self-government.
- c) General purposes must be designed based on respect for all students as free and

autonomous subjects, as citizens of the world, capable of developing competencies in a self-critical way.

d) It is a school with democratic management and an inclusive curriculum that is respectful of diversity.

e) It is, finally, a school with a methodology and didactical procedures that encourage the participation of all students and work collaboratively as it believes in the student as a protagonist of the teaching-learning processes.

Converting an educational center into an effective inclusive school creates conditions that facilitate improvement processes. It also allows teachers to innovate in their daily practices to build an education for all, which is based on the IQEFA project (improvement of quality in the education for all) (Rice (2006).

- Improves the results of teachers and students and the school effectiveness.
- Creates an open, appropriate climate that fosters a school culture based on efficiency and quality.
- Offers and creates spaces for joint reflection.
- Encourages active participation of the school community.
- Offers a greater probability of academic and social success.
- Provides permanent training for teachers.

## Conclusion

We do not live in a homogeneous. We must be aware of cultural, economic, social, and political differences—these truly separate people, not the color of the skin, religion, or language.

We to deepen the democratic project of each country. Hence, in the educational field,

inclusion is a firm commitment to the positive assessment of diversity in our society and the recognition that inclusive education is for all, which is why we need effective schools that fulfill that purpose.

Therefore, we are convinced of the need and commitment among education professionals to offer inclusive educational practices for all, building effective centers that promote academic success. However, there is a need for schools with the necessary socio-political support. Perhaps what is challenging to understand for some is that inclusion, as a process, is endless; it is always in constant construction and continually feeds on new experiences of all kinds (Barrio, 2009).

## References

- Ainscow, M. (2015). Developing inclusive education systems: what are the levers for change. *Journal of Educational Change*, 6: 109-124.
- Andersen, G.G. (2018). Teacher perceptions of a culture of thinking. *Advanced Education Programs Faculty Publications*, 3, [https://scholars.fhsu.edu/aep\\_facpubs/3](https://scholars.fhsu.edu/aep_facpubs/3).
- Arnaiz, P. & De Haro, R. (2004). Citizenship and interculturality: keys to education in the 21st century. *Education Siglo XXI*, 22, 19-27.
- Ayala-Pazmino, M., & Prieto-Lopez, Y. (2021). La pedagogía de la enseñanza del pensamiento: Hacer visible el pensamiento. *593 Digital Publisher CEIT*, 6(4), 177-183. <https://doi.org/10.33386/593dp.2021.4.517>
- Baker, B. (2012). The hunt for disability: The new eugenics and the normalization of school children. *Teachers College Record*, 104: 663-703.
- Barrio, J. L. (2009). Towards an inclusive education for all. *Complutense Journal of Education*, 1 (20), 13-31.
- Benhabib, S. (2006). *The other's rights*. Barcelona: Gedisa.



- Dajani, M.M.J. (2016). Using thinking routines as a pedagogy for teaching English as a second language in Palestine. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 6(1), 1-18. 10.5590/JERAP.2016.06.1.01.
- Erevelles, N. (2015). Deconstructing difference: doing disability studies in multicultural contexts. En S. Danforth y S. Gabel, *Vital questions facing disability studies in education* (pp. 347-362). N.Y., New York: Peter Lang.
- Ferri, B. A. (2016). Teaching to trouble. En S. Danforth y S. Gabel, *Vital questions facing disability studies in education* (pp. 289-306). N.Y., New York: Peter Lang.
- Genovese, A. (2018). For an intercultural pedagogy. Bologna: Università degli Studi.
- Golding, C. (2011). Educating for critical thinking: thought-encouraging questions in a community of inquiry. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 30(3), 357-370. 10.1080/07294360.2010.499144
- Graham, L. (2006). Caught in the net: a Foucaultian interrogation of the incidental effects of limited notions of inclusion, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10: 3-25.
- Martínez-Domínguez, B. (2019). Lights and shadows of the measures of attention to diversity on the path of educational inclusion. *Interuniversity Journal of Teacher Training*, 70, (25.1), 165-184.
- Peterson, J.J. (2021). Visible thinking: A distributed cognitive process to self-manage cognitive load. *United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences*. <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1124593.pdf>.
- Portera, A. (2019). Intercultural education in Europe: epistemological and semantic aspects. In A. García and A. Escarbajal de Haro (Coords.), *Sociocultural pluralism, education and interculturality* (pp. 243-266). Badajoz: Alfabet.
- Rice, N. (2006). Teacher education as a site of resistance. En S. Danforth y S. Gabel, *Vital questions facing disability studies in education* (pp. 17-31), N.Y., New York: Peter Lang.
- Vygotsky, L. (1987). *Un aula para pensar: Aprender y enseñar en una cultura del pensamiento*. Buenos Aires. Aique.