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Descriptive study on the quality of attention to diversity plans

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Abstract

The present study has as its basis the commitment and interest with the quality improvement to the diversity awareness through improvement plans. The main goal was to determine the main components of analysis of the quality of the centers that serve the diversity, from the teachers' perspective. The purpose is to appreciate the teacher staff perception about the plans for the improvement of attention to diversity. This is a descriptive and evaluative study in which we have designed and validated a questionnaire that was applied to 112 E.S.O. teachers. The results showed that there is a majority agreement on the revised researches on the deficiency in the resources that schools have to deal with the diversity. The number of students that make up the classrooms of E.S.O., its diversity of personal situations, lack of funding and support staff makes a low involvement of teachers in the design and development of improvement plans. We conclude that teachers consider necessary for the improvement of the quality of diversity awareness some aspects as an adequate number of students per classroom making their education more personalized; a close relationship between schools and families; adequate material resources to the different diversities, and collaboration between the different professionals at the school.

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1. Introduction

The aim of all educational systems today is to provide quality education. The Spanish educational systems have often highlighted the existing interrelationship between the different elements that directly affect quality, as something

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to which we all aspire and which constitute a permanent concern. It is interpreted as a hallmark of quality and acknowledges that something has been done well (Giné and Parcerisa, 2007). Seen from this angle, one of the goals of quality education would be to mitigate the high rate of academic failure or the relocation of teachers.

However, the concept of quality, which unanimously includes the notions of fairness and efficiency, is so broad and has so many acceptations that the considerations of culture and research change its meaning, limits and possibilities. There is a different core set of values, each educational reality is perceived in a distinct manner and the world can be understood in a variety of ways. Depending on where it is positioned in the world, the way it develops and the manner in which we perceive education, which we consider to be a necessary utopia to enable humanity to make balanced progress, we shall place greater emphasis on either the procedures or the results and, in all cases, we shall search for paths that reconcile the resources in that direction.

What is understood by quality in the field of education? Pérez and collaborators (2007) state that the quality of education depends on what is expected or asked of it in a certain context, with specific objectives and social expectations. Following these authors, quality education must point towards the results but taking the processes that lead up to them very much into account.

For the purposes of what we consider quality, a plan that addresses diversity must take into account the diversity of the students' initial situation, pay attention to the factors of exclusion, carry out actions that promote inclusion and bear in mind all the students, in all contexts and in a wide variety of situations. From this perspective, Mortimore (1991) considers a school of quality is one that fosters the students' progress in a wide range of intellectual, social, moral and emotional achievements, taking into account their socioeconomic status, family environments and previous learning. An efficient educational system is one that maximises the capacity of schools to attain these results.

In view of the foregoing, it can be easily deduced that assessing quality is not a simple process as all the situations involve previously choosing the meanings given to the fundamental elements of education, quality and assessment. Thus, quality assessment means and implies agreeing on the definitions of the concepts mentioned above in a process that is consistent with a cultural context that has already been defined, due to the fact the terms, assessment and quality are exposed to multiple definitions and interpretations that are frequently used confusingly to justify the interests of other social agents.

As a result, our goal is to determine the main components for analysing the quality of the centres that address diversity from the perspective of teaching staff. Our objective is to observe how teachers perceive diversity improvement plans.

2. Objectives

The general aim of our research work is to understand the perception of teachers on those improvement plans that include attention to diversity. For this we have designed the following specific objectives:

1. Understand the perception of teachers regarding:
2. the interaction with the Education Center context
3. the planning of the improvement plan,
4. the curriculum design, and
5. the agents to address diversity and the material resources available for it.

3. Sample

Teachers from three Institutos de Educación Secundaria (state-owned secondary schools) participated in the research. Said schools have been awarded the quality management system certification based on the UNE EN ISO 9001/2008 standard, in acknowledgement of their participation in a project that links them with the improvement of academic education that is both taught and received. The sample selection was done intentionally, fulfilling the criterion that the center had a quality attention to diversity plan and who voluntarily agreed to participate in this research.

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