

**TITLE OF CASE STUDY:
ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF DISABLES STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT (100-150 WORDS):

Fundamental rights such as equality and dignity of the person impose the access and participation of students with disabilities. The outlook is bright due to the rapid increase in enrollment of students with special educational needs associated with the university's efforts to provide them an adequate response, both at the administration and services level and at the educational one. To do this, the Spanish universities have made great efforts over the last two decades to eliminate barriers, architectural and of communication, promote the use of new technologies in educational administration and processes, to provide the students with special needs technical aids, personal and economic, etc.

In Spain, there are several initiatives, one-off basis to meet the demands of university students with special needs, since the late eighties. But we must wait for the nineties to observe a generalization of policies to ensure access and participation. In 1994 only 2% of universities had a specific service (Alcantud, 1995), while in 2001 and 75% of universities had some service or, failing that, with some care to students with special educational needs. Thereafter, the number of students with disabilities access to university education has increased year after year.

However, there is great variety in the range of services offered by the universities, because of the lack of a uniform legal regulation in higher education regarding the functioning of these services, their organizational structure, the activities to develop, their scope, and human and material resources (Sánchez Palomino, 2003), and a little funding. For all these reasons, we must continue working to promote access and participation of people with special educational needs in higher education.

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GENERAL BACKGROUND:

There is a growing concern for the educational integration of people with disabilities and to ensure, in this way, their equality of opportunity.

This concern is noted internationally and nationally.

Internationally: "World Declaration on Higher Education in the XXI Century: Vision and Action", UNESCO, 1998, Article 3 enshrines the "equal access to higher education": "a) In accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, access to higher education should be based on merit, ability, effort, perseverance and determination of applicants and, in the perspective of education to throughout life, may take place at any age, taking due account of previously acquired skills. Consequently, access to higher education may not admit any discrimination based on race, sex, language, religion or economic, cultural or social, or physical disabilities. "

Spanish State Regulations: Consistent with the configuration of the Spanish state as a Social State, the educational integration of people with disabilities has been a priority for the Spanish legislature. It should be noted, in particular, the enactment and subsequent regulatory development of National Plan for Special Education, 1978, the Law on Social Integration of Disabled Persons 1982, the Royal Decree of Special Education Management, 1985, the Organic Law on the Education System of 1990, the Organic Law of Participation, Evaluation and Educational Centers Government 1990, the Royal Decree on Management of Education of Pupils with Special Educational Needs 1995, the Organic Law of Universities of 2001, the Organic Law on the Quality of Education Act 2002, the Law for Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination of Persons with Disabilities of 2003 and the Organic Law of Education of 2006.

Regional regulations: In Spain, the legislative powers on education and social affairs are transferred to regional government bodies (Comunidades Autónomas). Therefore, the Autonomous Communities also have legislation on educational integration of people with disabilities. As an example, in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia is remarkable the Law for the Care of Persons with Disabilities, 1999, the Solidarity Law in Education, 1999, the Decree on care for pupils with Special Educational Needs 2002, the Psychology Assessment order 2002, the Order on Specific Projects Curriculum in Special Education Centers 2002, the Transition Program order Adult Life and Labor in 2002 and the Education Act 2007 in Andalusia.

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE:

In this case study, the purpose has been to do an approach to the access and participation of the students with special needs derived from their disabilities. It investigates how this integration is perceived at the University from the perspectives of teaching/research staff, administration/services personnel and students, including students with disabilities.

After to have analysed the results of several surveys and research works about this item, one of the most significant findings has been that around half of the surveyed people stated that they were incapable of responding adequately to

disabled students. This fact contrasts sharply with the idea that educational and social integration is fostered by the ideas and attitudes of those members of teaching/research staff who have received specific information about disabled students at the University.

The objectives of this case study are:

- Examine the ideas and attitudes than on skills, training and professional development that the teachers of the University have towards the group of students with special needs associated with disability.
- Examine the ideas and attitudes than on skills, training and professional development that the administrative and service staff of the University has to the group of students with special needs associated with disability.
- Examine the ideas and attitudes than on skills, training and professional development that the students of the University have to the group of students with special needs associated with disability.
- Assess the perception and satisfaction that the students with disabilities on educational have over their own integration at the University.

LINKS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Spain has developed a very intense research work on the educational integration at the University of students with special needs associated with disability. The results of these investigations are guiding the practice of the Spanish Universities, at the organizational, teaching and management levels. Among the investigations carried out, we have to remark those developed in the framework of the Research Program of the Ministry of Education. This program promotes projects that contribute to improving the quality of higher education, increasing competitiveness and human resource development of the Spanish system of higher education. For this, the results of projects funded under this program are available through its website (<http://82.223.210.121/mec/ayudas/>).

It is worth noting the following:

- "Study on the attention to diversity in university classrooms" (EA2005-75)
- "Project For The Improvement Of Total Quality Of Higher Education In Connection With Students With Disabilities" (EA2007-0085)
- "Need, Willingness And Fitness For Use Technology To Help College Students With Disabilities: Adaptation And Validation Of An Assessment Instrument"(EA2007-0154)
- "Teachers Activity Guide Training For Integration And Equal Opportunities By Reason Of Disability In The Teaching Techniques" (EA2008-0106)
- "Mentoring Program For The Integration Of Students With Disabilities In Higher Education" (EA2009-0126)
- "The Transition To University For People With Disabilities" (EA2009-0104)
- "Go To University. Vocational Decision of The Teens With Disabilities" (EA2009-0169)

RESEARCH PROCESS (DESCRIBE THE METHOD USED TO GATHER INFORMATION/GENERATE THE NEW LEARNING)

The tools and resources used to conduct the research in this area are basically:

- Interviews

- Questionnaires / Surveys
- Analysis of statistics

The methodology used for research in this area:

- Quantitative
- Qualitative
- Descriptive

LINKING RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS (OR POLICY MAKERS)

The results of research on the challenges and benefits of access and participation of students with disabilities reported the practice of the universities, at the organizational, teaching and management levels.

In particular, widespread services and tools that seek to promote access and participation of students with special needs in Spanish universities.

As example, the University of Granada, sensitive to social policies, has a full "social intervention program to students with disabilities" for years (in particular, since the academic year 1991-1992). Basically the program is to provide human and technical support to students with physical, hearing or visual impairments, or mobility limitations, to facilitate their greater integration and participation within the entire university, as well as facilitation and/or adaptation to the studies are provided, which allow them to achieve better academic performance. These services or benefits are sometimes managed in collaboration with various organizations and associations of disabled people: Andalusian Federation of Associations of the Deaf (FAAS), National Organization for the Blind (ONCE) or Granada's Federation of persons with physical and organic disability (CANF-COCEMFE).

Into this program, the University has a number of services for the students in attention to their specific needs of each case and type of disability presented.

a) Aid for students with disabilities in general:

- Adaptation of the entrance exam to the University.
- Reservation of 3% of the places of registration.
- Exemption from payment of registration on first call.
- Access to the documentary support service for the disabled (SADDIS).

b) Technical and human resources adapted to the type and degree of disability:

- Fellow colleagues
- Sign Language Interpreter
- Loan Radio-frequency stations
- Adapted transport service or scholarships for transportation
- Swimming therapy for people with motor disabilities
- Ecc.

The UGR also conducts regular monitoring of the whole collective and an annual evaluation of the program outcomes through:

- Periodic review annual of the "Census of students with disabilities"
- Development of an annual "Statistical Report" of the data.
- Individual interviews

- Collective interviews
- Exchange of information between technicians responsible for the program and the different partner agencies.
- Questionnaires /Surveys.
- Interprofessional meetings.

TRANSFERABILITY OF THE CASE

The integration needs of persons with disabilities are a global problem, so the concern and the initiatives taken by the Spanish universities to promote their access and participation in higher education are transferable to other university systems. It is of great interest to exchange experiences and policies of action on this issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CASE STUDY

- The integrative attitude of the groups involve in university activities (teachers, administrators and students) is the general rule (97.6%). It is generally considered that the University must provide the means for students with disabilities have the same opportunities as the rest of their companions, and to boost their employability.
- A large majority of students considered that access and participation of students with disabilities is enriching for the entire university community, and it does not imply a decrease of general academic level (92.8%).
- However, there is great heterogeneity among the aids and services, and implementation offer by the Universities.
- Students see that integration is largely task for teachers and university staff (92.2%). While much of the administrative and service staff and teachers say they do not have sufficient resources and organizational learning to achieve successful integration of students with disabilities at the University (74.2%, in particular in the group between 51-64 years old) or that the University does not have the means to ensure the adaptation of the curriculum of these students (54.5%). According to research over this item, about 40% of respondents said not being able to respond appropriately to students with disabilities.
- Against this, we believe that integration is the responsibility of all sectors of the university (teaching and research staff, administrative staff and services, but students too). Also, we consider that if on the one hand there is a high degree of acceptance of students with special needs, and secondly it is states the inability to give them an adequate treatment, it highlights the need for faculty and administrative staff and services of being trained to respond appropriately to the integration of students with disabilities.
- In general, there is great ignorance of the experiences of integrating students with disabilities developed at the University (the population aged 24-37 years is the segment of the population more sensitive, at the University, to ideas favoring integration). It is therefore necessary that the members of the university community have more information about the experiences of integration that are being developed by the University, and that access and participation of students with disabilities is a cross-cutting strategy.
- It is seen as good practice the signing of agreements with associations and institutions specializing in the care of people with disabilities, to improve

training and resources available to the University to gain access and participation of students with special needs.

- It would be desirable to establish specific regulations, or at least a list of best practices to create a legal framework and conditions necessary to ensure access and participation of persons with disabilities, and a minimum level of care due to disability in all Spanish universities, to avoid gaps and differences existing (eg., booking places for registration, exemption of academic fees, customized technical assistance to ensure equal opportunities on college campuses, adaptation to the tests access to college, curricular adaptations necessary and appropriate to ensure equality of opportunity in university classrooms). Encourage the participation of students with disabilities in the bodies of the University. Promote training for students, prospective university professionals on issues related to disability.

- In Spain, due to legal requirement, the new curricula adapted to the EHEA provide special measures of access, guidance and curriculum adaptation for students with special needs.

- With regard to gender, no significant differences between the attitudes and ideas that men and women have regarding the integration of students with disabilities.

FURTHER READING:

— Ainscow, M. (1995). *Necesidades especiales en el aula*. Madrid: Narcea-UNESCO. (2007). *De la educación especial a escuelas eficaces para todos*. En A. Sánchez y R. Pulido (Coord.), *El centro educativo: una organización de y para la diversidad*. Granada: Grupo Editorial Universitario.

—Alcantud Marín, F., Ávila Clemente, V. y Asensi Borrás, W. C. (2000). *La integración de estudiantes con discapacidad en los estudios superiores*. Valencia: Universitat de Valencia Estudi General (Servicio de Publicaciones).

—Bowe, F. *Universal Design in Education: Teaching Non-Traditional Students*. London: Bergin and Garvey, 2000.

— Conclusions of the First National Congress on Disability and University, organized by the Royal Board on Disability (Salamanca, 2005). <http://www.rpd.es/>

—Sánchez Palomino: “The University of Almería and the educational and social integration of students with disabilities: ideas and attitudes held by teaching/research staff”, *Revista de Educación*, 354. Enero-Abril 2011, pp. 575-603.

—Real Patronato sobre Discapacidad (2008). *Libro Blanco sobre Universidad y Discapacidad*. Madrid: Real Patronato sobre Discapacidad (http://www.rpd.es/english_presentation.html).

—World Declaration on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, UNESCO, 1998 <http://www.unesco.org>