

Original Article

The Mus-E Program: An Inclusive Experience that Improves Educational Success

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Received: 08 May 2024

Revised: 29 June 2024

Accepted: 13 July 2024

Published: 31 July 2024

Abstract - In an attempt to approach inclusive methodologies that allow improving academic results in basic instrumental areas, preferably mathematics and language, in students from disadvantaged educational contexts, the idea of working in this article on a unique program arises, the Mus-E Program. Under the Comparative Education methodology, 20 Educational Centers that share similar characteristics in terms of school students, family, educational context, and sociocultural environment are submitted for analysis. It is intended to establish to what extent the Mus-E Program has an impact on the educational success of students and on the reduction of school absenteeism.

Keywords - Quality of education, Intercultural education. School success, School failure, Socio-educational disadvantage.

1. Introduction

Contributions have been compiled from different authors such as [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6] or [7]. All of them agree that the origin of the concept of inclusion emanates from the desire to reduce situations of social exclusion in students, to face situations of socio-educational disadvantage derived from disadvantaged social, cultural, economic or other factors through reforms and legislative development, which allow a solution to be provided through public policies. To achieve a fairer and more equitable society, a quality education system is needed as an instrument that increasingly reinforces equality in access to education and ensures that all students remain in education. In this way, compensatory education was born, which makes effective the right to education of all students, understanding that there are inequalities in the students who are going to join the education system [8]. To understand the concept of Educational Inclusion, it is necessary to start with an analysis that allows us to understand how educational approaches have evolved over the years at the conceptual and regulatory levels. It has evolved in a relatively short period of time, both nationally and internationally (from the 60s to the present), from a segregating school to an integrating school, which passes through a comprehensive school [9] where educational compensation is necessary but is not sufficient to achieve real educational inclusion. According to Marchesi [10], if inclusion were real, there would be no need for educational compensation since there would be no inequalities in the classroom. However, inclusion and compensation are still present in educational practices with measures that contribute, on the one hand, to addressing the diversity of

students with educational needs and, on the other, to compensating for inequalities in access to and permanence in the education system of students at risk of dropping out for social or cultural reasons [11]. In this context, the idea has been consolidated that it is necessary to have an education model that includes everyone (comprehensive) and excludes no one, allows the diversity of the student body to be attended to within a school context (comprehensive education), or in other words, the need for "education for all", which contributes to eliminating barriers based on sex, age, ethnicity, race or any other personal or social circumstance, inequalities are compensated for and all the diversity of the student body is taken into account [12] y [13]. Educational Inclusion, Attention to Diversity and Educational Compensation are not contradictory concepts [7] but share the same challenges in the educational reality: achieving equality and equity in education. This means that students who may be in social, cultural, or gender inequality and because they have specific educational support needs benefit from education in an inclusive framework of education in conditions equal to those of the rest of the students. But it is not enough to have access to the system; it must also ensure that they remain in the education system for as many years as possible, eradicating situations of early school leaving.

1.1. Approach to the Concept of Inclusion

Many authors have written about educational inclusion and how to address it from the curriculum and have reflected in their research the need to conceive of inclusion as a principle that emanates from a social conscience whose



objective is to eliminate inequalities related to human rights and especially, the right to education [14], [4], [6], [15] and [16]. In this same sense, a debate is opened in which it is necessary to ask whether inclusion favors the school performance of the most disadvantaged students, who have educational needs derived from personal, social, cultural or ethnic factors, as well as to reflect on whether the education system is providing what the student needs to be able to stay in school with the available resources. Education must put in place all mechanisms to promote access to the education system in conditions of equality and equity for all students, and, in addition, strategies that allow it to be maintained for as many years as possible, at least in the compulsory stage, which in Spain is until the age of 16 (Casanova and Rodríguez, 2009). In this sense, authors as [17], [18] or [19] speak of the fact that "educating is more than schooling, dedicates a chapter to school failure and educational change, saying: There is, therefore, an express purpose of the educational system, the training of all students, and an unconfessed purpose, the selection of the best. Perhaps it is not entirely correct to talk about the selection of the best and should be said the exclusion of the worst. (p. 87).

School failure and its meaning have been analyzed by authors such as Marchesi and Pérez [20] or [21], who believe that it is a very negative and debatable term. The term is interpreted as a situation of lack of competence of the students to achieve educational objectives, something that offers a vision of the student that reduces their academic self-concept and self-esteem, which can also be seen as a label that harms their educational progress. In this way, when talking about school failure, is being alluded to a main characteristic, which is the low performance of the student, which places him or her in a situation of lack of educational success and risk of dropping out, as failure is considered to be something permanent over time. When school failure is attributed to causes other than those of poor academic performance, it is mainly associated with situations of lack of adaptation of the student to school, problems of school coexistence and discipline, behaviors far from the norm, or even problems associated with their personal or social origin and socio-educational inequality [20].

Other authors have shown that the conception of teaching and learning conditions or not a more open and inclusive pedagogical practice, with more active and participatory pedagogical methods being very relevant as those that promote more educational performance compared to traditional methods [20].

When the term performance and its relationship with school failure are analyzed, it is confirmed that "there is a risk that the aspects most closely related to the academic performance of students are the main, and even the only, references to decide whether a student obtains the basic degree" (p.27) [20].

Table 1. Indicators of school failure

Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic and social context
Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociocultural level • Dedication • Expectations
Educational system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public expenditure • Training and incentives for teachers • Teaching Time • Curriculum flexibility • Support available especially to schools and students at higher risk
Teaching Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Participation • Autonomy • Cooperation networks
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching style and conception • Classroom Management
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest • Competence • Participation

Note: elaborated on the basis of Marchesi and Pérez[20] p. 29.

However, and in contrast to the complexity suggested by the concept of school failure when analyzed in depth, indicators other than performance appear that are also related to educational processes and not only to results. Table 1 shows the indicators that can help to understand the concept of failure to avoid reductionist definitions, since it is a polysemic and multidimensional concept. School failure is a phenomenon that occurs in multiple circumstances and very different situations, not always affecting the same indicators. Following Puig-Rovira [21], the very agents and those responsible for failure may be the students, the teachers or the system itself that is failing.

The concept of school failure is too categorical and leaves no room for nuance. We speak of school failure in a general way in such a way that it can fail in all areas of life, not only in the school environment. On the other hand, it is known that not all failures are the same, that no one fails completely, that sometimes failure hides very valuable efforts, or that a failure can be only a lesser evil, both personally and socially. "For all these reasons, it is worth criticizing the simplicity, emphatic and negativity of the concept" (p. 84) [21]. Suppose the link between educational inclusion and academic performance is analyzed, understanding the latter as academic success. In that case, similar conclusions are reached regarding the complexity of the multiple contexts where success-failure can occur.

According to García-Fernández [22]: The school institution is not a neutral space. It is a place full of meaning. Both its formal and physical structures, as well as the norms and values by which it is governed, flow over everything that happens and is produced within it. They determine the terms

and conditions in which the teaching-learning processes are developed in the school's ecosystem; they create conditions to guide teaching, interpersonal, internal and external relationships in a certain direction.

How this ecosystem is organized depends on whether interactions open to the other and the inclusion of all its members take place or, on the contrary, generate mechanisms of discrimination, exclusion and failure (p.59). Authors such as [17], [6] and [7] agree that educational inclusion and success must be based on a new conceptualization of education and teaching and new ways of teaching and learning. This humanistic approach to education aims to create increasingly inclusive schools that cater for the diversity of the student body with measures that allow them to achieve educational performance and school success.

1.2. The Mus-E program

The Mus-E Programme, which has been implemented in Europe for almost 30 years (Bern-Switzerland, 1994), began in Extremadura in 1996 through an agreement between the Ministry of Education and Science and the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation. It was established for the first time in Extremadura in one of the seven pilot schools throughout Spain that are pioneers in this great experience, the "Santa Engracia" School in Badajoz. The Mus-E Programme is aimed at eradicating inequalities in education through creative methodologies based on the use of art as a methodological tool within the schools themselves, in line with the Chilean initiative of the Schools of Culture and Artistic Dissemination of Chile [23] but which depend on the Spanish Ministry of Education and are distributed throughout the national territory.

Like these, they aim to respond to students with many educational needs derived from ethnic or cultural, religious, educational or any other factors through the development of a common curriculum through the integration and incorporation of the different artistic disciplines (dance, theatre, music, etc.). Among the students participating in the Mus-E Program are those who have a curricular lag of more than two years in the basic instrumental areas, mathematics and language, as well as problems related to educational and social insertion [24].

The Mus-E is a new way of working on curricular content through dance, theatre, or music, allowing the creation of a teaching model where the educational and formal are fused with the artistic and creative, allowing the contents and objectives to be approached in a more comprehensive and meaningful way, which favours at the same time working with tutors and families to bring them closer to this school project. In which all members of the educational and social community are involved. Mus-E students come from disadvantaged socio-cultural contexts and are schooled in Preferential Educational Care Centres (hereinafter CAEP), usually located in neighbourhoods with few social, educational, cultural and

leisure resources or in rural areas. These students are characterised by the ethnic and cultural diversity they present, among which the gypsy, Maghreb or Moroccan ethnic groups stand out as the majority. The Mus-E educational centers are located in neighbourhoods or urban and rural areas with few resources, where there are problems of neighborhood coexistence and social problems derived from unemployment and/or unemployment, or job insecurity, an aspect that, on many occasions, forces families of students enrolled in these centers to work in the underground economy or temporary jobs linked to the countryside agriculture and livestock, preferably. On the other hand, there is a significant population of families that survive thanks to the receipt of assistance social and housing aid.

Currently, all the CAEPs in Extremadura have been integrated into the Programme for the Improvement of Educational Performance and Inclusion since 2015 as measure 4 of the Comprehensive Plan for the Promotion of Educational Success and the Reduction of Early School Leaving, but not all these centres participate in the Mus-E Programme.

In the CAEPs that also participate in the Mus-E Programme, there have always been high rates of early school leaving and school absenteeism, and therefore, on many occasions, these centres have been interpreted by civil society as ghettos, in addition to schooling a very large population of immigrants, due to the socio-cultural environment in which the educational centre is circumscribed characterized by social marginalization in its multiple manifestations (unemployment and/or unemployment, health-related problems, juvenile delinquency).

In this environment, which lacks personal, social, cultural or leisure resources, there is likely more school failure in primary education associated with poor school performance and the situations of absenteeism that arise, especially in students belonging to families who have work-dedication related to street vending and temporary, temporary jobs picking fruit or agricultural work. The novelty of the research lies in the fact that no program has managed to increase educational success rates.

However, with the Mus-E Program, not only has the performance of the most disadvantaged students been favored but also school coexistence has been improved. On the other hand, the Mus-E Programme represents a new methodological challenge for students and their families; through creative strategies based on the use of art, they are able to improve the motivation for the regular attendance of students at the Centre, which will improve family-school relations, and will mean an increase in the educational performance in mathematics and language of the Mus-E students. Students were very likely to leave the education system prematurely without having achieved the educational objectives of the primary education stage.

- In other Autonomous Communities these centres are called Difficult Performance Centres.
- This action is framed within the Comprehensive Plan for the Promotion of Educational Success and the Reduction of Early School Leaving, within the operational framework of the European Social Fund of the Community of Extremadura 2014-2020.

2. Method

All the categories, variables and factors that may be contributing to the increase in educational success and the reduction of school absenteeism have been analysed and will be subjected to comparative analysis from inferential statistics in Mus-E centres and in non-Mus-E centres, following the method of analysis proposed by Cohen et al. [25]. A longitudinal statistical study has been carried out on the evolution of educational success rates in instrumental areas in the Centres of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura, comparing these rates between the 2013-2014 academic year and the 2015-2016 academic year. The aim is to investigate the extent to which the Mus-E Programme contributes to increasing educational success in the areas of mathematics and language. To do this, a descriptive study is shown. Before starting the analysis, the raw data were adjusted to convert them into success ratios by centers.

This allows for a simple and reasonable comparison of data from different schools and different school years. The variables analysed have been the differences in the proportions of passes in each of the instrumental areas (Mathematics and Language) and each of the centres. A principal component analysis has been carried out that has allowed the addition of an auxiliary variable, specifically the mean of these two variables. The last phase of the statistical study consisted of a hypothesis of mean difference. This contrast has been executed following the necessary steps to ensure maximum reliability.

To begin with, as these are small data sets, it was not possible to use Welch's or Student's parametric tests without first analyzing the normality of both samples. After verifying, via the Shapiro-Wilk test, that the samples had a distribution quite far from what would be expected from a normal one (p-value of this test for data from non-Mus-E centers: 0.09476, the p-value for global data: 0.02233), has been applied the Mann-Whitney-Wilcoxon U test of mean difference, obtaining a p-value of 0.03998. These results clearly show that the evolution of educational success in the period analysed has been more favourable in the centres in which the Mus-E programme was being implemented.

3. Results

Using tools more typical of multivariate analysis, the data shown in Tables 2 and 3 are obtained.

Table 2. Mus-E Centers

L2013	M2013	L2015	M2015	DifL1315	DifM1315	Media
63,93	55,74	62,3	63,93	-1,64	8,2	3,28
66,9	69,01	82,52	69,9	15,62	0,89	8,255
78,8	82,07	89,19	89,19	10,38	7,12	8,75
54,61	53,29	58,91	62,02	4,31	8,73	6,52
81,85	81,19	80	77,67	-1,85	-3,52	-2,685
55	57	56,12	58,16	1,12	1,16	1,14
88,37	88,37	80,56	80,56	-7,82	-7,82	-7,82
36,67	26,67	57,14	57,14	20,48	30,48	25,48
49,32	57,53	55,84	54,55	6,53	-2,99	1,77

Note: Authors.

Table 3. Non-Mus-E Centers

L2013	M2013	L2015	M2015	DifL1315	DifM1315	Mean
97,13	97,13	96,05	95,26	-1,08	-1,88	-1,48
72,73	70,91	60,66	60,66	-12,07	-10,25	-11,16
73,63	70,33	76,19	73,81	2,56	3,48	3,02
90,2	85,95	91,28	85,91	1,08	-0,04	0,52
88,83	85,44	90,35	83,77	1,52	-1,66	-0,07
83,56	80,14	81,94	77,78	-1,62	-2,36	-1,99
90,98	79,7	87,14	72,86	-3,83	-6,84	-5,335
90,43	88,45	91,27	87,95	0,84	-0,5	0,17
94,64	88,93	93,03	88,15	-1,61	-0,78	-1,195

Note: authors

Where

L2013 is the percentage of passes in the language in the 2013-2014 academic year.

M2013 is the percentage of passes in Mathematics in the 2013-2014 academic year.

L2015 is the percentage of passes in the language in the 2015-2016 academic year.

M2015 is the percentage of passes in Mathematics in the 2015-2016 academic year.

DifL1315 is the difference between L2015 and L2013.

DifM1315 is the difference between M2015 and M2013.

Mean is the mean of these two differences.

In the first analysis, it is observed that the sample means of the variations in educational success are those shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, respectively.

Table 3. Sample means

Mean	Language	Mathematics	Mean
Mus-E Centers	+5,24	+4,69	+4,97
No Mus-e Centers	-1,58	-2,31	-1,95

Source: Authors.

Table 5. Sample standard deviations

Standard Deviations	Language	Mathematics	Mean
Mus-E Centers	9,04	11,23	9,34
No Mus-e Centers	4,40	4,00	4,12

Note: Authors.

This led to thinking that perhaps the Mus-E program, despite not being an Educational Success Program, could be helping to improve results in the centers in which it is implemented. In the second stage, it was verified to what extent we could talk about significant differences in success rates in certain centers between 2013 and 2015. To do this, different thresholds were used to determine whether a difference is significant due to the obvious difference in data variability: the year-on-year differences in the Mus-E centers are much greater than these same differences in the Non-Mus-E centers, as can be seen in the standard deviations of both samples.

It can be observed that the only significant favorable differences (greater than 2%, which is about half of the standard deviation) in non-Mus-E centers occur in only one of the Mus-E centers, while there are two centers in which the differences are significantly unfavorable. However, in two of the Mus-E centres analysed, there are increases in educational success of more than 5% in both instrumental areas, while there are four others in which this increase occurs in only one of these areas. Only in one of these nine centers is there a significant negative difference.

Based on the initial hypothesis that the Mus-E Programme favours the educational success of the basic instrumental areas (mathematics and language), the evolution of educational success in the centres in which the Mus-E programme is developed has not been the same as in the centres in which it is not, so an analysis of the difference between educational success between the 2015-2016 academic year and the academic year has been carried out 2013-2014 categorized by the qualitative variable Mus-E. The results that have been obtained are in line with what could be

expected before the study is carried out. 3 Without this assessment of the thresholds, for example, setting a threshold of 3%, only significant negative differences would have been found in non-Mus-E centres.

4. Conclusion

The starting budget was based on the suspicion that the Educational Centres that develop the Mus-E programme progressively increase the educational success rates throughout the academic years, with special emphasis on the instrumental areas, and decrease the rates of school absenteeism over the three academic years analysed. The results obtained show that this hypothesis is confirmed since the development of the Mus-E Programme in the centres studied has increased the performance in language and mathematics of students who participate in Mus-E centres in relation to those who do not participate.

Bearing in mind that success does not only depend on an analysis of school performance, have also tried to make known the relationship between the Mus-E program and educational success in basic instrumental areas related to the areas of mathematics and language.

However, it is of special interest to achieve better results, to open new lines Future of research related to the use of active and inclusive methodologies in the classroom and their link with educational success and with the academic performance of students, as well as to analyse other indicators such as the control and monitoring of school absenteeism, coexistence, teacher training or family-school participation that would offer a new scenario on whether they are related to absenteeism and school in this type of socially disadvantaged schools.

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