Educational Management from Homogeneity to Diversity in Teacher Training

Vladimir ENACHESCU[1]
Camelia STAICULESCU[2]

Abstract

Teacher training and development are essential components of providing quality education to diverse and heterogeneous beneficiary populations. The study by Silvija Markic and Simone Abels delves into the impact of teacher training and development programs on teachers' views and attitudes towards diversity in the classroom. The results of their analysis indicate that such programs can significantly enhance teachers' ability to meet the needs of diverse students. Similarly, Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben, and Vinz's study also highlights the importance of teacher education and professional development in fostering an inclusive classroom environment that celebrates diversity.

These studies highlight the importance of continuing education for teachers, especially in an increasingly diverse world. In addition to these studies, in our article we cited other results from the scientific environment so that we can highlight the fundamental elements and concern for the effective training of teaching staff in relation to contemporary challenges. In today's social, geopolitical, economic and technological context, education is constantly changing. The mobility of population groups is extremely fluid and fast, and one of the consequences is oriented towards educational systems that are placed in a position to respond to challenges such as cultural, spiritual and linguistic diversity and to build solutions that overcome traditional barriers. In our article, we explore these barriers and summarize potential solutions so that we can build a clear and coherent framework of a system that can meet contemporary expectations.

1. To what extent does initial training help future teachers to meet the challenge of student diversity in schools?

The topic of student diversity in schools is one that has gained increased attention in recent years. With the changing demographics of the student population, it is important to consider how initial teacher education prepares educators for this

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[1] Vladimir Enachescu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, vladimir.enachescu @dppd.ase.ro
[2] Camelia Staiculescu, Bucharest University of Economic Studies, camelia.staiculescu @dppd.ase.ro

challenge. Researchers such as Øivind Varkøy and Lani Florian (2012) have emphasized the importance of recognizing and capitalizing on diversity in education, while others such as Cochran-Smith and Loughran J (2002) have emphasized the need for teacher training programs to address this issue. In addition, Van Driel & Berry's (2012) work emphasizes the importance of pedagogical content knowledge to help teachers meet the needs of diverse audiences. While initial training can provide teachers with a foundation for addressing the issue of diversity, it is important to continue ongoing professional development in order to effectively manage this complex issue in the classroom. In practice, these visions that we consider sectoral are actually visions generated from experience but also on a cultural background with a high character of specific identity of the researchers, the advantage being generated by the convergent nature of these points of view. It is also part of the corporate social responsibility to assure a high integration of people coming from different cultures, with different values or perspectives and having a performant management of the stakeholders (Cristache, et al. 2019).

The question of whether initial training prepares teachers with the necessary skills to effectively manage work with the diverse student populations found in many schools today is a complex and nuanced one. While some specialists, such as Øivind Varkøy and Lani Florian (2012), argue that initial training is inadequate in this regard, others, such as Cochran-Smith, Loughran J and Van Driel & Berry (2012), argue that training programs have evolved to incorporate strategies of promotion. pursuing diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Despite these differing perspectives, the consensus seems to be that there is still room for improvement in this area and that continuing professional development is essential for teachers to continue to grow and adapt to the ever-changing needs of their students. In this context, we also understand the concerns regarding the extension of the pedagogical practice periods for the training period of the teaching staff, but also regarding the mentoring of the beginning teaching staff. These are actually ways to support, but they can also convey the idea of insufficient training in the current system.

Silvija Markic and Simone Abels (2012) offer insights into how teachers can best address the diverse needs of their students. Through their research, they found that fully training teachers by providing them with a diverse set of strategies, tools, and techniques can make a significant difference in their ability to tailor instruction to individual students' learning needs. Their conclusions were strengthened by the contributions of Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben and Vinz (2007), who emphasized the importance of understanding the differences that exist within beneficiary groups.

Educators must address the heterogeneity of current beneficiary groups (made up of diverse populations) to ensure equal educational opportunities for all students. Practically, the importance of the Krell, Riedmüller, Sieben and Vinz (2007) model is highlighted, which provides a broad framework for teacher training that supports the development of intercultural competence. This model encourages teachers to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds, values and beliefs, while respecting and valuing diverse perspectives. In practice, the need for continuous

teacher training and development is emphasized to ensure that educators are effective in supporting diverse student populations.

2. The transformation of teacher training programs from homogeneity to diversity

The transformation of teacher education programs from homogeneity to diversity has become a prominent topic in the academic sphere. Research studies by Trautmann and Wischer, Helmke and Weinert, Leiprecht and Lutz, and Burns and Shadoian-Gersing have emphasized the need for teacher education programs to incorporate a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. Sliwka highlights the importance of preparing teachers to work in multicultural environments and the implications for effective pedagogical practices. As teacher education programs continue to evolve, it is important to recognize the value of diversity in educating teachers who are prepared to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

Ideas postulated by Trautmann & Wischer, Helmke & Weinert, Leiprecht & Lutz, Burns & Shadoian-Gersing, and Sliwka (2007) suggest that diversifying teacher education programs can lead to better student outcomes. Studies show that teachers who are exposed to diverse perspectives and experiences are more likely to be effective in classrooms with diverse student populations. However, implementing diversity in teacher education is not without its challenges, such as resistance from traditional teacher education programs and ensuring that diversity is more than just a checkbox in the curriculum. Despite the obstacles, it is clear that a move towards greater diversity in teacher education is crucial to creating effective and inclusive learning environments for all students. This holistic approach to teacher education promises to create a dynamic workforce equipped to meet the diverse needs of students in today's evolving classroom environment.

Educational reformer Grant Wiggins states that: "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire". In other words, effective teaching is not just about imparting information to students, but rather about instilling a love of learning that will last a lifetime. This sentiment reflects current principles in education, as outlined by researchers such as Brian Feyerer (2007), who emphasize that teaching should be student-centered, academically rigorous, and connected to the real world. However, as educators know all too well, putting these principles into practice can present practical dilemmas. Therefore, teacher education programs must impart not only content knowledge, but also the skills and strategies needed to apply these principles in the classroom.

The dilemma in practice is that the normative vision cannot be fully realized in the current school system. There is a significant gap between theory and practice. Feyerer (2007) suggests a number of principles that teachers should try to extend in practice (see Table 1) in order to be able to manage the diversity of students they encounter in their classrooms and to be able to effectively approach the normative perspective. More cooperation and less competition, more work in group

activities and less individual work, etc. have proven to be of real use in inclusive classrooms. As Feyerer (2007) notes, "education involves the coordinated effort of many stakeholders." It thus emphasizes the importance of collaboration and mutual support in achieving better education. It is important that teachers implement these principles gradually for good acceptance by students. For some beneficiaries it may be useful to work in correspondence with the column represented by "Competition" in Table 1.

Principles of teaching

Table 1

Competition	Cooperation
Individual work	Team and group work
Selection	Support
ASSESSMENT	Feedback
External differentiation	Inner differentiation
Focused on content	Learner-centered
COURSES	project

Source: Feyerer, 2007

Our vision, however, does not contradict the elements already known from Feyerer's (2007) position, but comes to operationalize this perspective in a cursiveness related to contemporary requirements, as shown in Table 2

The cursive model of training

Table 2

Language development Acquisition of specialized language	Development of learning skills Development of theoretical notions	Identifying the sources of updating the information. Developing the thinking system	Operationalization of information	Specialization / Professionalization
Development of technological skills				
Observation / support / counseling / psychopedagogical intervention				

Source: Enachescu & Staiculescu

3. Multicultural training of teaching staff

The topic of multicultural teacher education has attracted increasing attention in the academic community in recent decades. Jenks et al. (2019) argue that it is essential that teacher education programs provide comprehensive and meaningful training in addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom. Grant and Sleeter (2017) similarly emphasized the importance of preparing future teachers to engage in working with diverse student populations. A critical aspect of this training involves examining teachers' beliefs and biases in order to develop more culturally accessible and relevant pedagogical practices. As such,

there is an imperative need for teacher education programs to incorporate multicultural education into their curricula to better serve both students and current communities.

The findings provided by Jenks et al. (2019), Grant, and Sleeter (2017) shed light on the challenges and complexities involved in preparing future teachers for multicultural classrooms. One of the key points of discussion revolves around teachers' beliefs, which can play a significant role in shaping teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards students from different cultural backgrounds. As a result, teacher education programs have begun to emphasize the importance of developing cultural competence among future teachers. Through contextualized learning activities, pedagogical practices, and community-based learning experiences, teacher education programs aim to prepare teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to create inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments in classrooms.

Jenks et al. (2017) state that multicultural teacher education aims to "enable teachers to understand the cultural backgrounds and experiences of their students and to promote positive learning environments that are inclusive of all ethnic groups". Grant and Sleeter (2011) further elaborate on the importance of addressing teacher beliefs, stating that "teachers' beliefs and biases can have a significant impact on their ability to effectively teach diverse student populations." As such, teacher education programs must prioritize multicultural education and provide teachers with the tools and resources to cultivate culturally responsive teaching practices.

An interesting approach is given by the emphasis on seven key elements of teacher preparation, which Clare Kosnik and Clive Beck have identified as essential for effective teacher education. Elements include coursework, hands-on experiences, differentiated learning, technology integration, pedagogical content knowledge, reflective practice, and collaboration. All these elements must be integrated into a coherent vision of teaching that prioritizes the development of well-rounded professionals who can teach in diverse educational contexts with confidence and competence. A strong focus on these priorities will build a foundation for teacher education that produces graduates who are ready to motivate and educate the next generation.

Acknowledging the ever-changing universality of education, it is essential to have a clear and coherent vision of teaching that encompasses the skills and knowledge needed to succeed as an educator. This vision should include elements such as content knowledge, pedagogy, student diversity, and classroom management. It is therefore essential that teacher education programs prioritize these elements, ensuring that they have a rich curriculum that provides teachers with the necessary foundation for their future careers.

4. Perspectives on the Evolution and Dynamics of Diversity in School

In recent decades, the landscape of education has undergone significant transformation, particularly in terms of diversity and inclusivity. Through the examination of shifting demographic trends, policy changes, and practical

implementation of diversity initiatives within educational institutions, we must recognize the importance of both the advances and challenges in achieving equitable access to education for all students.

The demographic composition of schools has become increasingly diverse due to a variety of factors, including immigration, changing birth rates, and globalization. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the racial and ethnic diversity of the student population in the United States has been steadily increasing, with minority students now representing more than half of the total student body. This shift necessitates a reevaluation of educational practices to ensure that all students, regardless of their background, receive a quality education. Thus, a permanent dynamic is observed regarding the multicultural component in terms of student classes. This dynamic is one that takes place in a spiral, the minority tending to balance the percentage of representation in order to later impose itself in relation to the majority.

One significant outcome of these demographic changes is the rise in the number of English language learners (ELLs). Programs such as bilingual education have been implemented to address the specific needs of these students. A case study on the implementation of bilingual education in a diverse urban school district demonstrates the success of this program in supporting ELLs and fostering a more inclusive learning environment. The study highlights how bilingual education not only helps students acquire English proficiency but also validates their native languages and cultures, contributing to their overall academic and social development. The possibility of studying in the mother tongue, other than the language of the majority population, even if it has an important role in the preservation of traditional values, can equally contribute to the construction of individual limitations regarding socio-professional insertion.

In response to the growing diversity in schools, various policies have been introduced to promote inclusivity and equity in education. Sleeter's work on multicultural education emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum and creating a classroom environment that respects and values all students. Similarly, Nieto's research on equity and social justice in education advocates for policies that address systemic inequalities and provide all students with the resources and opportunities they need to succeed.

One example of successful policy implementation can be seen in a rural school that has integrated culturally responsive teaching practices. By recognizing and valuing the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences, this school has created a supportive and engaging learning environment. Culturally responsive teaching involves adapting instructional methods to meet the diverse needs of students, incorporating their cultural references into the curriculum, and fostering a sense of belonging and respect. This study, in much more detail, is presented in a current work (Naz, Dr & Hadayat, Hina & Assistant, Ali & Muhammad, Javed & Aftab, Muhammad (2024). The Importance of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices in Promoting Inclusive Classrooms 5. 909-925.) from which emerges the idea that conducting more investigations on how culturally inclusive teaching

strategies persist within students across time in terms of the intellectual and emotional facets of a learner could provide more insights into the long-term impact of the educational methods.

The practical implementation of diversity initiatives in schools involves a combination of policy enforcement, teacher training, and community engagement. A comprehensive diversity and inclusion policy at a high school actively promotes acceptance and understanding among students from various cultural, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds. This policy includes measures such as anti-bullying programs, diversity clubs, and workshops that educate students and staff about the importance of inclusivity.

Teacher training is another critical component in the successful implementation of diversity initiatives. Educators need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge to address the diverse needs of their students effectively. Professional development programs that focus on cultural competency, implicit bias, and inclusive teaching strategies can help teachers create a more equitable and supportive classroom environment. Because for an elastic educational system, prepared to respond to the increasingly diverse and complex challenges coming from society, we need motivated, well-trained teachers with a reflective attitude. This type of teaching staff must go through a training program adapted to everyday reality, also supported by inspired teachers.

Community engagement also plays a vital role in promoting diversity and inclusion in schools. By involving parents, local organizations, and community leaders in the educational process, schools can build a more inclusive environment that reflects the values and needs of the broader community.

5. Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the progress made in promoting diversity and inclusion in schools, several challenges remain. Cultural differences and language barriers can create obstacles to effective communication and understanding between students, teachers, and parents. Additionally, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for all students requires addressing systemic issues such as funding disparities and unequal distribution of resources.

A comparison of two schools in different regions, one urban and one suburban, illustrates the unique challenges and opportunities for diversity and inclusion in different educational contexts. (Rong, Xue & Brown, Frank. (2002). Editorial Immigration and Urban Education in the New Millennium: The Diversity and the Challenges. Education and Urban Society - EDUC URBAN SOC. 34. 123-133. 10.1177/0013124502034002001.) The urban school, with its diverse student population, faces challenges related to overcrowding and limited resources. In contrast, the suburban school, while less diverse, has more resources but may struggle with creating an inclusive environment for the few minority students it serves.

The evolution and dynamics of diversity in school settings are complex and multifaceted. While significant progress has been made in promoting inclusivity and equity in education, there is still much work to be done. By continuing to implement and refine diversity initiatives, schools can create an environment that supports the academic and social development of all students. To further this goal, educators, policymakers, and community members must work together to address the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by an increasingly diverse student population.

For those interested in exploring how these principles can be applied to their own educational contexts, we invite you to book a call with one of our experts. Together, we can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

6. Conclusion

The post-covid era has brought significant changes in the field of education, especially in the training of future teachers. With the increased focus on technology, there is a growing need to diversify teaching methodologies and accommodate different learning styles. Findings from recent studies have highlighted the importance of incorporating strategies that promote diversity and inclusion into teacher education programs. As a result, recommendations were made for the development of curriculum and instructional materials that foster cultural awareness and sensitivity. By taking a multifaceted approach, practitioners can better prepare future teachers for a setting that reflects the diverse student populations they will encounter.

The current context and society in general expect teachers to respond to the needs and expectations of their diverse students and to possess a proactive approach in adapting to the ever-evolving educational environment. Thus, in the light of the post-pandemic era, the training of future teachers must be updated by strategically capitalizing on some of the technological advances. This can be achieved through the wider incorporation of virtual learning facilities such as open online courses (MOOCs). Through this paradigm shift, it is essential to highlight the need for teacher education institutions to formulate and implement newly designed recommendations aimed at promoting a more diverse and inclusive teacher education.

Finally, moving from homogeneity to diversity in teacher education is crucial to creating an equitable and accountable learning environment.

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