

1.1. Practices of inclusion in formal and non-formal education contexts

SP - (18819) - SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AS A MEANS FOR INCLUSION: LISTENING TO THE VOICES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

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Short Abstract

Developing an inclusive education that responds to students' diverse needs and talents by creating an environment in which every student participates in meaningful learning experiences and engages in rich social experiences with others, is on the agenda today. And indeed, research has shown that the possibility of engaging in activities with their peers has enormous benefits, both for learning and for students' social and emotional development (e.g., Bukowski et al., 2007; Wentzel et al., 2021). However, at the same time, some studies have been showing that students identified with SEN have greater difficulties in engaging in positive social experiences with peers (Freire & Moreira, 2021; Gamboa et al., 2021) and lower probability of educational success, as their specific needs associated with their unique condition are not always recognized and met (Groce, 2004). Social support has been pointed out in the literature as fundamental for positive social experiences; it is defined as "the type of assistance/help that individuals receive or expect to receive from those who come into contact with them in any way" (Papadopoulos et al., 2015). Social support thus refers to a set of behaviors towards a receiver, namely providing emotional support and concrete help, giving information and practical suggestions. However, these behaviors may have different effects on the receiver; they may be considered useful or otherwise have a negative effect (Sarason & Sarason, 2006). In addition, social support gains meaning in the context of specific dyadic relationships between giver and receiver (Sarason & Sarason, 2006). Within the school context, the way students build the difference make them experience emotions of anger or sadness in relation to students needing specific support, and to display behaviors consistent with these emotions, such as rejection and refusal to provide support, or sympathy and social support (Juvonen, 1991). Thus, it is essential to raise awareness about students with SEN needs and how they can be met and for that it is essential to know students' perspective on what kind of social support they receive and would like to receive. The goal of this communication is to identify behaviors that students with SEN perceive as useful and that generate self-worth feelings, or rather that they perceive as useless and having negative effects on their emotional well-being and self-esteem (Dubois et al., 2002). For this, 16 students (aged between 6 and 18 years) identified with SEN were interviewed. The results show that not accommodating the teaching-learning process to students needs and characteristics is a negative form of practical support and that excluding students with SEN from peer games and activities based on protection arguments is understood as a form of negative emotional support. These and other results will be discussed in the light of the construction of an inclusive school and how to intervene in the social and physical context of schools in order to improve the experiences of students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

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