



INCLUSION AND INTERCULTURALITY: TWO PATHS THAT ARE INTERWOVEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Danilo Marcelo Diaz Quichimbo^{1*}, Jeferson Dario Crespo Asqui², Veronica De Lourdes Lligalo Maliza³, Miguel Eduardo Vásconez Campos⁴

Abstract:

The National University of Education UNAE is a public university in Ecuador, dedicated to the training of professionals in the field of education with an impact on the transformation of the educational quality of the country and region. Therefore, the objective was to analyze the inclusive and intercultural processes that occur in an academic cycle of the Basic Education career offered by UNAE. As a research question: How do the components of inclusion and interculturality affect the training of education professionals at UNAE? The paradigm was based on socio-criticism from the questions that human beings are diverse in their individual and social aspects. Regarding the approach, we worked with a mixed approach that combined quantitative and qualitative aspects, from the identification of data, its processing, tabulation to the interpretation of the results. The method used was action research that contributed with a sequence of phases to determine the incidence of inclusion and interculturality in teacher training. Observation and survey techniques contributed to the precision of various realities. The results indicate that inclusive and intercultural processes are promoted at UNAE; However, they must be extended to the entire academic community in such a way that they contribute to a fair and equitable society. In conclusion, it is highlighted that inclusion and interculturality are essential and transversal components in the theory and practice of teacher training.

Keywords: Training, inclusion, interculturality, practice, society.

¹*Máster Universitario en Educación Inclusiva e Intercultural Universidad Nacional de Educación UNAE, Ecuador danilo.diaz@unae.edu.ec <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1073-5524>

² Máster Universitario en Biología Universidad Nacional de Educación UNAE, Ecuador jeferson.crespo@unae.edu.ec <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0646-2068>

³ Magíster en Derechos Humanos Universidad Nacional de Educación UNAE, Ecuador veronica.lligalo@unae.edu.ec <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9947-7960>

⁴ Magíster en Educación Inclusiva Universidad Nacional de Educación UNAE, Ecuador miguel.vasconez@unae.edu.ec <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6644-3918>

***Corresponding Author:** Danilo Marcelo Diaz Quichimbo

*Máster Universitario en Educación Inclusiva e Intercultural Universidad Nacional de Educación UNAE, Ecuador danilo.diaz@unae.edu.ec <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1073-5524>

DOI: 10.53555/ecb/2024.13.02.24

Introduction

The National University of Education UNAE is a public university in Ecuador, dedicated to the training of professionals in the field of education with an impact on the transformation of the educational quality of the country and region. Its pedagogical model highlights attention to diversity and the promotion of interculturality as essential elements in the training of future teachers. The practical and theoretical components are essential in the training of students, to this are added elements of research, links with society that allow the student to develop various competencies, skills to respond to the needs of a complex society, diversity and the digital age.

Its student population is diverse, this is reflected in cultural identity, gender, age, ideology, place of origin, religion, which implies taking on constant challenges from the teaching staff. In this sense, this research aims to analyze the inclusive and intercultural processes that occur in the sixth cycle of the Basic Education career offered by UNAE, starting from the recognition of educational diversity, as a source of cultural and epistemic wealth. The research question that guided this study was: How do the components of inclusion and interculturality affect the training of education professionals at UNAE?

Interculturality is presented as a form of recognition and respect for the cultural diversity present in the classroom; Therefore, it promotes healthy coexistence, the dialogue of knowledge, the rescue of customs, traditions of the peoples and in this way mutual enrichment is guaranteed. In the studies by Paredes and Carcausto (2022), they estimate that interculturality is reflected in communication and the relationship between cultures; It implies an equitable exchange of knowledge and experiences and goes beyond contact between cultures.

Along these lines, the promotion of interculturality also encompasses the appreciation of the religious, socio-economic and linguistic differences of the students in training, and this makes it possible for each individual to be unique and diverse in society, with skills and qualities in solving different problems. For this reason, Hernández Hernández (2020) suggests that it is necessary to work with students to promote coexistence, given that there are inconveniences to interact and it is essential to raise awareness about empathy, support each other through dialogues and inclusion in daily study activities.

For this reason, the challenge for educational institutions lies in promoting spaces for the

promotion of interculturality from different scenarios and actors, all of this reflected in the promotion of empathy for diversity, cultural sensitivity, the mutual exchange of knowledge, and the establishment of cultural bridges that guarantee the comprehensive education of students. In this sense, Benito (2019) emphasizes that interculturality must be a transversal aspect of training, that is, it must be present in the competencies and contents.

On the other hand, referring to interculturality in education is equivalent to promoting inclusive, equitable spaces, social justice, tolerance and respect for diversity, in which everyone feels an active part of the didactic process. In the studies of Carmona, Santiago et al. (2019) report that it is relevant to incorporate pedagogical strategies based on interculturality, inclusion and in which families participate as an essential element of the educational act that requires the commitment and guidance of parents in the development of academic tasks.

On the other hand, educational inclusion implies that all students have learning opportunities and that it is of quality, with resources, scenarios and learning environments that enhance their skills, abilities and competencies; In other words, it is about embracing diversity as an accumulation of wealth represented in the knowledge, experiences and experiences of each educational subject. For this reason, since the conception of Paz Maldonado (2020), it is important to strengthen continuous training programs for teachers, motivate the participation of all students, respect rights, generate inclusive policies, and raise awareness among the university community on issues of inclusion and educational diversity.

Along these lines, educational inclusion strengthens emotions, self-esteem, and interpersonal relationships in students by highlighting processes such as understanding, respect, empathy, tolerance; In other words, processes of discrimination, exclusion, prejudice and stereotypes that affect the quality of the educational act are left behind. From the perspective of Valdés-Morales et al. (2019), they state that educational policies must promote an inclusive culture as a source of knowledge in which educational leadership is generated and all actors participate.

In this sense, the National University of Education is conceived as a space that promotes interculturality, inclusion, respect for diversity,

protected by its Pedagogical Model, so that each student develops their potential, skills, learns to learn and unlearn in a complex society, of the digital age, with various problems to solve and with enormous challenges to assume.

Method

a) Paradigm

The paradigm on which this study was based was based on the socio-critical from the questioning that human beings are diverse in their individual and social aspects, which emphasizes to embrace diversity as a source of knowledge and for continuous improvement. Along these lines, Sinche Crispin et al. (2023) report that this paradigm emphasizes that cooking is the result of collective interactions, based on the natural needs of human beings and in which social and historical aspects intervene.

(b) Approach

Regarding the approach, we worked with the mixed approach that combined quantitative and qualitative aspects, from the identification of data, its processing, tabulation to the interpretation of the results. In the studies of Acosta Faneite (2023) he states that this approach is divided into two phases: the one is the quantitative one that involves the collection of numerical information and the second that refers to the qualitative one expressed in the collection of subjective and descriptive information.

(c) Method

The method used was action research, which contributed with a sequence of phases to determine the impact of inclusion and interculturality in the training of UNAE teachers. In the words of Cebrián (2020), he emphasizes that this method promotes spaces for collaboration, reflection, and mutual support in which knowledge and curricular processes are acquired.

d) Techniques and Tools

Observation and survey techniques contributed in this study to the accuracy of various realities around the promotion of inclusion and interculturality at UNAE. On the other hand, the checklist, the questionnaire was constituted as the instruments for collecting information in the students of the sixth cycle of the Basic Education career of the UNAE.

(e) Participants

The participants of this study correspond to the 28 students of parallel 2 of the sixth cycle of the Basic Education career, during the period from April to September 2023, of which 18 correspond to the female gender and 10 to the male gender, they mostly identify with the mestizo culture, followed by the Cañari and Kichwa, there is a predominance of visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles; As far as ages range from 19 to 26 years old, religious, ideological, and linguistic beliefs are diverse. They are motivated by the incursion of ICTs, work outside the classroom, teamwork, and the application of active methodologies.

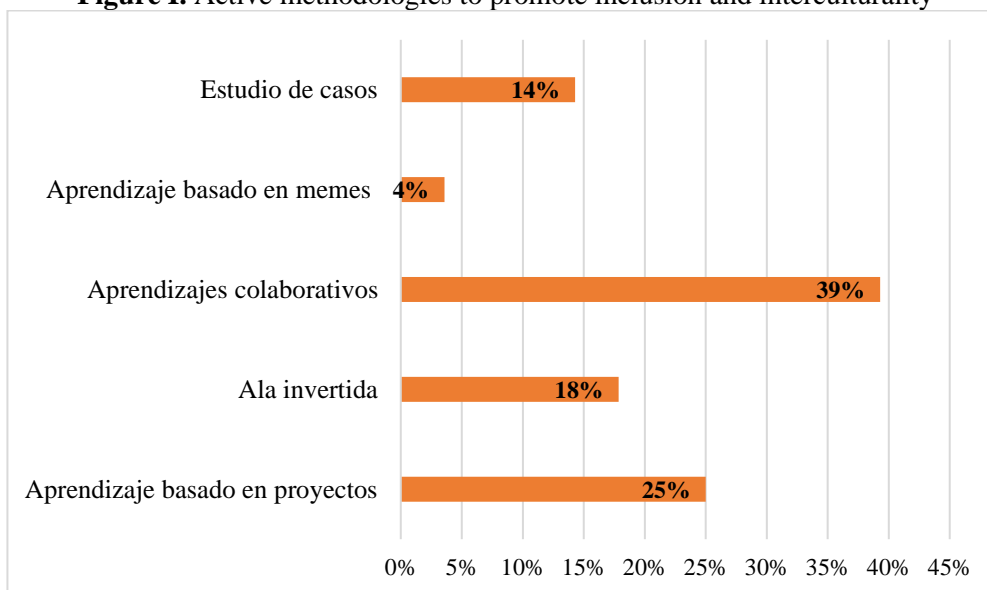
(f) Procedure

The research instruments were designed and elaborated: the checklist addressed to teachers and the survey addressed to students, in relation to the variables of inclusion and interculturality in education, later these instruments were validated by experts with experience and training in the area of study, all this through a rubric with aspects in relation to relevance, Writing, coherence.

These instruments were transferred to Google Forms and their subsequent application to the subjects of the study. Next, the data and information supported by Excel were processed, in which the results were analyzed and the conclusions about the two study variables were raised.

Results:

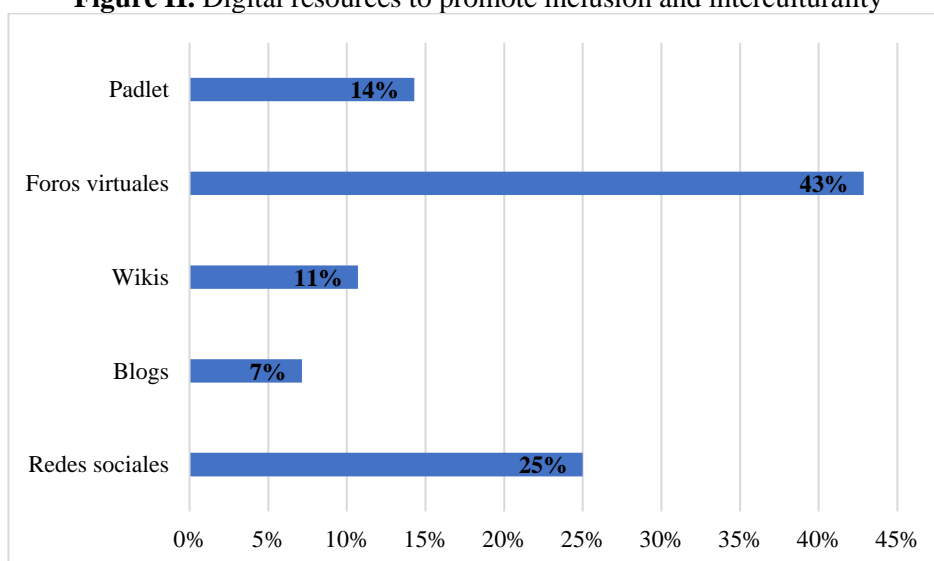
It is important to mention that the UNAE in its Pedagogical Model emphasizes the application of active methodologies, the use of digital platforms that promote collaboration, inclusion, interculturality in the teaching-learning process. That is why, after applying the survey to the students of the sixth cycle of the Basic Education career, it is demonstrated from the perspective of the students that teachers do use methodologies to promote inclusion and interculturality in the classroom and among the most stands out is that of collaborative learning. followed by project-based learning; For this reason, it is important that these methodologies are promoted, as they are a source of wealth of learning, experiences and experiences due to the dynamics of involving all the members of the group:

Figure I. Active methodologies to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation. In original language English .

On the other hand, technology also plays a leading role in the classroom and is a transversal tool in the training of future teachers, which is why students recognize that educational forums and social networks are spaces to promote processes of

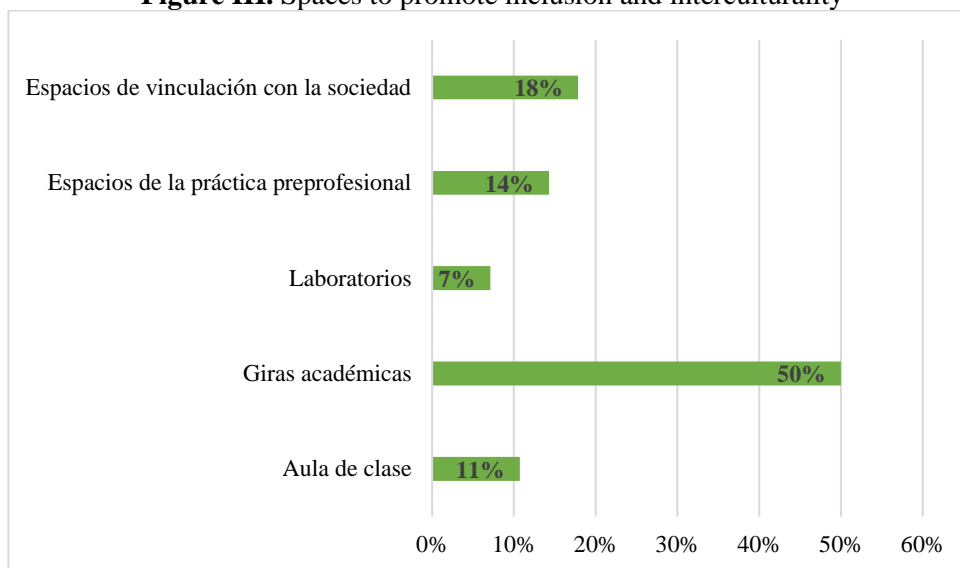
inclusion and interculturality; However, it is important that digital resources are associated with educational planning processes in order to ensure that a didactic sequence is successfully followed and the learning objectives are met:

Figure II. Digital resources to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation.

With regard to the spaces that favor inclusion and interculturality in teacher training, academic tours stand out, followed by spaces for linking with society; Therefore, these spaces are promoted within the curricular planning of each teacher and,

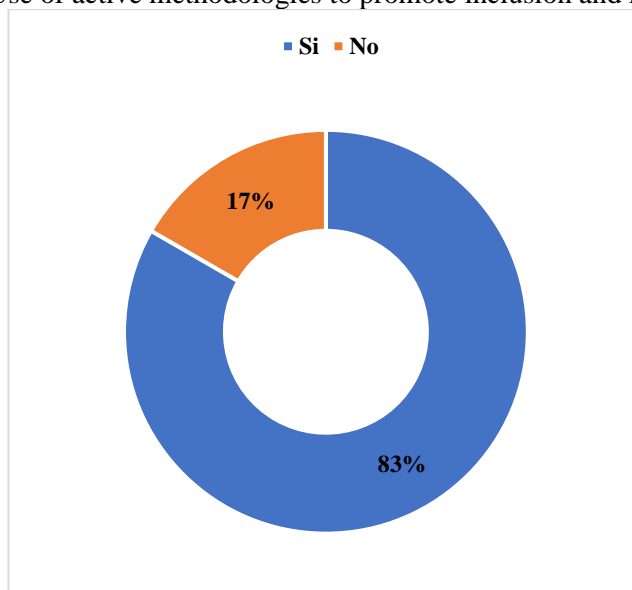
on the other hand, conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents are consolidated. This also reflects that learning is done not only in the classroom, but also outside of it:

Figure III. Spaces to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation. In original language English .

At the same time, through the instrument of the checklist aimed at sixth-cycle teachers, the promotion of interculturality in inclusion in the classrooms was ratified, through active methodologies, digital resources and didactic spaces. Along these lines, most teachers conceive

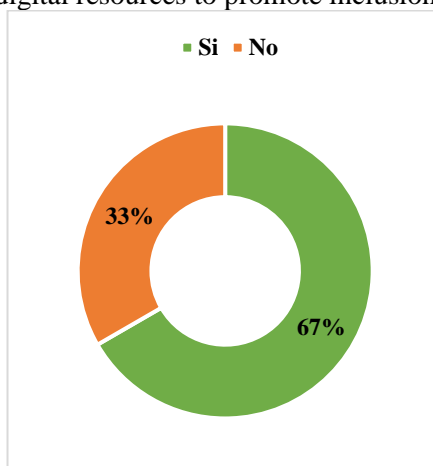
that they do use active methodologies to promote the principles of inclusion and interculturality; However, they require greater capacity to meet students whose specific educational needs are:

Figure IV. Use of active methodologies to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation. In original language English .

On the other hand, technologies also play a leading role in the work of the teacher to mediate learning, but at the same time it is conceived that they are carriers of spaces to attend to inclusion and interculturality, since through their interfaces students can exchange points of view, experiences,

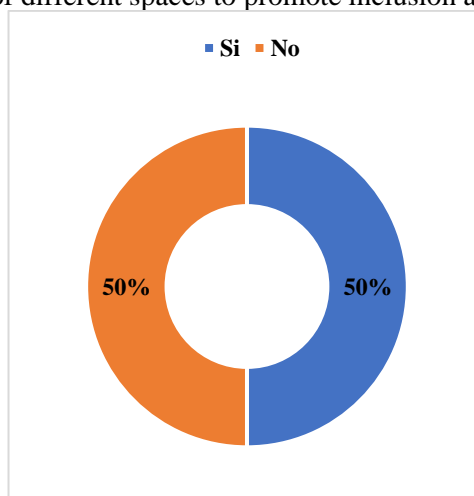
experiences either in synchronous or synchronous times; For this reason, they are flexible when it comes to interacting; However, it is important to take into account their use as they can lead to processes of exclusion and discrimination.

Figure V. Use of digital resources to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation. In original language English .

Along these lines, it is important to know the point of view of teachers regarding the spaces that favor learning and therefore those that promote inclusion and interculturality; For this reason, half of the teachers believe that the spaces within the classroom are ideal for promoting the categories of studies and the other half believe that they are not.

These results also serve as food for thought; however, it must be countered by the perspectives of the students and thus achieve a balance; All this with the aim of taking care of the integrity of each student, their principles, customs, traditions and guaranteeing a quality education and attention to the diversity of the students.

Figure V. Use of different spaces to promote inclusion and interculturality

Source: Authors' own creation. In original language English .

Discussion

Inclusion and interculturality are elements that are recognized in the Pedagogical Model of the UNAE within the training of teachers in the different areas, since the population that characterizes the university is diverse and that makes the customs, traditions, clothing, thoughts of students and teachers respected; For this reason, it is essential to generate strategies and methodologies that open spaces for dialogue and reflection between all cultures. The UNAE is recognized as a basic competence of the teacher, the ability to work in heterogeneous groups, in which empathy, understanding, respect must be developed and, on

the other hand, in one of the pedagogical principles, the promotion of interculturality is valued, that is, the recognition and respect for diversity (National University of Education, 2017).

The presence of digital tools constitutes a means that guide the educational process and also contribute to generate spaces of respect, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity; For this reason, it is essential to use different technological resources that are based on didactic planning to achieve the learning objectives. However, the studies by Camacho et al. (2020) estimate that Latin America faces great challenges around teacher training, since few teachers want to participate in refresher

courses for the appropriation of tools and strategies supported by the use of technology in teaching-learning processes.

On the other hand, stereotypes, exclusion and discrimination are aspects that are increasingly left behind and that the university has been working to eradicate; however, the support and participation of all actors is required in this goal. Along these lines, Cobeñas (2019) is critical when he refers to the fact that students with disabilities receive differentiated activities, sometimes in differentiated scenarios with differentiated teachers and from different approaches; Therefore, inclusive education does not only imply the presence of people with disabilities in school, it implies going further, that is, embracing the diversity of each student as a strength.

Inclusion and interculturality are two fundamental elements in contemporary society that cannot be ignored; That is why the UNAE is constantly working on policies and processes that account for and guarantee their execution. For this reason, it is important to promote spaces of respect for cultural diversity, resources that promote the active participation of all students, strategies that meet the potential and needs of each student. Along these lines, Sepúlveda (2020) is critical in arguing that the state must support with policies and mechanisms to combat language barriers in intercultural processes.

Technological resources play fundamental roles in the educational process and in the promotion of inclusion and interculturality, however, the learning objectives and the didactic process to be followed must be clear. However, from the perspective of Isequilla Alarcón and Martín-Delgado (2021) it is important to take into account the accessibility offered by digital tools for students, on the other hand, the emotional and socio-affective aspect of the student must be taken into account when carrying out an education mediated by digital tools.

On the other hand, it is important to guarantee the active and diverse participation of all educational actors, through different active methodologies, this as a way of understanding inclusion and interculturality as a space in which everyone feels important and contributes from their experiences, experiences, knowledge. In this sense, Muntaner-Guasp et al. (2022) emphasize that active methodologies contribute to the diverse participation of students, depending on their particularities, considering that the barriers come from the context and never from the people.

Conclusions

The processes of inclusion and interculturality at the National University of Education are protected by its Pedagogical Model and therefore spaces are generated in the classrooms to promote them with all educational actors; However, it is important that inclusive good practices are strengthened and promulgated throughout the university community. Collaborative learning, project-based learning, case studies are the active methodologies that, from the perspective of students and teachers, are put into practice at the university and that stand out for their particularities in respect for the opinion of others, the generation of learning, the dialogue of knowledge.

It is important to rely on digital resources such as virtual forums, social networks, Padlet to promote collaborative learning in which the opinion of others is respected and inclusive and intercultural principles are encouraged; All these resources are aligned with educational planning that guarantees a didactic sequencing and the achievement of the learning objectives of each student.

The spaces to generate meaningful learning are not only within the classroom, but also in other scenarios such as academic tours, spaces for linking with society, spaces for pre-professional practice that undoubtedly contribute to embracing educational diversity as a source of cultural, epistemic and social richness.

Bibliography:

1. Acosta Faneite, n.d. (2023). Research approaches in the social sciences. *Revista Latinoamericana Ogmios*, 3(8), 82–95. <https://doi.org/10.53595/rlo.v3.i8.084>
2. Benito, M. J. A. (2019). Literature as the backbone for the implementation of interculturality in the FLE classroom. *Langue(s) & Parole: Journal of French and Romance Philology*, (4), 143-160. <https://raco.cat/index.php/Langue/article/view/367387/461259>
3. Camacho, R., Rivas, C., Gaspar, M., & Quiñonez, C. (2020). Innovation and educational technology in the current Latin American context. *Journal of Social Sciences (Ve)*, XXVI (3), 460-472. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7599957>
4. Carmona Santiago, J., García Ruiz, M., Maiquez Chaves, M. L., & Rodrigo López, M. J. (2019). The impact of family-school relations on the educational inclusion of Roma students: A systematic review. <https://riull.ull.es/xmlui/handle/915/23310>

5. Cebrián, G. (2020). Education for Sustainable Development in the University Curriculum: Cooperative Research-Action with Teachers. *Ibero-American Journal of Higher Education*, 11(30), 99-114. https://www.scielo.org.mx/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S2007-28722020000100099
6. Cobeñas, P. (2019). Educational Exclusion of Persons with Disabilities: A Pedagogical Problem. *REICE. Ibero-American Journal on Quality, Effectiveness and Change in Education*, 18(1), 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.15366/reice2020.18.1.004>
7. Hernández Hernández, D. (2020). Teacher training to promote interculturality in the preschool classroom. *Mexican Journal of Educational Guidance*, 65–73. <https://web.p.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=e21684fd-1185-45f8-97af-84da6e817246%40redis>
8. Isequilla Alarcón, E., & Martín-Delgado, M. (2021). Digital tools applied in the scenario of educational inclusion in the time of COVID-19. *RiiTE Interuniversity Journal of Research in Educational Technology*, (11), 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.6018/riite.490731>
9. Muntaner-Guasp, J. J., Mut-Amengual, B., & Pinya-Medina, C. (2022). Active methodologies for the implementation of inclusive education. *Revista Electrónica Educare*, 26(2), 85-105. <https://dx.doi.org/10.15359/ree.26-2.5>
10. Paz Maldonado, E. (2020). Systematic review: educational inclusion of university students with disabilities in Latin America. *Estudios pedagógicos (Valdivia)*, 46(1), 413-429. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-07052020000100413>
11. Paredes, A., & Carcausto, W. (2022). Interculturality in Basic Education in Latin American Countries: A Systematized Review. *Chakiñan Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, (17), 203-216. <https://doi.org/10.37135/chk.002.17.13>
12. Sepúlveda, C. A. B. (2020). Inclusion and interculturality for the Deaf culture: paths traveled and pending challenges. *IE REDIECH Journal of Educational Research*, 11, 792. <https://doi.org/10.33010/ierierediech.v11i0.792>
13. Sinche Crispin, F. V., Infante Rivera, L. de J., Espinoza Quispe, C. E., Matos Vila, G. S., & Gilvonio Yaranga, F. M. (2023). Implication of social phenomenology and the socio-critical paradigm in university education research. *e-Revista Multidisciplinaria del Saber*, 1, e-RMS01112023. <https://doi.org/10.61286/e-rms.v1i.5>
14. National University of Education. (2017). Pedagogical Model of the National University of Education UNAE. Editorial UNAE. <http://repositorio.unae.edu.ec/handle/56000/560>
15. Valdés-Morales, R., López, V., & Jiménez-Vargas, F. (2019). Educational inclusion in relation to school culture and coexistence. *Education and Educators*, 22(2), 187-211. <https://doi.org/10.5294/edu.2019.22.2.2>