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Scientific articles

Juventudes en riesgo e inclusión social: historias de vida de estudiantes normalistas con discapacidad

Youth at risk and social inclusion: life stories of normal school students with disabilities

Jovens em situação de risco e inclusão social: histórias de vida de alunos com deficiência em escolas regulares

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Resumen

El objetivo de la investigación fue identificar las barreras para el aprendizaje y la participación (BAP) a las que se han enfrentado dos estudiantes con discapacidad auditiva que cursan el nivel de licenciatura en una escuela formadora de docentes en México. El estudio se sustentó en la teoría de la justicia y equidad de Rawls (1971), con énfasis en la equidad, la imparcialidad y el respeto a las libertades fundamentales. La investigación tuvo un enfoque cualitativo, enmarcado en el diseño de historia de vida y estudio de casos, utilizando relatos biográficos y entrevistas a profundidad con apoyo de un intérprete. La información fue analizada a través de la codificación abierta y axial. Entre los resultados se encontró que los estudiantes sordos presentan un bajo nivel de acceso al conocimiento, que existe poca interacción entre docentes y estudiantes, presentándose la necesidad de capacitación de la planta docente en el dominio de la Lengua de Señas Mexicana (LSM) para

lograr una comunicación efectiva en el aula. El estudio contribuye a la literatura de la inclusión educativa, dada la relevancia de las trayectorias de superación que representan los futuros docentes con discapacidad auditiva.

Palabras clave: Barreras para el aprendizaje y la participación (BAP), discapacidad auditiva, educación inclusiva, equidad educativa, Lengua de Señas Mexicana (LSM).

Abstract

The objective of this research was to identify the Barriers to Learning and Participation (BLP) faced by two students with hearing impairments pursuing undergraduate degrees at a teacher training college in Mexico. The study is grounded in Rawls's theory of justice and equity, emphasizing fairness, impartiality, and respect for fundamental freedoms. The research employs a qualitative approach, framed within a life history and case study design, utilizing biographical narratives and in-depth with the support of an interpreter. The data were analyzed through direct and axial coding. Among the findings, it was found that the deaf students exhibit low levels of access to knowledge, limited teacher-student interaction, and a need for faculty training in Mexican Sign Language (LSM) to achieve effective classroom communication. This study contributes to the literature on inclusive education, given the relevance of the example of these future teachers with hearing impairments overcoming challenges.

Keywords: Barriers to learning and participation (BLP), hearing impairment, inclusive education, educational equity, Mexican Sign Language (LSM).

Resumo

O objetivo desta pesquisa foi identificar as barreiras à aprendizagem e participação (BLP) enfrentados por dois estudantes com deficiência auditiva que cursam o ensino superior em uma faculdade de formação de professores no México. O estudo se fundamenta na teoria da justiça e equidade de Rawls, enfatizando a imparcialidade, a justiça e o respeito às liberdades fundamentais. A pesquisa emprega uma abordagem qualitativa, estruturada em um estudo de caso e de história de vida, utilizando narrativas biográficas e entrevistas em profundidade com o auxílio de intérpretes. Os dados foram analisados por meio de codificação direta e axial. Entre as constatações, destacam-se os baixos níveis de acesso ao conhecimento, a interação limitada entre professor e aluno e a necessidade de formação docente em Língua

Gestual Mexicana (LSM) para alcançar uma comunicação eficaz em sala de aula. Este estudo contribui para a literatura sobre educação inclusiva, dada a relevância do exemplo desses futuros professores com deficiência auditiva que superaram desafios.

Palavras-chave: Barreiras à aprendizagem a participação (BLP), deficiência auditiva, educação inclusiva, equidade educacional, Língua Gestual Mexicana (LSM).

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Introduction

Research on at-risk youth and social inclusion processes, particularly in cases of educational exclusion due to disability or social status, is a current necessity in Mexico. This importance is supported by the guidelines established in the National Development Plan and the Sectoral Education Program (2019-2024), which propose actions aimed at eradicating educational inequality and discrimination. Their central purpose is to promote educational inclusion, especially for students from vulnerable communities, such as those with disabilities.

In this context, this paper examines the case of two young teachers in initial training who have hearing impairments, a condition that places them in a vulnerable position within the educational setting. It also analyzes their interaction with a third student, who does not have a hearing impairment and has taken on a support role as an interpreter, standing out for his empathy and willingness to facilitate his classmates' learning process.

From an intercultural perspective, this experience is understood as a form of coexistence based on the recognition of diversity and the building of harmonious relationships among students. Interculturality, in this sense, implies considering different ways of life and worldviews within a framework of social inclusion. This approach aligns with the National Development Plan (2019), which promotes inclusion as a fundamental principle in education.

The study is based on the principles of the New Mexican School, understood as an educational model that places at the center the maximum learning achievement of the students and promotes their integral human development (Secretariat of Public Education, 2022).

Within this framework, the promotion of inclusive education responds to a requirement established in the federal government's public policies, particularly in Cross-Cutting Theme 1 of the National Development Plan, entitled "Gender Equality, Non-

Discrimination, and Inclusion.” This theme stems from a diagnosis that recognizes the persistence of inequalities associated with sex, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status. Consequently, it posits that reducing these gaps demands a coordinated process encompassing the planning, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs, and actions across all sectors and territories. Furthermore, this approach incorporates criteria of gender equality, non-discrimination, life cycle, interculturality, and territorial development. From this perspective, inclusion is established as the guiding principle, summarized in the premise: “leave no one behind” (National Development Plan, 2019).

In this regard, the incorporation of the cross-cutting theme “Gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion” is based on Article 1 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, which establishes that all persons are entitled to the human rights recognized in the Constitution itself. Consequently, the State has the obligation to guarantee their full exercise as a fundamental part of the social contract (National Development Plan, 2019).

According to data from the National Survey on Discrimination (ENADIS, 2017), people with disabilities continue to face barriers to accessing education, particularly women. While 2.7% of the total male population and 3.5% of the female population are illiterate, this deficiency is significantly higher among people with disabilities: 20.7% of men and 21.0% of women.

School attendance gaps highlight the barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing education. While the majority of the population of basic education age attends school (96.1% of boys and 97.2% of girls), only 79.9% of boys with disabilities and 79.0% of girls with disabilities in the same age range do so. This disadvantage persists in later stages, particularly among the 15- to 24-year-old population, who are in upper secondary or higher education, or about to complete their studies. In this group, the situation is even more unfavorable for girls with disabilities, whose school attendance rate is 19.6%, that is, 24.5 percentage points below the national average (ENADIS, 2017).

In teacher training institutions, students with disabilities face barriers to learning and participation (BLP), which limit their acquisition of the knowledge established in the graduate profile. In this context, the admission of students with disabilities to higher education presents a challenge for various institutional stakeholders, including teaching, administrative, and support staff, as well as the student community itself. These conditions affect their educational trajectories, particularly access, retention, and graduation.

This paper presents the case of two students with hearing impairments who have successfully completed their seventh semester. This achievement has been largely due to the support of a classmate, identified by the students themselves as a "mentor," who is fluent in Mexican Sign Language (LSM) and has acted as a mediator between teachers, students, and their peers with hearing impairments during class.

In the undergraduate program under study, a problem has been identified related to the lack of conditions to guarantee equal learning opportunities for these students. In particular, the teachers lack knowledge of Mexican Sign Language (LSM), which has led to processes of integration rather than inclusion. This situation violates fundamental principles such as the right to education, equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and the prevention of violence.

Based on this context, the following research questions arise: How has the educational inclusion process for students with hearing disabilities developed? What barriers to learning and support have influenced their trajectory during teacher training at the normal school?

Accordingly, the research objectives are: a) to analyze the barriers to learning faced by students with hearing disabilities in the final stage of their teacher training; and b) to assess the educational inclusion process based on the support of a peer with mastery of Mexican Sign Language.

Theoretical framework

This research is based on John Rawls's theory of justice (1971), which refers to the equitable distribution of education; that is, inequalities should result in greater benefits for the least advantaged members of society. Rawls (2002, as cited in Bolívar 2005) argues that society should establish equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of family income. In other words, two people with equal will and talents should have the same opportunities for academic success. From this perspective, Rawls (1971) proposes a guiding framework for building a just society, based on principles that offer a normative model of how such a society could be structured, emphasizing equity, fairness, and respect for fundamental freedoms.

Another fundamental aspect of the study is the concept of educational inclusion, which, in the words of Climent (2009, cited in Escribano and Martínez, 2013), is polysemous. This term encompasses several meanings: (a) inclusion related to disability and special educational needs, as in the case of the present study; (b) inclusion as a response to behavioral

problems; (c) inclusion aimed at groups at greater risk of exclusion; (d) inclusion understood as the promotion of a common, non-selective school open to all; and (e) inclusion as a guarantee of the right to education for all people.

At the same time, another theoretical and analytical support is functional interculturality, understood as the recognition of diversity and cultural difference with the goal of inclusion within the established social structure (Walsh, 2009, as cited in Lara, 2009). Therefore, according to Lara (2015), it is necessary to envision a school of pluralities, where multiple voices, perspectives, and experiences converge, and where education empowers and strengthens different ways of being and inhabiting the world.

Sánchez et al. (2019) state that inclusion is a process that should be viewed as a constant pursuit of improvement and innovation to respond more positively to the diversity of students. It is about learning to live with this diversity and making the most of it. For his part, Latapí (2009) addresses the right to education not only in terms of accessibility, but also through participation and the necessary support for students to learn effectively.

According to Campusano (2011), over 90% of the hearing-impaired population does not receive the necessary linguistic stimulation because they are born into hearing families. This situation limits the natural acquisition of a language, since, on the one hand, the parents do not speak sign language and, on the other hand, the children cannot access the spoken Spanish that their parents use.

For their part, Álvarez et al. (2012) describe the difficulties people with disabilities face in adapting to university education. Their results demonstrate the diversity of needs expressed by these students. For example, before entering university, they required the support of a school counselor, a teacher specializing in special educational needs, a sign language interpreter, as well as psychological support and guidance in developing organizational and study skills.

De la Peña (2015) highlights the importance of inclusive education and the role of primary school teachers with specialized training. These professionals can promote diversity and inclusion in their classrooms, contributing to the development of generations more aware of these issues. Consequently, upon reaching secondary and higher education, this would foster the creation of more inclusive environments for people with disabilities.

This research is also grounded in the public policy of the Mexican federal government, specifically in the first cross-cutting theme of the National Development Plan (2019), “Gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion.” This theme acknowledges the

inequalities that exist in the country based on sex, gender, ethnicity, age, disability, and socioeconomic status. It also takes as a reference point Goal 10 of the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO, 2015), which addresses reducing inequalities. From this perspective, discussing educational equity is essential today to ensure that young people with hearing disabilities can complete their professional training.

For its part, the General Law of Federal Education (Chamber of Deputies, 2019), in article 65, section II, states that it is necessary to facilitate the acquisition and learning of Sign Language; section III recommends that deaf students receive education in the languages, modes and means of communication most appropriate to their needs that allow them to reach their maximum academic and social development.

Methodological framework

This research is framed within the qualitative paradigm, as it focuses on understanding phenomena by exploring them from the participants' perspective in a natural setting and in relation to their context (Hernández et al., 2014). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2005), this approach analyzes social behaviors, opinions, thoughts, and perceptions. Conducting qualitative research with deaf individuals presents a significant challenge, as Quiceno and Abello (2025) argue, because it involves engaging them in their world and their forms of communication.

Ragin (2007) suggests that one of the tasks of social research is to give voice to certain groups, to tell their stories, among other things, to make them more visible within society. Hence the use of narrative as a strategy for listening to the voices of our participants. In the words of Arias and Alvarado (2015), narrating involves putting lived experience into words, as ideas and emotions that account for the particular and complex configuration of the events experienced. For Flick (2012), narrative is an approach to understanding individual worlds of experience. The narrative-biographical design is also called “life stories.” In narrative designs, the researcher reconstructs individual stories, the events, the sequence of events, and the outcomes, and identifies categories in the narrative data, to finally weave them together and construct a general story or narrative (Hernández et al., 2014).

At the same time, the research also fits the “case study” design. McMillan and Schumacher (2005) define it as that “analysis of data focused on a phenomenon, selected by the researcher to understand regardless of the number of scenarios or participants in the study” (p. 403).

Participants

The study involved three undergraduate students, aged between 19 and 22. Two of them have hearing impairments, while the third has played a constant support role throughout their teacher training, serving as a Mexican Sign Language (LSM) interpreter. The female student was assigned the pseudonym "Luna" and the male student, "Júpiter." The interpreter, who is fluent in LSM, was referred to as "Sol."

It is important to note that only two students with this condition are enrolled at the institution; therefore, the research exclusively captures their perspectives. Furthermore, the inclusion of a third participant reflects the solidarity and support they have provided to their classmates throughout their academic journey, as their experiences and perspectives proved relevant to the study's objectives.

Data collection instruments

Data collection involved (1) semi-structured interviews and (2) field notes. Biographical narratives were also employed (3), tools that help us understand everyday life in the space where a person experiences their reality. The biographical narrative returns the subject to the forefront, as it requires the researcher to rely on a first-person narrative from the perspective of the person who has lived the experience, helping to understand phenomena based on how they conceptualize and classify their world (Herrera & Amezcua, 2021).

A script was prepared beforehand for the interview and validated by experts using the methodology proposed by Escobar and Cuervo (2008). The specialists evaluated each question in terms of clarity, relevance, coherence, and conceptual pertinence, using a rating scale and qualitative observations.

Procedure for information analysis

For the analysis of the data, the information was coded using open codes, that is, when we point out portions of the text or words that catch our attention (Strauss and Corbin, 2016) and axial codes, which refer to the repetition of terms provided by the interviewee: "Researchers try to make sense of their data by organizing them according to a classification scheme." (p. 21).

Subsequently, pattern coding was employed as a second-cycle strategy, following an initial round of coding (e.g., open coding). Its purpose was to group the initial codes into broader, explanatory, and inferential categories (Álvarez-Gayou, 2003; Saldaña, 2021). In

this first phase, codes such as “lack of communication,” “lack of knowledge of LSM,” “barriers in the classroom,” “untrained teacher,” and “limited use of the interpreter” were identified. Based on this, pattern coding allowed for the reduction and organization of the data volume, the construction of more consistent units of analysis, the facilitation of their articulation with theoretical frameworks, and the development of central interpretations. This strategy proved particularly relevant, as it made it possible to move beyond the mere illustration of testimonies and advance toward the construction of meaning.

The results section includes excerpts from the students' discourse that, in our view, are significant for understanding their experiences. While these extracts are illustrative, their main purpose is to describe the categories derived from the analysis of the textual material, which structure this section: LSM, mentor, knowledge, audism, and teachers. These constitute the units of analysis and are presented below.

Results

a) Mexican Sign Language (LSM)

The data shows that Mexican Sign Language (LSM) is the primary means of communication and access to knowledge for participating students. Informants attribute central value to it both in their interaction with the deaf community and in their teacher training. However, its use also presents a barrier when it is not shared by teachers and colleagues.

In Luna's case, Mexican Sign Language (LSM) has been part of her life since early childhood, which has facilitated her interaction with deaf people in different contexts: "I've been learning it since preschool... LSM is very important for good communication" (Field Diary). However, she also mentions experiences of exclusion within the group: "A lot of exclusion; some classmates are inclusive because they are interested in learning sign language, but not all of them" (Field Diary).

For his part, Jupiter points out that his learning of LSM has taken place mainly in the family environment, which has allowed him to establish communicative links in various social spaces: "I have learned LSM thanks to my parents and my aunts... I communicate with them in LSM" (Field Diary).

Likewise, informant Sol highlights that mastery of this language makes it possible to build bridges between the deaf and hearing communities: "LSM is wonderful... it allowed us to establish a link between both communities" (Field Diary).

Taken together, the findings show that LSM is not only a communicative resource, but a necessary condition for educational participation, whose absence creates barriers and whose presence promotes interaction and access to learning.

b) Mentor: student with proficiency in LSM

The testimonies reveal the importance of the student who acts as a communication mediator, establishing themselves as a key figure in the academic journey of their peers. The relationship established between this informant and the students with disabilities is characterized by constant support and facilitation of communication in the classroom.

Sol describes his role as providing support aimed at improving accessibility: “My role has been to improve the conditions for participation of my colleagues” (Field Diary). He also notes that, in the absence of teaching strategies, he assumed the responsibility of explaining content, tasks, and projects: “Everyone came to me for explanations” (Field Diary).

This mediation has also fostered social interaction within the group, allowing students to participate in different communicative spaces: “they could move around anywhere... interpret what they wanted to mention” (Field Diary).

From Luna's perspective, this support is significant for her learning: "a classmate who knows sign language helps us explain the topics... it helps me learn" (Field Diary). The findings indicate that the mentor figure becomes a fundamental support for everyday inclusion; however, they also reveal a structural dependence on individual support to guarantee basic access conditions.

c) Knowledge

The results show that the appropriation of academic content was limited by various barriers present in the educational environment. Among these, communication difficulties stand out, particularly during virtual sessions, where the absence of subtitles on digital platforms affected the understanding of the content: “there were communication difficulties during the virtual sessions... due to the lack of subtitles” (Field Diary).

Likewise, the lack of accessible teaching materials, such as adequate visual resources and multimodal strategies, was identified, which restricted learning opportunities: “the lack of resources with graphic support limited our learning” (Field Diary).

In this context, the students relied heavily on peer support to access information, which impacted their academic autonomy. Sol's mediation helped to offset these limitations to some extent, facilitating content comprehension and participation in school activities.

Taken together, the data show that access to knowledge is not fully guaranteed, but

rather conditioned by external support and the absence of systematic institutional strategies.

d) Audiism

The students' accounts reveal experiences associated with audism, understood as practices that limit or devalue the use of sign language. Jupiter states: "I was forbidden from communicating through LSM because it distracted the group" (Field Diary), which demonstrates restrictions on the use of his language in the educational setting.

Similarly, Sol describes situations of exclusion from the moment her classmates entered the classroom, noting the lack of conditions for their participation and the presence of discriminatory practices: "seeing this discrimination during classes... made me reflect" (Field Diary). These findings show that, in addition to structural barriers, there are practices that limit the recognition and legitimate use of Mexican Sign Language (LSM) within the classroom.

e) Teachers

The testimonies agree that the main barrier to educational interaction lies in the teachers' lack of proficiency in Mexican Sign Language (LSM). This situation restricts direct communication, creates dependence on intermediaries, and limits students' active participation.

Likewise, the informants identified a lack of knowledge of deaf culture, which affects the way in which educational practices are developed: "there is a lack of knowledge about our forms of interaction" (Field Diary).

The results also highlight the need to strengthen teacher training in areas related to accessibility, inclusion, and the use of appropriate teaching strategies. From the participants' perspective, these shortcomings impact both learning and the overall educational experience.

In summary, the findings show that educational inclusion depends not only on individual disposition, but also on institutional conditions that guarantee the effective participation of all students.

Discussion of results

The findings of this research allow us to understand, from the students' perspectives, the complexity of the educational process for people with hearing disabilities in a regular school. Through dialogue with theoretical contributions and previous studies, key categories are identified: Mexican Sign Language (LSM), the role of the hearing mentor, access to knowledge, audism, and teacher training—all closely linked to Barriers to Learning and Participation (BLP) and the real possibilities for educational inclusion.

First, the central role of Mexican Sign Language (LSM) as a means of communication, learning, and social interaction aligns with the findings of Islas (2012), Álvarez et al. (2012), and Marzo et al. (2022), who recognize it as an indispensable pedagogical tool for ensuring access to knowledge and reducing barriers to learning and participation (BAP) in the classroom. In this study, the testimonies demonstrate that LSM not only facilitates communication among deaf peers but also constitutes an essential resource for the appropriation of academic content. However, its limited presence among hearing teachers and students constitutes a persistent structural barrier. In this regard, González-Montesino and González (2022) warn that when the language of the deaf community is not integrated into educational dynamics, effective participation and co-responsibility in education are limited. Similarly, Aceituno-Aceituno et al. (2025) indicate that environmental barriers contribute to the production of disability, which is confirmed in the findings of the present study.

Secondly, the presence of a mentor fluent in Mexican Sign Language (LSM) emerges as a highly significant element. The results show that this figure acts as a linguistic, cultural, and academic bridge, providing support that extends beyond classroom interpretation to include assistance with academic and administrative activities. While this mediation is fundamental for student participation, it also highlights the inadequacy of institutional conditions to guarantee inclusion. As Verástegui (2017) points out, the education system continues to promote inclusive discourses without ensuring the necessary training and resources for their implementation. In this case, the mentor figure underscores both the potential of mediation and the lack of professional interpreters and trained teachers.

Regarding the knowledge category, the findings reveal limitations in the appropriation of curricular content, especially in virtual contexts lacking accessibility, such as the absence of subtitles. These results align with Andrango (2017), who emphasizes that teachers are key actors in creating inclusive conditions through relevant pedagogical

practices. The lack of reasonable accommodations, accessible teaching resources, and multimodal strategies restricted students' full participation, highlighting a gap between formal access to education and actual access to learning.

For its part, the category of audism reveals explicit experiences of discrimination, such as restrictions on the use of Mexican Sign Language (LSM) in the classroom. These findings align with Varona (2018), who defines audism as a form of domination based on the ability to hear. The reported experiences not only affect students' social interaction and well-being but also reproduce dynamics of exclusion within the educational space. In this sense, identifying audism as a practice present in teacher training is one of the study's most significant contributions, highlighting the gap between institutional discourses of inclusion and everyday practices.

Regarding the teacher category, participants highlighted the need to strengthen teacher training in Mexican Sign Language (LSM) and inclusive pedagogies. This approach aligns with the views expressed by Verástegui (2017), Andrango (2017), and the Mexican government (2010), who agree that inclusion is not limited to access but requires pedagogical, linguistic, and cultural conditions that guarantee effective participation. The results show that, while diversity is recognized, training strategies that eliminate communication barriers and ensure equitable access to teaching and learning processes have not yet been consolidated.

Taken together, the findings underscore the need to move towards more accessible, culturally and linguistically relevant, and pedagogically sound learning environments. The evidence confirms that inclusion is an essential component of educational equity (Espinoza, 2025). In this context, the education of students with hearing impairments cannot depend on individual support, such as mentors, but requires institutional policies that guarantee teacher training, the availability of interpreters, the use of assistive technologies, and awareness-raising within the educational community. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognize Mexican Sign Language (LSM) as a fully-fledged language, a vehicle for identity, and a tool for equity (Marzo et al., 2022).

Consequently, the results highlight the urgent need to transform teacher training colleges into genuinely inclusive spaces, where discriminatory practices are eliminated and equitable access to educational resources is guaranteed. This implies not only training teachers in inclusive approaches and the use of Mexican Sign Language (LSM), but also implementing institutional strategies that proactively address students' needs. These

strategies include incorporating assistive technologies, designing personalized support from the beginning of their academic journey, and creating learning environments that recognize and value linguistic and cultural diversity.

Limitations of the study

This study was conducted with the participation of the only two students with hearing impairments enrolled at the institution at the time of the research. While this allowed for an in-depth and contextualized exploration of their experiences, the small sample size limits the possibility of generalizing the results to other populations or educational contexts. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as exploratory and descriptive contributions.

Furthermore, the study is limited to a specific institution, whose inclusion policies, available resources, and organizational culture directly influence the experiences analyzed. Therefore, the results reflect a specific context and are not necessarily representative of other higher education institutions. Future research with larger samples or in different contexts would allow for comparison and expansion of the findings presented here.

Conclusions

The central finding of this study confirms the persistence of audism as a power structure that systematically shapes the educational experience of student teachers with hearing impairments. Audism is not limited to isolated acts of exclusion or technical deficiencies in institutional support; it constitutes a symbolic order that hierarchizes orality as the legitimate norm for communication and knowledge production, subordinating other linguistic and cultural forms. Within this framework, difference is not recognized as an expression of diversity, but rather as a deviation from a hearing ideal that operates as an implicit measure of academic normality.

From a linguistic justice perspective, these findings reveal a structural violation of the right to education under equal conditions and the right to full recognition of sign language as a legitimate language within the teacher training context. Inclusion cannot be understood as a concession or a compensatory policy aimed at “deficient” individuals, but rather as an institutional obligation to guarantee equitable conditions for participation, learning, and academic production. When policies are limited to reasonable adjustments without challenging the communicative hegemony of hearing students, subtle but persistent forms of

exclusion are perpetuated.

The identified audism is embedded in everyday interactions as well as in pedagogical practices, assessment tools, regulations, and organizational cultures that reproduce symbolic inequalities. Consequently, moving towards a rights-based higher education requires structural transformations: institutionalizing training in deaf culture and linguistic diversity, formally recognizing sign language as a valid means of teaching and assessment, revising regulations that render other communication modalities invisible, and promoting cross-cutting policies that position diversity as a guiding principle and not as an administrative exception.

This study contributes to the academic field, and although situated within a specific context, its findings profoundly challenge higher education by reminding us that inclusion cannot be based on concessions, but rather on the full recognition of the linguistic and cultural dignity of deaf people. Recognizing sign language as a legitimate language of thought, learning, and academic production is not a symbolic gesture, but an act of justice.

Taking on this challenge means transforming the teacher training college into a space where no form of communication is considered inferior, where difference is not merely tolerated but valued, and where full participation is an everyday reality. Within this framework, higher education can become a genuine meeting place, capable of dismantling historical communicative hierarchies and affirming, in practice, that the right to education is only fulfilled when all voices, including those expressed in sign language, are heard, recognized, and respected.

Future lines of research

Research Line 1: *Teacher Training for the Inclusion of Students with Hearing Impairments* . This line of research focuses on understanding and strengthening inclusive pedagogical practices in higher education, especially in teacher training institutions, through the professional development of faculty in the use of communicative and didactic strategies that guarantee the right to education for deaf people. Its central purpose is to analyze how teachers in teacher training colleges face the challenge of addressing diversity, particularly when students with hearing impairments are integrated into their classrooms, and what institutional or training support they require to do so effectively.

The questions guiding this line of research are: What level of mastery and use of Mexican Sign Language (LSM) do teachers in teacher training colleges possess? What conceptions of educational inclusion and hearing impairment prevail among teacher educators? And what continuing education strategies could promote equity and effective communication in the teacher training classroom?

Among the specific objectives are (1) to identify the knowledge, attitudes and practices of the normal school teachers regarding the inclusion of students with hearing disabilities; (2) to analyze the teacher training needs in the use of LSM and in the adaptation of inclusive pedagogical strategies and, finally, (3) to propose a training program aimed at the development of communicative and pedagogical skills that promote equity and educational justice.

The proposed methodology combines a mixed-methods approach with a descriptive-exploratory design. The quantitative phase will involve administering diagnostic questionnaires to assess the level of knowledge and attitudes toward inclusion; while the qualitative phase will consist of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups with teachers from various subject areas. Data analysis will be conducted using descriptive statistics and content analysis, seeking to identify patterns, discourses, and practices that reflect the progress and challenges in building inclusive educational environments.

Research line 2: *Academic trajectories and training experiences of deaf students in teacher training institutions*. This line of research aims to understand, from a lived and narrative perspective, the processes of access, retention, and graduation of deaf students in teacher training colleges. It seeks to highlight their academic trajectories, the barriers and support they face, as well as the learning and transformations that emerge from their educational experience in contexts still moving toward inclusion. Analyzing these experiences will allow us to recognize both the institutional limitations and the examples of resilience and agency that characterize future teachers with hearing disabilities.

The questions guiding this work are: What are the main barriers and supports faced by deaf students in their teacher training? How do institutional, pedagogical, and communicative conditions affect their access, retention, and graduation? And what personal learning and transformations arise from their training experience in a partially inclusive environment?

The objectives that guide this line of research are (1) to describe the academic and social experiences of deaf students in their transition through teacher training colleges; (2) to analyze the institutional and personal factors that favor or limit their full and equitable participation; and (3) to generate proposals for institutional improvement that promote more inclusive and accessible educational pathways.

Methodologically, this research line adopts a qualitative approach with a narrative and multiple case study design. In-depth biographical interviews, analysis of institutional documents, and participant observation will be employed, with the support of a Mexican Sign Language (LSM) interpreter when necessary. Data analysis will be conducted through open, axial, and selective coding, with triangulation of sources to ensure the validity and interpretive richness of the findings. Ultimately, this research line seeks to provide evidence that will serve as a basis for the formulation of institutional inclusion policies and for the transformation of pedagogical practices toward a more just and equitable higher education.

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