



# Perceptions Of English Practicing Students On Educational Inclusion Policies For Students With Diverse Needs And Their Applicability In Colombian Classrooms

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## Summary

The theme of this article is inclusive education, contextualized in the exercise of teaching English, revealing some methodological alternatives that can be used by beginner language teachers, considering in turn the educational policies emanating from the State, which benefit this community. The methodological process used was based on qualitative research, supported by an online survey, where a group of beginner English teachers was asked about their knowledge of inclusion policies and their consideration in the context of teaching practice. In conclusion, the need to continue studying this issue is recognized, since, despite the efforts made by the State, there is still much to be done, to achieve a true process of inclusion in the educational context.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, beginner English teacher, diverse need, Colombian inclusion policies.

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## 1. Introduction

People with disabilities must be part of the social system, however, even in these times, they continue to be discriminated against in various contexts, one of them is the case of school. Having said the above, the existence of obstacles is evident, as a result of ignorance of the policies that regulate the community in a condition of disability; omitting in the daily life the existing laws that contemplate their application, in Colombian society.

Similarly, it is worth talking about inclusion policies, which lead to the mention of studies carried out by entities such as Dane (2022), who recognizes that the most prominent educational gap among all inhabitants is located at the primary and secondary level, where 16.2% present disability; while 2.6% do not have it, indicating that the highest percentage of residents without access to education corresponds to the community with disabilities, revealing a wide margin of inequality in the educational context, which indirectly affects the coexistence and growth of this community, by denying them the right to education, as established in the Political Constitution of Colombia.

It should be noted, however, that since the proclamation of the Political Constitution of 1991 and particularly in article 68, the elimination of illiteracy and the need to offer education by the State to all people without any distinction was already contemplated.

With this, a point of critical discussion is pointed out, related to the obligation of the State to comply with all the social, economic, political, and cultural requirements, considering the principle of singularity and the right to difference, as well as to the full coverage and the right to education; With respect to this indication, the discrepant existence between what is considered by the laws is evident, in issues such as social inclusion, which in this writing is treated in a particular way, compared to the reality lived by people with diverse needs, evidencing a gap between what is contemplated in the law and their daily experiences.

It is convenient to delve into this subject, to say that according to the census of the Ministry of Education, in Bogotá there is an average of 458,000 people with disabilities, of which 20,806 were enrolled in official educational institutions in the year 2020, with these figures in mind and as an alternative solution to this problem, this state entity hired "1,338 people to support the work of teachers, with the purpose of guaranteeing the right to quality education and relevance through their permanence ", in the different public institutions (Secretary of Education, 2020, p, 1)

Within this framework, the recognition of a non-homogeneous society, characterized by diversity, must be considered, in such a way that this condition is reflected in the new government policies, which seek to establish criteria by which the educational system is included, in public schools in the country.

It is noted, however, that the statistics show that, in the Colombian context, according to data provided by the Bogota Planning Secretariat (2020), only a margin of 32.9% accessed primary basic education, while 19.2% were able to reach the secondary education and only 13.8% accessed basic secondary education, significant data and probably more marked in recent times because of the pandemic, since the lack of access to technology and the absence of materials that compensate their conditions, caused a high dropout , depression and dissatisfaction, hinting at a deep educational crisis, by not fully supplying its particularities in this community, in times of pandemic.

Now it will be interesting to approach this situation, assuming a political and governmental vision in the Colombian context, which shows the treatment given by state entities to this issue, so pertinent in recent times.

Considering the previously mentioned outline and starting from its political guidelines, a look was given from the perspective of a group of beginner English teachers from a public institution who were immersed in teaching practice and who were assigned a group of children with singularities. Such as: cognitive, hearing, knowledge acquisition, and attention disabilities, and others presented physical and emotional deficiencies, which were immersed in groups of Basic education children. Therefore, the practitioners had to assume them, adapting the activities and subjects according to their particularities without neglecting the rest of the students who made up the group.

Now we will move on to the main theoretical constructs, addressed in this article.

## 1.1 literature review

### 1.1.1. diverse need

It begins by explaining that diversity is a condition inherent to each human being, characterized by a particular way of thinking, feeling and acting, determined by affective and behavioral aspects, under which the individual is educated.

It is worth noting that this position is established according to the capacities, interests and needs and, above all, due to

the socio-cultural conditions that are proper to it, giving them a condition as a unique individual, that is, they are part of a community.

From all this it is recognized that the school of the moment requires a principle of flexibility in the development of its exercise, which takes into account the human being with its singularities, from the moment in which its approach to knowledge and the educational process begins.

On the other hand, these considerations direct their reach towards the projection of a future English teacher, who has the capacity to respond and lead when developing their practice and encountering children with diverse needs, whom they must attend to with the same dedication and interest, facing its complexities and looking for pedagogical alternatives that allow it to develop the process of learning the English language, contemplating the limitations of these students.

Therefore, it is necessary to have pedagogical knowledge about diverse education, in order to be able to set proposals aimed at achieving the goals of inclusion, in such a way that they are not considered as an imposition of an external entity, whose discourse is times far from the reality of teachers, which suggests ignorance about the current policies related to this issue and that should underlie teaching practices, to assertively satisfy the diverse educational needs, which today more than ever, require an understanding and of a start-up in the classroom, in such a way that the educational community benefits by putting educational policies and the activity led by the practitioner in dialogue with their practice director and the titular teacher, action that will definitely favor this community in the long term.

Regarding the above, it is significant to clarify the issue of diversity and school inclusion, approaching Dr. Nieto (2004) who defines them as the academic space called associated disabilities presenting research on inclusion, developed as a principle of integration in the school context, glimpsing the need to consider the environment of the subject to facilitate their development, their integration, and their participatory coexistence with the members of the school and their environment in daily life. It should be noted that this author considers other elements that are fundamental in the definition of its particularities and turned out to be quite relevant in the case of this study.

#### 1.1.2. Challenges of practicing teachers with students of diverse needs.

Now some challenges are mentioned that neophyte teachers must consider when they assume their practice.

##### **First challenge: Detecting students with diverse needs**

On multiple occasions, teachers can overlook children with extraordinary conditions, since there is a tendency to detect only those that can be directly observed, but not those that are invisible or difficult to identify, that is, those related to learning and cognition.

This notoriously hinders the application of inclusion processes with these communities. Given this situation, teachers in training are expected to have the insight and ability to identify such cases. In the same way, the creation of plans supported by different sources of information, knowledge, methods, and approaches is expected, which allows classifying and undertaking pedagogical actions, which respond to each case. This is because formerly training on these topics was not provided, which leads us to consider the following statement, to be considered.

##### **Second challenge: Few teachers trained to take on the challenge of needs supported by interdisciplinary plans**

The existence of various shortcomings detected on this subject is undeniable, due to its novelty and particularity, interdisciplinary support is required, in the field of pedagogy, psycho-pedagogy, neurology, and even psychology, to respond to the needs of these pupils, this is how in some cases, the teachers in their good work, carry out activities without any direction, only trying to provide an immediate solution to the detected situation, without carrying out a follow-up designed to address the identified difficulty, which will to the detriment of the learning of this type of students,

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which in many cases causes desertion, or the frustration of the student with diverse needs, by not feeling integrated into the group.

In relation to the field of disability, it is necessary to have an interdisciplinary team, which allows recognizing the distinctive specificities of this type of subjects. It is highlighted as an assertive aspect that in the curriculum offered to future English teachers of the District University, an academic space called "special educational needs" has been included, because these theoretical foundations make possible the attention and generation of pedagogical proposals, which this community requires. Now another aspect relevant to this topic is presented.

### **Third challenge: Adequate materials and facilities for the development of learning with diverse needs students**

There are few infrastructures and materials available in schools and libraries that facilitate learning for these boys and girls, which is why it is suggested that future English teachers present research proposals around this topic, supported by a rationale theory that is reflected with the implementation and creation of material in the classroom, considering each circumstance. Similarly, there is another concern to be taken into account.

### **Fourth challenge: Knowledge about assessment processes, in the field of educational inclusion**

There is a scarcity of data on the assessment of learning in this type of student, for this reason, the importance of the proposals put forward by beginner teachers on this subject, which turns out to be quite relevant due to the nature of their assessment process, characterized by being flexible, innovative, diverse, particular, procedural, continuous, globalizing and comprehensive, considering the particularities of each individual.

#### 1.1.3. Conceptualization of diverse education within the inclusion policy.

Taking UNESCO (2009) as a reference, inclusive education is defined as an act of creation, with which it was intended to respond to the needs of heterogeneous students immersed in a school context to achieve the maximum possible participation and inclusion, especially in public institutions, thus supporting the development of their learning, making possible their reintegration into school, thus reducing their exclusion or educational marginality.

This purpose has implied changes, adjustments, and modifications, both to the contents, the strategies, and discussions held about this group within the educational system and how teachers must respond to their needs because they are untrained as a support or complement to their education.

Therefore, the characterization of their interests, capacities, and learning needs is required in such a way that the school offers within its programs pedagogical alternatives that are inclusive, attractive, and interesting, that contemplate diversity and its particular learning needs, thus complying with the principles of the Colombian political constitution.

#### 1.1.4. Teaching English to students with diverse needs.

After outlining this study, it was possible to appreciate the need to become familiar with some methodological experiences carried out with this type of population. With a view to implementing the guidelines outlined in the educational inclusion policies, taking this premise into account, The following experiences are presented.

To start, the National Institute for the Blind (INCI) (2020) released support material for teaching English, which included a series of exercises classified by ability, which presented instruction for the teacher and for the student, providing material supported by technology.

Continuing with the presentation of the experiences, Mendez and Acuña (2018) are mentioned, who disclose various tests, in which an experiment was carried out with a group of children with Down syndrome who were able to approach the knowledge of the English language, exalting that the native language facilitated the learning process of the foreign language, as long as the teacher contextualizes the class, through activities that are motivating and close to the reality of these children, recognizing that the support of their family environment and school, are of vital importance.

In addition to this, there is the study carried out by Medina and Pérez (2017) who analyzed a group of children with disabilities, who were included in a public school institution, reaching the conclusion that human capital and infrastructure are required, which facilitates the teaching of the foreign language, they also recognize the importance of family support to achieve it, stating that all these needs have been supplied voluntarily by the teachers, who resolved all the difficulties that arose, to achieve language learning, for which they must have used their abilities, their methodological expertise, their sharpness, their research capacity, and their resilience, allowing them to see in a problem, a challenge to be solved, providing alternative solutions, with which they could demonstrate their ability as assertive teachers.

Another case worth mentioning is that of the researchers Pinto and Rivera (2012) who carried out a study on the activities that could be applied to infants with disabilities who wanted to learn English, deducing it is necessary to organize playful, individual, and group activities, that lead to motivation, participation, and group integration, through the organization of teamwork that involves without distinction all members. In this way, we sought to bridge the gaps between regular students and those with diverse needs, highlighting the need for greater accompaniment from the teacher and from a specialist in diverse learning who knows how to guide and support teachers. And thus, be able to respond to the needs of the cognitive process that their learners have according to their pace of development and the motivation to learn this foreign language.

Another valuable example of this is Morales (2017) who proposes the selection of activities found on the web, including some guidance or suggestions for the teacher, clarifying that they must be quite playful and attractive for the whole group. Finally, it reflects the proposal of a facilitative implementation of the teaching of the foreign language, highlighting that its proposal is characterized by being innovative, practical, and complementary.

Now it is appropriate to mention Wilches (2016) who in a study analyzed the process of teaching English to a group of students with diverse needs who studied in a public school, identifying the didactic aspects that must be taken into account to teach them this language, since they presented Down syndrome, proposing the use of educational aids supported by ICTs and other communication alternatives close to them, as they are language facilitators which stimulated the understanding of the ability of their expression and production of speeches, thus helping the families that care for them, by favoring their integration, by improving their ability to communicate among family members and peers.

Continuing with this trend, Ibarra and Rodríguez (2018) are mentioned who carried out an investigation in an educational institution, taking into account the inclusion criteria applied to the teaching of a foreign language, to students with diverse needs, using multiple didactic strategies that proved to be effective due to the motivation perceived by these pupils, sensitizing their senses when they developed the workshops. From here arose a methodological proposal based on the creation of strategies that favored the performance of NEES boys and girls (children with special needs) when they were learning a foreign language, by showing greater appreciation and interest when there is greater affection or affinity.

#### 1.1.5. Inclusion policies in the educational field.

Government entities have established guidelines aimed at closing the coverage gaps for people with disabilities, but their attempts have been unsuccessful due to the limited relevance that has been given to this issue. Even at present, those involved feel discriminated against not only in the field of education but also in daily life, within the city where

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they are located because government entities do not take disability into account in territorial planning, which allows them to be part of their environment as active citizens and partners.

Taking this line of discussion, with a historical look, in 1948, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed, which shows that for more than seven decades, education has been considered a fundamental right, which is why the State must offer it to the entire population without any distinction, becoming a topic of discussion and traceability in various policies, which seek to be included, highlighting that in the Colombian context, despite having been followed for a long time, only until 2019, the State pronounces itself in the situations they face.

It should be added that in the Colombian context, the Political Constitution of 1991, in its Article 68, considered the education of people with limitations and/or exceptional talents. Likewise, Law 115, or the General Education Law, considered it a social right that should meet the interests and needs of all human beings. In the same way, it is recognized that since Law 361 of 1977, there was already talk about the integration of people with limitations, demanding both assistance and protection of their needs.

Even with all this extensive legal framework exposed so far, there is evidence of resistance to making them a reality, due to all the implications that must be taken into account in the school and due to the changes and adjustments that are required to comply with these regulations. It is worth emphasizing these legal opinions confirm the State's interest in coverage for these people, but the red tape, adaptation of the physical spaces, the lack of support materials, as well as the shortage of specialized teachers, make the efforts unsuccessful or very slow because ultimately, teachers are the ones who must resolve all situations as best they can, given the scarce existence of specialized entities that provide timely support. However, it must be recognized that there has been a slight increase in this type of population with diverse needs since they are attending school from an early age, and the institutions have begun to have specialized personnel who support the educational process of these learners, being insufficient due to the multiple situations of disability detected, falling short to be supplied, as well as the lack of commitment and accompaniment of the parents at home, who due to their limited or null knowledge, cannot provide adequate help, to continue with the work that is done within educational institutions.

Understanding this, it is added that in the programs that educate teachers in the university context, only from 1994 many study plans were restructured, contemplating the need to propose subjects aimed at solving the issue of inclusion. Likewise, some institutions had to adapt their physical spaces to allow the incorporation of people with disabilities, giving them an opening to the professional world and their subsequent job placement, rewarding companies that hire them, giving them exceptions to the payment of their taxes, and thus opening spaces for their labor, social, and civic integration.

Subsequently, in 2002, Decree 3020 was issued, providing guidelines for hiring specialized personnel to serve students with diverse needs, thus achieving their integration into educational establishments to meet their social, particular, and educational needs, while promoting at the same time the creation of innovative educational actions and the implementation of special models for this type of students, approved by the Ministry of National Education, through programs such as ethno-education and VAES (back to school) aimed at young people over 14 years old who present various particular situations, but who seek to finish their high school academic cycle. With this space, the school establishes a modality of inclusion, which makes the educational system more flexible. This idea is reinforced and expanded by Resolution 365 of 2003, which issued criteria and established particularities to serve this population.

It is necessary to recognize that this new way of developing the school has contributed to strengthening autonomy, confidence, and self-esteem, being reflected in the development of the skills of these students with special talents, thus achieving greater interaction with others, inside and outside of the classroom, positively favoring their insertion in the environment of the community to which they belong, achieving advances in the socialization, in the inclusion, and in

the family vindication of these boys and girls NEES, achieving goals and capacities to develop activities that give them the possibility of being incorporated into the Colombian labor market.

## 2. Methodology

This project took into consideration the criteria of qualitative research, which according to the guidelines of Ramírez et al. (2021) is characterized by being descriptive and interpretative, carrying out an exhaustive analysis about the object of study related to the **perceptions of the English practice students on educational inclusion policies for students with diverse needs and their applicability in Colombian classrooms.**

In this way, a holistic vision of this phenomenon was taken, studying it in a meticulous, detailed and explicit way, it should be noted that in the data collection process, focus groups were used, which were immersed in pedagogical practices, which, due to their experience, gave rise to questions and related approaches, with the object of study of this research.

### 2.1. Data collection instruments.

To take the samples, instruments such as interviews, surveys, and direct observations were studied, establishing the survey was the most accurate, because according to Parra and Ramírez (2021) it favors the collection of information quickly and effectively, enabling their interpretation, to then put them in dialogue, with the theoretical concepts included in this study.

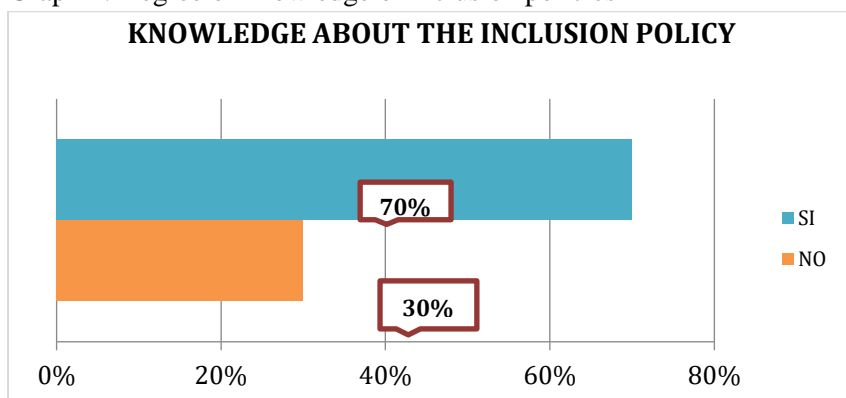
### 2.2. Population.

According to the perspective of Arias (2006) the population selected was made up of 26 students of the Language Degree program, whose ages ranged from 20 to 23 years, who were developing the subject of teaching practice with children, in a school of the capital district. It should be noted that this sample of participants was characterized by being familiar with the subject of diverse needs in students, because they previously had an academic space within the curriculum, called "special educational needs ", a fact that gave rise to this investigation.

## 3. Results

Having defined the theoretical guidelines of this research, as well as the methodological framework with which the objectives were achieved, the graphs that illustrate the results achieved are presented below.

Graph 1: Degree of knowledge of inclusion policies

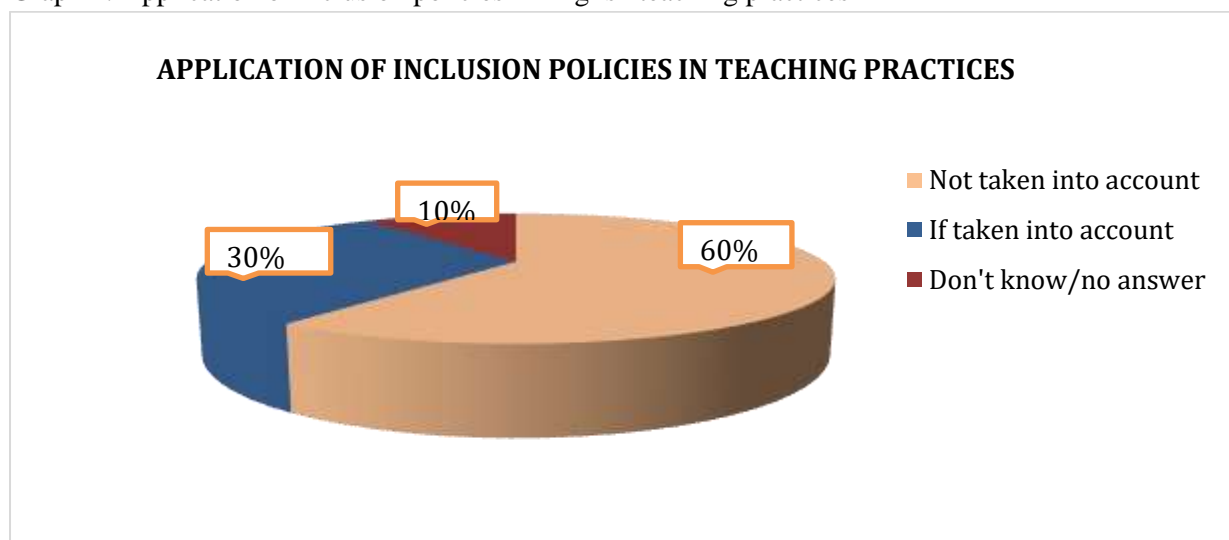


Graph 1: Degree of knowledge of inclusion policies. own elaboration

Graph one (1) shows the knowledge of inclusion policies, whose margin reached corresponded to 70% of the participants, demonstrating mastery on this topic, which proved the correctness and effectiveness of the curricular space called "special educational needs", including in his university study plan, evidenced in the performance of his pedagogical exercise, by promoting and supporting various proposals around the topic of inclusion.

Now graph two (2) is presented, which corresponds to the application of inclusion policies, in the planning of English teaching practices.

Graph 2: Application of inclusion policies in English teaching practices



Graph 2: Application of inclusion policies in English teaching practices. own elaboration

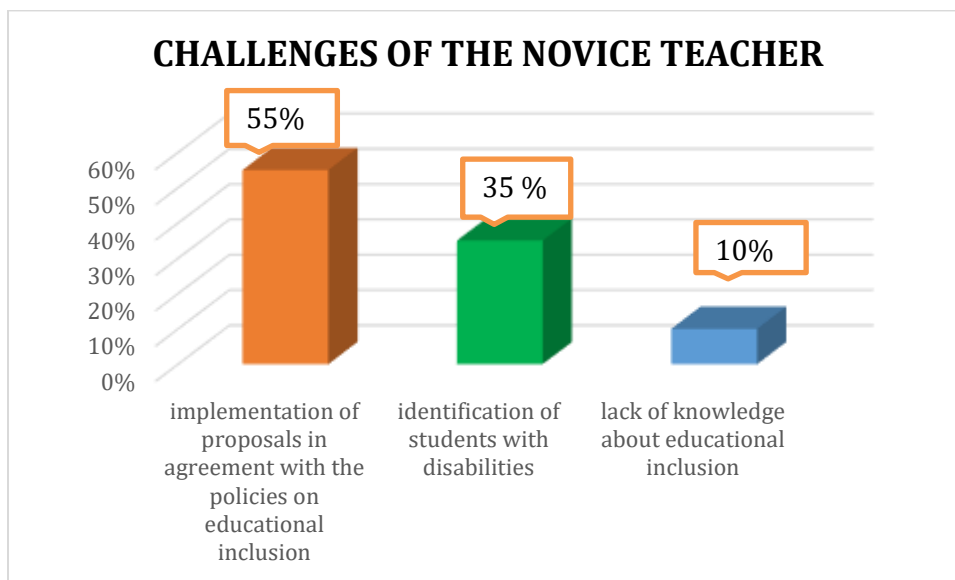
This graph two (2) shows a marked trend corresponding to 60% compared to the scant consideration of inclusion policies in foreign language learning, a fact reflected in the lack of pedagogical proposals related to this subject by the institution where Teaching practices are carried out, probably due to the administrative and economic implications that they require and the indifference of teachers to address these issues.

On the other hand, with the spaces given from the academy, in the field of English teacher training, it is recognized that these have proposals around the inclusion subject, to be applied and validated or refuted as the case may be, since by being able to detect from an early age the difficulties that children have in the school, room is given to inclusion and to respect for the other, without there being room for difference. However, there is not always the approval of the institutions where the practice is carried out to be able to implement them, because they are initiatives of teachers in training, a fact that leaves in evidence the undervaluation of the work and the proposals created by the initiative of preservice teachers.

Now graph three (3) corresponding to the challenges faced by the beginner teachers facing the implementation of inclusion policies in the school when they are immersed in teaching practice.

Graph 3: Challenges of the beginner teacher





Graph 3: Challenges of the beginner teacher. own elaboration

This graph three (3) shows the need to implement pedagogical proposals related to the inclusive education subject by tenured teachers and the little reception given to these investigations because they are initiatives given by practitioners, the result of their teaching practice, which corresponds to 55%, nullifying the proposals that could make inclusion policies in the school a reality, by making their development viable and putting them into operation in the real context of the school, whose basic principle is equality of opportunity conditions supported by experts.

On the other hand, it is necessary to highlight the ability of practitioners to identify boys and girls with exceptional talents, equivalent to 35% as shown in graph three (3), as a result of the knowledge that the practitioners have acquired, through academic spaces included in their curriculum.

#### 4. Conclusions

Educational inclusion facilitates the empowerment of people by claiming them as citizens, thus promoting the right to belong to the school system with their characteristics, in such a way that the exclusion gap, traditionally maintained, is minimized. Although there are programs that obey educational inclusion policies, there are still difficulties regarding their application in Colombian public educational contexts.

It is clear that the government has made multiple efforts, which have been clearly defined in its policies. However, it should be considered that these have not been applied in their entirety, therefore, they are not in dialogue with reality, it is required so, that the State promote equity in terms of access to education, this way illiteracy will probably be decreasing and it will accommodate the expansion of coverage, providing educational opportunities for everyone.

The school is considering educational inclusion, when it allows access to the population with special needs, opening up to the principles of equality, allowing the strengthening of the social and political fabric, in such a way that they do not lose their sense of dignity, and strength their condition of citizens of peace, who are part of society, their family environment and school.

It is necessary to recognize that this type of proposals make it possible for people with limitations to enter the labor and professional world, who have the opportunity to reinforce their self-esteem, consolidating their condition of being and their abilities as integral and inclusive beings in society.

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