Access4all
Laboratory for Policies and Practices of Social Development in Higher Education

Good practices for equity and inclusion in Higher Education

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The Spanish version of the teacher efficacy for inclusive practice scale (TEIP-e): a tool to measure competence for teaching in inclusive settings

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Keywords: Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice (TEIP) scale; Spanish version; preservice teachers; diversity; inclusion

Introduction

There is little doubt that the movement towards inclusion has made enormous impact on education systems and schools worldwide (UNESCO, 2007). While initially focusing on providing for students with disabilities in mainstream schools, inclusion now encompasses a much broader definition that refers to all students who may have been historically marginalized from meaningful education, who come from varied multicultural and multidiverse backgrounds or who are at risk of not achieving their full potential (Forlin, 2013). This educational trend has been encouraged internationally as a positive means of enhancing students’ overall development and functioning and basically means giving access and bringing support services, when necessary, to all. Inclusion requires generalist teachers to be able to cater to the needs of the most diverse student population academically, socially, and culturally, responsibility that has impacted the task of teachers more than anything.

In this context, the need for all teachers to develop inclusive pedagogies has become increasingly urgent. This professional requisite is contained in standards for teaching (e.g. Ministry of Education and Science, 2007), but often it is inconsistently and ineffectively addressed in teacher education programs (Malinen et al., 2013; Specht et al., 2016). In practice, it is unclear how successful these programs are (Sleeter, 2001) or how many of them substantively address the need (Zeichner, 2003). In this sense, much research suggests that teachers are not well prepared to teach in today diverse classrooms and usually show serious instructional concerns related to their ability to design and deliver effective instruction for diverse learners in inclusive settings (Chiner & Cardona, 2012; Scott, Vitale, & Masten 1998).

In the field of teacher education for diversity and inclusion some researchers have explored the construct of teacher self-efficacy (e.g., Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013; Malinen et al., 2013; Park et al., 2016). Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are commonly examined through the theoretical lens of Bandura’s social cognitive theory (1977). It can be understood as an ex-
pression of confidence that one’s actions may lead to success and mastery over oneself having a positive influence on others. According to Bandura (2007), self-efficacy is not something that teachers possess, but something that teachers believe they can do. All these studies have provided support for the factor structure of the TEIP (Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice) as a tool to measure competence for teaching in inclusive settings and equity for all revealing that the TEIP scale is essentially unidimensional with one dominant latent factor and three specific factors representing unique aspects of the general factor of teacher self-efficacy to teach inclusively: Efficacy in Using Inclusive Instruction (EII), Efficacy in Collaboration (EC), and Efficacy in Managing Behavior (EMB).

Despite the relevance and potential of these studies, the validation of the TEIP for inclusive practices in non-English speaking countries remains an important issue. To date there is not a Spanish version ready to use with Spanish-speaking preservice teacher populations. An international study on this topic is important, relevant, and timely because teacher self-efficacy for inclusive practice has been found that it is an international construct understood equally well through different languages and cultures. In line with the above, the purpose of the present study was (1) to provide evidence of the psychometric properties (internal consistency, construct and convergent validity) of the TEIP-e designed within the framework of a research project ‘Teacher Training for Diversity and Inclusion: A Preliminary Comparative Analysis’ conducted at the University of Alicante, Alicante, Spain, in collaboration with the Institute of Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, Minneapolis, and (2) to have a tool to measure competence for teaching in inclusive classrooms. Further, we aimed to examine the factor structure of the TEIP-e, but also look for its potential invariance across program major and sex. As part of the study, the TEIP was translated into Spanish, and adapted to the Spanish socio-cultural context.

Method

Participants

The sample of this study included 503 student teachers (representing 70.68% of the cohort) enrolled in coursework in a university of the Valencian Community of approximately 24,625 students. A method of recruiting a convenience sample was used with special emphasis on the objective that students from Early Childhood and Elementary Education in their third and fourth year of the program would be included in the study. More than 70% of the student teachers in both programs, present in the classroom on the day the survey was administered, participated voluntarily in the study. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents were Spanish, and 2% of other nationalities, including British, Dutch, Italian, Romanian, Chinese, Latin American, Moroccan, and Filipino. The age distribution of the participants was homogeneous with a mean of
22.19 years old (SD = 3.68, range 20-52) for the total sample. Nineteen percent (19.40%) were male and 80.60% female. The majority of participants (97%) were full-time students.

Instrumentation

The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale developed by Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin (2012), translated into Spanish and adapted to the Spanish context (TEIP-e), was used in the study. The original TEIP scale consists of 20 questions examining different aspects of self-efficacy for preparedness to teach in inclusive settings. Questions that include issues relating to assessment, classroom management, instruction, working with others, and professional issues are answered using a six-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (6). A higher score indicates more positive feelings toward self-efficacy specific to teaching in inclusive environments. The scale showed evidence of high validity and reliability (alpha = .89 for the entire scale; .93, .85, and .85 for each factor, respectively) (Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013).

Procedure

Sampling was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2015-2016. As a prerequisite to completing the survey, the students were given a working definition of diversity (Queensborough Community College, n.d.). This stated that diversity should be taken to mean ‘Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing individual differences and its educational effects based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, learning ability and learning styles, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.’ They were also given a definition of inclusion stating that it is the process by which ‘mainstream schools accommodate a full diversity of students.’ The participants answered the questionnaires during class time after gaining permission of the Dean’s Faculty of Education and instructors. The questionnaire took 15-20 minutes to complete.

Data analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 23.0. A descriptive analysis was run using means, standard deviations, and percentages. Internal consistency of the scale items and its subscales were examined using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. To check construct validity, a factor analysis of the main components with Varimax rotation was performed as this was less dependent on the sample and, as such, more reproducible. This type of analysis allowed us to explore the dimensionality of the Spanish version of the TEIP scale. Convergent validity was assessed using Pearson correlation coefficient with other measures such as (a) teacher program mission, (b) program opportunities for teacher competence development on
Results and conclusion

The TEIP-e (Table 1) demonstrated high internal consistency displaying Cronbach alpha coefficients higher than those reported in previous studies (> .90) (Park et al., 2016; Sharma et al., 2012; Savolainen et al., 2012).

Table 1
Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practice scale (Spanish and English versions)
Note. In the present study, Item 1 was excluded after a preliminary test for data fit so 19 items were retained for the exploratory factor analysis. The word disability has been used in a more general sense as synonymous of special educational support needs.

A factorial analysis of principal components (Varimax rotation) produced a general latent factor with three dimensions (Efficacy in Managing Behavior, Efficacy in Collaboration, and Efficacy in Using Inclusive Instruction) that accounted for more than 60% of the common variance (see Table 2).

Table 2
Rotated component matrix of the TEIP-e factorial analysis of principal components
This factor solution was invariant through program major and gender suggesting that the results confirm the model’s consistency contributing, therefore, to its construct validity. Further analyses yielded positive and significant correlations (ranged between .23 and .57) of previously unexplored relationships between the TEIP-e subscales and the characteristics of the teacher education program (e.g., teacher program mission, program opportunities for teacher competence development on diversity and inclusion, and self-confidence on preparedness to teach in inclusive classrooms).

The results of the study indicate that the TEIP-e is a reliable and valid measure of teacher perception of self-efficacy to teach in inclusive classrooms and presents adequate evidence for potential use with Spanish preservice teacher populations. This enables us to consider the TEIP-e as a useful tool for teacher efficacy studies on inclusion in Spanish contexts. In spite of the fact that the psychometric results obtained from the TEIP-e are promising, we should continue to be cautious and consider the limitations inherent in the study: (1) this study is specific to a particular teacher education program and the sample cannot be considered as representative of other programs in the same or other Spanish speaking countries; and (2) the results are based on self-reported data usually associated with social desirability of the responses. Future research should control this effect by conducting more longitudinal, observational, and qualitative studies. In conclusion, our findings are valuable for the field of equity and inclusion. We recommend the use of the TEIP-e for assessing educators’ efficacy for inclusive teaching not only in early and elementary but in secondary and postsecondary education with the corresponding adaptations.

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