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Social and Juridical Sciences faculty members' experiences in Spain: what to do to develop an inclusive pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a study which aims to know what faculty members who develop inclusive pedagogy do to foster the inclusion of students with disability. Using a qualitative methodology, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 faculty members, who were recommended by their students with disabilities. The data were analyzed inductively through a categories and codes system. The results show the participants' experiences working with disabilities and the active and participatory methodological strategies used by the interviewees to ensure the participation of all the students, as well as some key elements to foster inclusion. Lastly, the participants offer some recommendations for other faculty members to move toward inclusion in the university. The conclusion section discusses the results of this work with those of previous studies, and offers some suggestions for further work in the scope of inclusive pedagogy and Higher Education.

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diversity; students with
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Points of interest

- Faculty members need training and information on inclusive education to meet the needs of students with disabilities.
- Faculty members who develop inclusive pedagogy do not distinguish between students with and without disabilities, and treat all students in the same way.
- Active and participatory teaching methods are the most effective and beneficial for all students.
- Inclusive Faculty members recommend that other teachers become informed about disability, develop a good and close relationship with their students and value their abilities, not their limitations.

Introduction

Inclusive education is a model that goes beyond disability and aims at reducing exclusion and removing barriers to learning and participation for every student. In the legislative evolution of inclusive education in Spain, the Constitution of 1978 stands out, emphasising that everyone has the right to education. From that moment until the Organic Law on Education (LOE 2006), work was done in terms of integration. At this stage, it is important to differentiate between integration and inclusion. Integration focuses on the students with disabilities, which requires special actions, adaptations and different educational actions. Inclusion promotes education for all, regardless of ability, by encouraging the restructuring of ordinary educational environments to accommodate everyone. The system adapts to each student and not the other way around. A decisive step was taken in 2006 towards inclusive education. The preamble to the LOE specifies that the appropriate educational response to all students must be given by the principle of inclusion, stating that attention to diversity is a need that covers all educational stages and all students.

In higher education (HE), the European Network for Information on Education Systems and Policies considers it necessary to reflect diversity in the university by ensuring that all students, regardless of their social, cultural or economic conditions, have the opportunity to access, participate and ultimately succeed in HE (Eurydice 2011). Spanish universities have launched multiple initiatives and programmes to address diversity in order to integrate this model into their foundations. This was done through specific programmes to respond to minority groups, such as people with disabilities.

Traditionally, students with disabilities have been in a disadvantaged position regarding access and retention in higher education (HE). However, the number of students with disabilities who access the university system is increasing considerably in recent years (Kendall 2017). The first study carried out by Universia Foundation in Spain, in the academic year of 2010/2011, indicates that 1.1% of university students had a disability (Universia Foundation 2018). Then, in its last study carried out during the academic year of 2017/2018, the percentage increased to 1.5% (21,435 students), and already in its 2019/2020 guide it shows that 22,818 students with disabilities were enrolled in the university in that academic year (Universia Foundation 2020). This reality has been facilitated mostly by the development of student support services and the specific legislation that regulates the rights of students with disabilities (Yssel, Pak, and Beilke 2016).

International higher education policy contemplates a fairer and more equitable access for underrepresented student groups (Gibson et al. 2016). The conclusion of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons

with Disabilities, whose text was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, was a key point. This provision stresses that State Parties must ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. In fact, there are European initiatives to favour inclusive education in the university, such as the European Strategy 2010–2020 (European Commission 2010).

At the national level, Law 26/2011 of August 1st, on the adaptation of legislation to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adapts the legislation to the provisions of the international context. The country is moving in this direction, and the 2010 University Student Statute or Royal Decree 1/2013 on the rights of people with disabilities and their social inclusion, establishes the need for universities to be accessible and guarantee the participation and learning of all students. Thus, in Spain, as in most developed countries, there are laws that compel universities to offer the necessary educational support to allow students with disabilities to participate on equal basis (Redpath et al. 2013). It is important to differentiate between equality and equity, thus equal treatment for all students could be unfair to students with disabilities. Students should be treated in the same way regardless of their individual characteristics. However, there must be equity in teaching, offering each student what he or she needs to learn properly.

The analysis of the inclusive policies of Spanish universities (Caneiro, et al. 2017) explains that most universities make reference to equal opportunities and the prohibition of discrimination in their Statutes, containing references to accessibility and promoting important initiatives to guarantee this right. Likewise, an increasing number of universities offer specific support services for students with disabilities. In most cases, the students consider these services as an important aid that facilitates and improves their academic experience (Hanafin et al. 2007). Despite these advances, it seems that universities still need to make further efforts to ensure that there is adequate attention to diversity, since students with disabilities are still finding many barriers that hinder their academic success (Biggeri, Di Masi, and Bellacicco 2020; Griful-Freixenet et al. 2017; Kilpatrick et al. 2017). As stated by Gale, Mills, and Cross (2017), providing more resources to educational institutions is not enough to solve these difficulties and reach social justice. According to these authors, the focus of interest should be the pedagogical work that is developed in the classrooms by the faculty members. This is the strategic place to carry out this work of change. In this sense, the interest for pedagogy in the university has begun to gain importance in the countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), particularly in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia (Gale and Mills 2013).

There are numerous studies focused on identifying the barriers that students with disabilities encounter in university classrooms and how to solve them. Most researchers have explored the opinions of this group of students

(Madriaga et al. 2010; Patrick and Wessel 2013; Spassiani et al. 2017; Yssel, Pak, and Beilke 2016). Regarding faculty members, these students often highlight some difficulties such as inaccessible teaching methods and resources, lack of training to develop inclusive practices and negative attitudes toward disability. This last barrier, i.e. negative attitudes, can even make students unwilling to reveal that they have a disability so as not to receive a different or discriminatory treatment (Moriña, Cortés-Vega, and Molina 2015). In Spanish universities, students decide whether or not to disclose their disability at the beginning of the course in the registration process, deciding whether to give their consent for the university to share the information with the disability support services and with the teaching staff. If they decide not to do so, the support offices will not be able to offer them the resources they require, and the teaching staff will have no knowledge that the student has a disability. In some cases, the disabilities are visible, so the faculty member can detect that the student has a disability and offer him/her support. But when the student has an invisible disability (for example, some organic or intellectual disabilities) the detection is more complex. This situation is complex when these students require some adjustment in the materials or in the methods of academic assessment, since these adjustments are not applied due to the lack of knowledge of the faculty.

Although to a lesser extent, there are studies that have analyzed the opinions and experiences of faculty members who had had students with disabilities in their classrooms (Abdella 2018; Collins, Azmat, and Rentschler 2019; Kendall 2017; Lombardi and Murray 2011; Love et al. 2014; Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018). As a result of all these studies, it becomes clear that the educational practices developed by faculty members in the classroom have a direct influence on the levels of academic success of students with a range of educational needs.

With regard to attention to diversity, inclusive education is the approach that has gained most importance in HE in recent years (Moriña 2017), namely through the implementation of specific measures of attention to promote diversity in university policies. However, it is necessary to generate further knowledge of how inclusive educational practices are developed in university classrooms.

The traditional approach to work with students with disabilities has been the one based on special educational needs (SEN). As in previous stages before university, this approach consists in offering a differentiated and special education, with different or additional services, which promotes segregation and discrimination (Florian 2010). With the aim of avoiding this situation, in the last few years, attempts have been made to introduce the principles of inclusive education in the teaching of all educational levels. However, in practice, the characteristic procedures of special education have persisted.

Different educational approaches and techniques have emerged in order to improve the processes of attention to diversity in all educational stages,

such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is based on three basic principles: offering multiple forms of information, action and expression, and engagement (CAST 2018). On the other hand, Universal Design for Instruction (UDI), developed by the Center for Universal Design in Education (CUDE) at the University of Washington, is a proposal that aims to apply the principles of Universal Design at post-secondary and university levels. This model is based on the following principles: equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, size and space for approach, and use. The application of these principles in teaching makes it accessible, usable and inclusive for all students (Burgstahler and Cory 2008). In this way, student diversity is seen as something that is always present in any group, and teaching is designed and planned with a variety of forms of teaching and learning, ensuring that all students can participate and learn appropriately. Furthermore, in England and Scotland appeared the concept of inclusive pedagogy (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011). It emerged as an alternative to special education, differentiated from the paradigm of inclusive education. While inclusive education is a broader concept that refers to aspects such as processes, policies or centres' organization, inclusive pedagogy focuses specifically on the development of inclusive teaching-learning processes that are appropriate to the characteristics of all students. Inclusive pedagogy recognizes the individual differences of students, while avoiding the problems associated with the identification of some students as 'different' (Florian 2010). Its objective is to offer support to all students, making differentiations for some. Inclusive pedagogy is based on three basic assumptions: (1) difference is considered as an essential aspect of human development in any conceptualization of learning; (2) teachers must believe that they are capable of teaching everyone; and (3) teachers must develop new creative ways of working with others (Florian 2014). In the model of inclusive pedagogy, diversity is a strength, rather than a difficulty, and the teacher must offer a variety of options for everyone, taking difference into account (Spratt and Florian 2013).

The studies in the area of inclusive pedagogy have focused on compulsory educational stages. It is worth highlighting the research of Spratt and Florian (2013), which included the content of inclusive pedagogy in the initial training of teachers and analyzed its subsequent implementation. Moreover, it is important to point out the publications of Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) and Black-Hawkins and Florian (2012), who analyzed the inclusive practices of teachers through observation and interviews with the aim of knowing and understanding the thoughts underlying those practices. These studies have been the source of practical strategies that support and guide the development of educational keys to promote an educational inclusion.

With regard to HE, the approach of inclusive pedagogy has also been analyzed, although there are not many studies focused on this topic

specifically. For instance, Hitch, Macfarlane, and Nihill (2015) conducted a desktop audit about the presence of inclusive teaching and UDL in public documents and university policies of Australia, and they undertook a survey about the methods used to enable the personnel to offer inclusive teaching. Likewise, the studies of Gale and Mills (2013) and Gale, Mills, and Cross (2017), which introduce the concept of 'socially inclusive pedagogy', establish three principles that serve as a foundation to build a socially inclusive pedagogy in the university (belief, design and actions) (Gale and Mills 2013, 8):

1. The belief that all students bring things of value to the learning environment.
2. A design that values difference while also providing access to and enabling engagement with dominance.
3. Actions that 'work with' rather than 'act on' students and their communities.

A socially inclusive pedagogy based on these principles will have the potential to open spaces for groups that have been considered as marginalized (Gale and Mills 2013). Thus, the needs of all students can be satisfied with a good design of the educational curriculum and the implementation of teaching practices and strategies based on an inclusive pedagogy (Barrington 2004). A fundamental route to achieve this goal is to support an increase of student participation and importance in the classroom, and a greater teacher-student interaction (Juma, Lehtomäki, and Naukkarinen 2017). In fact, other studies about disability and HE have recommended the use of more participatory and student-centered methods (Bain 2004).

In this paper, we analyze the experiences and inclusive practices developed by a group of faculty members in the field of Social and Juridical Sciences in higher education in Spain. This field has been poorly analyzed in the literature about inclusive education and HE (Moriña, López, and Molina 2014). Likewise, it is also necessary to generate further knowledge about inclusive pedagogy and the good practices of faculty members (Blasco 2015; Moriarty 2007). Therefore, we aim to fill a gap in the literature by providing a specific analysis on what faculty members do to develop inclusive pedagogy, using the results of a study developed in Spain.

Method

The study presented in this paper is part of a research project funded by the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness of Spain '*Inclusive pedagogy in the university: faculty members' narratives*' (EDU2016-76587-R, IP. Anabel Moriña, 2016–2021). The main purpose of this 4-year-long project was to know, through a qualitative methodology, what faculty members do to

develop inclusive pedagogy in the university, and how and why they do it. More specifically, this paper focuses on analyzing the experiences of faculty members with students with disabilities, the inclusive actions they develop in the classrooms, and the recommendations of the participants for other faculty members to foster the educational inclusion of all students.

Three research questions guided this analysis:

How do faculty members value their experience of teaching students with disabilities in the classroom?

What actions do faculty members carry out to promote inclusive education?

What are their recommendations for other faculty members to achieve more inclusive classrooms?

Participants

The study involved faculty members of 10 public Spanish universities, and all fields of knowledge were represented. Specifically, this paper presents the experiences and actions of 25 faculty members from Social and Juridical Sciences. We contacted 35 faculty members, although eventually 10 of them did not participate in the study, due to a lack of time to collaborate or due to illness that did not allow them to participate.

To access the sample, we contacted the disability support services of the different universities via telephone and email. At this point, we informed them about the objectives and characteristics of the project, and requested their collaboration to contact the students with disabilities. These services shared the information about the research with all the students with disabilities. They were asked to recommend those faculty members who had positively influenced their academic trajectory, who had fostered their social and educational inclusion, who were notable for their interest in the learning of all students, and whose teaching practice was inclusive and without barriers for learning. After receiving the information given by the students about the faculty members, we contacted the proposed faculty via telephone and/or email to request their participation. In addition to showing the goal of the project to them, we informed them that they had been proposed by some of their students with disabilities as 'inclusive faculty members'. Furthermore, we used the 'snowball' technique. We contacted students with disabilities directly and shared the information with different members of the university community to disseminate the research. Thus, other students with disabilities, even those who had completed their studies, could recommend inclusive faculty members.

With regard to the profile of the participants, 15 of them developed their teaching activity in Faculties of Economics and Business, 5 in Faculties of Law, 3 in the field of Journalism and 2 in Social Work. With respect to gender, 14 were men and 11 were women. Of the 25 participants, 3 of them

were under 40 years of age, 10 of them were between 41 and 50 years old, and the remaining 12 were over 50 years of age. Lastly, regarding their teaching experience, only one of the participants had taught at the university for less than five years, whereas 6 of the 25 participants had between 6 and 10 years of experience. The rest of the faculty members were more experienced, since 8 of them had between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience, and the remaining 10 had taught for more than 20 years.

Research instruments

A qualitative methodology was used to carry out the study. In this first phase of the research, the data were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews. Two interviews were conducted with each of the participants. Some of the questions that guided the interview focused on educational actions were the following: What difficulties have you encountered when working with students with disabilities? What do you do to discover the specific needs or difficulties of students to successfully follow your subject? What do you do to help them overcome these difficulties? What methods do you consider to be more effective for all students to learn, and why? What strategies do you develop to foster the relationship with your students? What recommendations do you have for faculty members who have students with disabilities in their classroom for the first time? Each of these interviews had a duration of 90 min and they were conducted individually by different members of the research team. Most of the interviews were face-to-face. In those cases in which a participant could not attend it face-to-face, the interview was conducted via Skype or telephone. Of the 25 participants, 18 were interviewed face-to-face, four via telephone and three via Skype. All the information from the interviews was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

To process the data, a structural analysis was performed from the inductive creation of a categories and codes system, following the proposal of Miles and Huberman (1994). This analysis was made using the data analysis software MaxQDA12. The researchers were grouped in pairs for the categorization of all the information. Then, a group analysis was conducted by the entire team. This analysis was used to categorise the doubtful information. [Table 1](#) shows the categories and codes used to analyze the information presented in the results section.

Ethical issues

Regarding the ethical issues of the research, we used an informed consent report that ensured the confidentiality of the data. Through this, the team

Table 1. Categories and codes system.

Categories	Codes
Experience	Number of students
	Types of disability
	Institutional support
	Training needs
	Motivations
Actions	Knowing needs
	Teacher-student relationship
	Teaching methods
	Materials
	Evaluation
Recommendations	Follow-up and tutorials
	Training
	Support services
	Consider diversity
	Support and follow-up of learning
	Reasonable adjustments
	Equitable treatment

committed to send a copy of the results to the participants. Moreover, the participants were informed that, in case anyone wished to withdraw from the study, their data would be deleted and would not be included in the research report. No ethical approval was necessary for this research project.

Results

In this section, we present the results of the study organized into three sections. The first section presents the experiences of the participants whose classrooms included students with disabilities, how they managed those situations and what support they had. The second section shows the educational keys that these faculty members considered when developing their teaching activity to include all the students. Finally, the third section offers some recommendations by the participants for other faculty members to develop an inclusive pedagogy in their university classrooms.

Faculty members' experiences with students with disabilities

Firstly, this section shows numerous experiences of the participants that made them reflect on their teaching to meet the needs of a diverse group of students. Although they had experiences with students with different types of impairments –intellectual, hearing, visual and physical–, the latter two were the most frequent.

The institutional support they received was one of the key elements that some participants identified as fundamental to respond to the needs of students at first. Specifically, the university support services for students with disabilities played an essential role. These services provided, in most cases, information about the students that were going to attend their classes, their

educational needs and the recommended educational measures and adjustments. All this information was specially welcomed by the participants.

I'm very grateful to the university for informing me about the characteristics of a person with Asperger, because I'm neither a technician, nor a doctor, nor a psychologist, and the advice they gave me was very useful: to give this student more time in the exam, to make multiple-choice questions... (Faculty 2).

However, some participants did not have this support to properly meet the needs of their students. In some cases, they were not even informed about the presence of students with disabilities in the classroom until the subject began. When this happened, since they did not know their needs beforehand, the participants could not adequately plan a specific strategy or the necessary adjustments in advance.

We had an Erasmus student with a considerable visual disability, and we had to improvise in specific aspects because there was no established protocol to attend to her (Faculty 13).

Other participants stated that, although the support services for students with disabilities gave them information about the students, sometimes this information was not enough. Likewise, they said that it was an important issue to not know in advance the students with disabilities that were going to attend their class. Thus, they did not have the chance to prepare and gather information in order to give them the necessary support or to design new didactic methods in advance.

I didn't know I had a student with a disability. The student didn't tell me anything about it. She participated a lot in the lectures, and that is how I realized she had a disability (Faculty 8).

In view of the lack of information and training among the faculty about the educational needs that could be associated with disability, the participants had to search for this information on their own in many cases. This interest to improve their educational practices with the aim of achieving the participation of all the students appeared as a common characteristic in all the participants.

When I knew that this student had a psychiatric condition, the first thing I did to tackle this issue, since I was a bit concerned as I didn't know how to treat him, was to consult a psychiatry service in the city hall, to obtain information about this condition and how to interact with this student (Faculty 8).

Although these faculty members were characterized for being inclusive, their lack of training to attend to some specific educational needs posed an important difficulty for most of the participants in their first few times. However, their beliefs about diversity, their personal values and the concern for the learning of all their students were motivating elements that

counterbalanced this lack of training and information. All participants commented that they were able to offer an inclusive educational response and an egalitarian treatment for all.

From the conversations I have with my colleagues about this matter, I don't perceive that I'm especially sensitive toward the students, but I do believe that I care more for the students compared to other faculty members (Faculty 5).

These faculty members had the common goal of achieving the learning and full participation of all their students, offering each student what he or she needed without treating students with disabilities differently. For these faculty members, all students were equal, regardless of their differences. Thus, their interest in achieving the success of the students was a key factor for any student, regardless of their characteristics, to be able to enjoy a fair and effective teaching-learning process based on equal opportunity.

The general valuation that the participants made of their teaching experience was very positive. All of them highlighted the fact that that student diversity in a classroom was an opportunity for learning and personal and professional growth, not only for the students, but also for the faculty members themselves. Moreover, they emphasised the potential and positive characteristics of students with disabilities, rather than focusing on their difficulties and needs.

When you look back and meet this group of students, the feeling you get is that they made you grow, that you gained more than them, and that the experience was very rewarding. Seeing that these people thrive in life, overcome obstacles and move forward, you feel a deep satisfaction knowing that you were part of that growth. It is interesting and rewarding to think that you left a part of you in them (Faculty 13).

How to attend students' diversity? Keys for an inclusive classroom

The faculty members talked about the key elements that they used in the classroom to achieve the inclusion and participation of all the students. They highlighted the fact that all students must have the same opportunities, while considering that they are all different from each other.

According to the participants, the first contact with the students at the beginning of the subject was critical. During the first lectures, the faculty members asked about their particular needs and requirements of methods and materials. They stated that one of the keys to gain the trust and motivation of the students was to show themselves accessible and willing to offer their support and to make the necessary changes attending to their students' opinions. Thus, the students perceived the faculty as an aid and a resource, and not as a barrier.

Being available to them and acting according to their needs so that they don't see a barrier in me. Even asking them to tell me how they are doing in the other subjects and encourage them, letting them know that they can talk to me whenever

they need to. I don't want them to see me as a faculty member, but as a person who they can resort to and who can guide them (Faculty 7).

With respect to the teaching methodology, all the participants were characterized for using active and participatory methods. They agreed that students' participation and importance in the teaching-learning process were essential to achieve a significant learning. Moreover, with this type of methods they strengthened the relationship among students and fostered social inclusion in the group. According to the participants, when selecting a participatory methodology, it was essential to respect the pace of each student, allowing different levels of participation based on their characteristics, interests and capacities, while constantly encouraging participation. These successful measures are closely and clearly related to some of the fundamental principles associated with effective learning (e.g. active rather than passive, varied rather than repetitive, etc.).

Putting no barriers to participation; on the contrary, trying to get them to participate like the rest of the students. They must see that there is a normal treatment, but if they have problems to express themselves, then the faculty member must be patient and integrate them in the participation without making him look like a different student (Faculty 22).

With regard to this idea, an important aspect according to the participants was to treat all students the same way. They stated that students with disabilities did not want any special treatment, they did not want to feel different. The participants tried to use methods in which all students could participate, rather than using specific strategies for some of them. However, they admitted that, inevitably, in some cases they had to make some adjustment when a student required it.

It is important to treat them in equality with respect to their classmates. I think that it doesn't help them when people give them a special treatment. If that was the case, I would differentiate them from their classmates, mark them, and that's exactly what they don't want. I always keep them in mind when I give the lectures, but in my opinion, they are all equal to the rest of the students and I communicate with them the same way I would with the others (Faculty 19).

The participants also mentioned the educational materials. Many of the faculty members knew how helpful it could be, for some students, to have the teaching material beforehand. Thus, they offered all the material from the beginning of the subject, rather than doing this progressively or during the lectures. They stated that this action was beneficial for all students equally, since they were all grateful for having the material available before the sessions and being able to focus their attention on the class session. Likewise, the faculty members highlighted the importance of having the format of the material adapted to the different needs, thus they also offered a variety of resources.

Another key is the subject content. I always give it to them in advance, because I don't want them to take notes in my classes. I believe that when they take notes, they're not listening to me, so I upload the subject content in the Platform for all my students, which I previously design in Word format (Faculty 19).

The electronic format that the participants used more often for the contents was mostly Word. Thus, they edited the content and made the necessary adjustments whenever these were required, and made it compatible with assistive technology.

In addition to adjusting in the methods and material whenever it was necessary, the faculty members said that other changes had to be made in the academic assessment. Although most of the participants preferred a continuous assessment that did not require many adjustments, in some occasions they had to give exams or final tests. In these cases, modifications were required in the format and in the way these tests were carried out. To this end, the faculty members showed a high degree of goodwill to adjust the test to the characteristics of any student, ensuring equity in the evaluation of their learning.

They practically face the same questions and the same type of exam as the rest of the students, but with time and other specific factors adapted to their conditions (Faculty 1).

Lastly, another key that the participants prioritized in their teaching practice was to carry out an individualized follow-up of their students. With the aim of avoiding discouragement and maintaining the engagement of their students, the faculty members showed their concern about the situation of a student when they perceived a decrease in the level of motivation. One of the faculty members commented that he even called those students who stopped attending the lectures and tried to encourage them to come back and participate.

I do a follow-up of the registered students for the first two or three weeks of the subject. If I see that some of them stop attending, I contact them. First, I send them an e-mail and, if they don't reply, then I call them to tell them that I'm their instructor and to ask them what's going on in their lives. I tell them that I would like to meet with them, and by doing this I managed to get many of them back in the classroom. I offered them my support and thus I could integrate some of those who were probably out. This shows them that they can count on me, and not just them, but everyone who has a difficulty, or feel discouraged, as I think this can encourage them (Faculty 7).

They also carried out this student follow-up process in the tutorials. The participants offered this resource whenever the students found difficulties related to the subject. Thus, they ensured adequate learning experiences for their students. Once again, this type of strategies was not designed only for students with disabilities, as the interest for the situation and learning of the students made no distinctions.

When some student had an issue, I tell them that if they could not follow the classes they could make extensive use of the tutorials. I don't mind having them there all week if that would help them. I also offer this to students without disabilities who, for whatever reason, have more difficulties with the subject (Faculty 10).

Recommendations to develop an inclusive pedagogy

In addition to sharing the teaching strategies, we asked the participants what they would recommend to other faculty members who had students with disabilities in their classrooms. The lack of specific information about disability was one of the issues that the participants mentioned most frequently. They stated that it would be very helpful if the faculty members were trained in inclusive education and diversity.

They must make sure they are ready to attend to them, with training, depending on the type of disability. However, if they already have a student with specific needs, they must gather information about what to do, what technology they can use, what type of software, or even simpler matters, adaptations they can make in the material, methodology, the exams... They must make sure they are prepared to attend to that specific disability (Faculty 4).

Besides participating in courses and training programmes, the faculty members recommended searching for information about the different types of disability and how to adequately attend to their needs. Specifically, they encouraged others to consult the disability support services of the universities or other type of institutions, such as the National Organization of Blind Spanish People (Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles, ONCE), which also provide support for students.

There is an organization in the university that informs and advises us according to the disability. For example, due to this or that condition, the students can't do the exam with the rest of the students, as he or she needs a little bit of extra time, or, in other cases, the student is not available in the mornings due to the medical treatment followed, etc. (Faculty 10).

Furthermore, the faculty members stated that it is important to have a close relationship with the students, and to be open and available to them. They highlighted the fact that faculty members must offer their help to the students and give them the opportunity to talk about their difficulties and what they need from faculty. Thus, all faculty members would be able to make the necessary changes to enable all students to pass the subject successfully. In this regard, they recommended other faculty members to consider the specific characteristics of each student, in order to determine which methods are the most appropriate to ensure the participation of the whole group. In the necessary cases, they also pointed out the need to make all the adjustments that the students required, since, in the case of students with disabilities, these are mandatory measures.

Well, I would recommend them, first of all, to talk to their students, but confidentially or discretely, as these are very personal matters. They must have a very fluid communication, an open conversation with the students, so that they can communicate freely and let the faculty know everything they need, everything that could be provided to them to ensure that they are in equal opportunity with the rest of the students (Faculty 4).

Lastly, the participants recommended other faculty members who have students with disabilities in their classrooms to value their capabilities, rather than considering their needs or limitations. According to them, it is important to consider the ability to excel and the effort capacity, as students with disabilities can be an example for other students to follow. They encouraged other faculty members to abandon the idea that diversity hinders teaching, and to shift to a more positive conception of diversity as an opportunity and an enriching element of the classroom.

And I would especially tell them to consider their virtues, which are many, and not so much their limitations. The capacity to work, sacrifice, self-denial... They are usually the most focused people, and the ones who work and study with more enthusiasm. That is, they are usually my best students (Faculty 2).

Discussion and conclusions

In this paper we have presented the teaching experiences of a group of faculty members from the field of Social and Juridical Sciences and the inclusive educational practices they developed to achieve the inclusion and participation of all their students. Other studies have focused on the perspective of students with disabilities (Norris et al. 2019; Yssel, Pak, and Beilke 2016; Spassiani et al. 2017) and on the difficulties of faculty members to attend to the needs of this group of students (Abdella 2018; Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018). However, the aim of the present research is to show evidence of what faculty members do to develop an inclusive pedagogy that supports the academic experience of all their students.

Firstly, we have showed the difficulties that faculty member may encounter when they have a student with a disability in their classroom for the first time. In agreement with other authors (e.g. Gelbar et al. 2015), one of the main problems that faculty members find in this situation is the lack of training and information (Black, Weinberg, and Brodwin 2014). As in many other countries, the pedagogical training of faculty members in Spain is not mandatory. Therefore, most faculty members have not been specifically trained to attend to the needs of students with disabilities (Moriña, Cortés-Vega, and Molina 2015). Despite not having compulsory training for university staff, Spanish universities have training centres for their faculty members, which offer training courses in different areas every year. These courses are given by experts from the University itself or by external professionals. Within

this offer, the number of courses on inclusion and students with disabilities is usually much lower than those focused on topics such as research, general didactics, technology or languages (Carballo 2016). There is an ongoing debate on the need for a compulsory training programme for faculty members, as the university is the only educational level where teaching staff do not receive this training. On the other hand, faculty members receive great support when they obtain the necessary information from disability support services (Moriña and Carballo 2017). However, when these services do not offer appropriate information, or they do not offer it in time, the faculty members must search for solutions on their own or with the help of the students with disabilities themselves (Phillips et al. 2012).

Despite the difficulties, as in earlier stages of compulsory education, faculty members are able to learn from experience and search for the necessary information to develop inclusive practices without the need to receive specific training (Florian 2014). Faculty members must believe that they are capable of attending to all their students.

Secondly, the arguments of the participants show how they try to respond to the needs of all their students. Moved by their beliefs about disability and diversity, and by their interest in offering an individualized attention to their students (Collins, Azmat, and Rentschler 2019), faculty members can design and develop syllabuses based on an inclusive pedagogy that consider differences and allow the participation of everyone (Barrington 2004). Knowing the needs of all students and caring for their preferences is the first step of the process to adjust the methods to their characteristics (Love et al. 2014). Once they know the interests and motivations of their students, the faculty can select the appropriate active and participatory methods. These methods must adapt to the different learning paces of the students and allow the participation of everyone (Florian and Black-Hawkins 2011), which is a fundamental premise for the development of an inclusive pedagogy. In many cases, carrying out adjustments in methods and resources is a fundamental action to achieve the success of a student with a disability (O'Byrne, Jagoe, and Lawler 2019). Moreover, many of these actions, such as offering material in advance, are beneficial for all students. Other authors, such as Juma, Lehtomäki, and Naukkarinen (2017) and Lombardi and Murray (2011) have also drawn this conclusion.

Furthermore, it is characteristic of inclusive pedagogy to develop continuous assessment processes that consider the effort of the students and motivate them to work every day. As stated by Gale (2010), the assessment must have a pedagogical purpose and contribute to the learning of the students. It must not be a mere way of assigning marks. This assessment is common in all the participants of our study. Moreover, those who give some exam or assessment test do so in a flexible manner, adapting it to the characteristics of the student when necessary (Lombardi and Murray 2011). This measure is crucial, as it has been shown that many students with disabilities consider assessment as a

source of stress, since their needs are usually not considered in it (Spassiani et al. 2017). Lastly, using tutorials as a space to help students with difficulties in their learning, and to follow-up the students, is also an important key for inclusion (Baker, Boland, and Nowik 2012).

Finally, the faculty members with experience in the development of inclusive actions offer some recommendations for other faculty members to shift to the educational inclusion of all their students. As a starting point, they recommend faculty members to be trained in matters of inclusive education and attention to students with disabilities (Black, Weinberg, and Brodwin 2014). In this sense, it has been demonstrated that training experiences in this field offer knowledge and skills for faculty members to give an adequate response to the needs of their students (Murray et al. 2014). In the same way as inclusive educational practices, this training will benefit all the students (Kendall 2017). Furthermore, this training has an impact on the sensitivity of the faculty members who receive it, improving their conceptions of disability and promoting a greater commitment for working to achieve the academic success of this group of students (Moriña and Carballo 2017). It is also recommended that faculty members know and make use of the disability support services of their university (Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018). In these organizations they can obtain information about the educational needs of the students, as well as help for the adjustment of methods and materials.

Likewise, the attitude of the faculty members and their relationship with the students is a fundamental and decisive aspect for an optimal academic experience. It has been proved that the academic success of the students is influenced by the relationships with the faculty members and by their positive attitudes (Stein 2014). In this sense, it is recommended for faculty members to be flexible and open to suggestions and changes. It is fundamental to consider the opinions of the students and their preferences in the teaching-learning processes (Beynon and Dossa 2003). The aim of this practice is to maintain their motivation and ensure that teaching adapts to the expectations and interests of all students. Moreover, another recommendation from this study is to make all the reasonable adjustments required to guarantee the correct learning of the students. Faculty members must develop a pedagogical practice based on equal opportunity.

One last aspect to address is the conception of disability. The beliefs underlying the teaching practices have important consequences in the classroom and in the student learning. In order to develop inclusive pedagogy, it is necessary to consider diversity as a valuable resource, a strength, and not as a difficulty that hinders the work of the educator (Spratt and Florian 2013). From the perspective of the participants in our study, it is fundamental to value the individual characteristics of all the students and, in the case of those with disabilities, value their work, effort and capacity, rather than their limitations. Students with disabilities have shown to be equally capable of

learning and working as their classmates without disabilities (Madriaga et al. 2010; Reed, Kennett, and Emond 2015).

Most studies about inclusion and HE seem to indicate that universities are still not ready to implement a real inclusive education (Martins, Borges, and Gonçalves 2018), and that their faculty members encounter difficulties to attend to the needs of students with disabilities (Collins, Azmat, and Rentschler 2019). Despite this reality, the present study shows that universities have faculty members who develop teaching practices based on inclusive pedagogy, who consider the opinions of their students when designing and developing their teaching activity and understand difference as a fundamental premise of any human group.

Normally, this type of educational practice is attributed to faculty members of Educational Sciences or to teachers of pre-university educational stages (Vasek 2005). There is a widespread idea that faculty members generally use traditional teaching methods based on the transmission of information and memory-based learning. These practices are mostly reported in areas such as Health Sciences, Experimental Sciences and Social Sciences (Frank, McLinden, and Douglas 2020). However, this study shows that faculty members in specialities such as business, economics, law or journalism are equally capable of developing innovative and inclusive educational practices, involving themselves in the learning of all their students and ensuring that they all have a good academic experience. In addition, we found no significant differences between the professors of the different specialities, as they all agree in their beliefs about disability, in the type of educational practices they employ and in the way they relate to students. All the participants were recommended by their own students with disabilities, which ensures that their attitudes, ways of relating and educational practices have a positive effect on the learning and satisfaction of their students. Some limitations have been encountered in the research process. First, due to the variety of geographical areas of the different universities and the availability of participants, not all interviews could be conducted face-to-face. Some interviews had to be conducted via Skype and telephone. On the other hand, we contemplated the lack of previous studies on Inclusive Pedagogy in HE and, more specifically, in the area of Social and Legal Sciences. For this reason, we consider it necessary to generate further knowledge about this educational approach and its development in universities as a new form of inclusion of students and professional development of faculty members.

We hope that the educational practices shown in this paper, as well as the recommendations of the participants, serve as an example for other educators. In this line, and in agreement with Patrick and Wessel (2013), it is necessary to raise awareness among faculty members about how important it is for students with disabilities to adjust and personalize teaching. HE institutions must promote training spaces and actions to enable their faculty

members to teach to all their students adequately (Black, Weinberg, and Brodwin 2014). These measures, along with others, such as improving the communication processes between the support services and the staff, or the development of inclusive policies that ensure the compliance of the rights of students with disabilities, will guide universities toward more equitable and fair scenarios for the whole university community.

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