

TEACHING MODULE 1

Introduction

The most common theoretical approaches that appear both in the literature and in the empirical data of the IHES project, from a "teaching" point of view, are a) social paradigm of disability; b) independent living; and c) universal learning design. These will be briefly explained below through theoretical notions as well as the opinions of specialists from four different countries (Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Portugal) and different stakeholders from these same countries (students with and without disabilities, university professors/researchers, and staff). university administration).

Chapter 1. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

SOCIAL PARADIGM OF DISABILITY

The social model of disability emerged in the 1960s in the United Kingdom as a reaction to biomedical approaches, highlighting the importance of organizations of people with disabilities who claimed other approaches, defending the idea that disability is socially constructed, being the barriers that society creates the ones that limit and constrain the lives of people with disabilities (Fontes, 2016). The basic premise of the social model is that disability should not be understood as an individual problem, but as an eminently social issue, transferring responsibility for the disadvantages of people with disabilities to the inability of society to foresee and adjust to diversity (Oliver, 1990). Disability is the inadequacy of society to include all people, inclusively managing diversity. In this way, the social model focuses on proposals for social inclusion policies.

From an empirical point of view, the data indicates that the most relevant dimensions of the social paradigm of disability are a) the independent living model; b) educational inclusion; c) non-segregation; d) collaborative teaching methodologies for inclusion; and e) inclusive citizenship.

Regarding the first dimension, that is, the *independent living model*, there is a concern to understand and share its origins and philosophy, the principles and foundations, and the strategies associated with the model that favour personal autonomy.

For *educational inclusion* in the university context to be truly effective, it is necessary to start from the earliest stages, compulsory and non-compulsory, so that an evolutionary gap does not accumulate. This means creating bridges with secondary education.

Non-segregation arises, in the students' discourse, through the dilemma about the effects that may arise from adaptation/individualized attention. On the one hand, they can be segregated due to specific and adapted care. If, on the contrary, they are included without any "curricular adaptation", they may be more integrated but may lack a scaffolding for their learning processes. In response to this dilemma, they propose the availability of tools so that students can use them according to their own needs, without differentiation.

It is also mentioned how the use of *collaborative, participatory, and coordinated teaching methodologies* between subjects and/or between subjects and civil society entities promote inclusion at all levels. Finally, *inclusive citizenship* would require a change in the university system, which should go from being an institution that produces workers and promotes only academic and theoretical skills, to another type of system that promotes citizen proactivity.



INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living in the area of disability is a term used within the framework of some social movements, in studies of disability and international social policies. It was originally framed in social movements in the area of disability, particularly associated with the independent living movement, having gained greater notoriety associated with an understanding of disability within the framework of Human Rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Article 19 from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), is designated as “the right to live independently and included in the community”, including the elements of accessibility of services, personal assistance, and the paradigm shift from institutions to community support.

It is about having opportunities for choice and control and, as a political concept, it refers to support so that people with disabilities can enjoy citizenship and have choice and control over the way and configurations in which support is provided (Pinto, 2011). It is not about autonomous execution, but decision-making regarding this execution, emphasizing the power of choice about the care they receive as well as the provider of that care, from a perspective of creating self-determination, dignity, and participation of people with disabilities (Ferguson, 2012).

Empirically, the main concern with independent living resides in *the Support Coordination Systems* since, many times, the support provided is not enough, nor does it usually consider the life trajectory of the person who receives it integrally.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a teaching approach that works to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners, building inclusive classrooms. This means developing a flexible learning environment in which information is presented in multiple ways, students engage in learning in a variety of ways, and are provided with options when demonstrating their learning.

Incorporating universal design principles enhances an inclusive learning environment and eliminates potential learning barriers or unnecessary learning obstacles.

Providing students with multiple means of perceiving, comprehending, and expressing their learning allows them to engage with the material in a way that most benefits them, and also encourages students to engage with the material to improve in areas in which their skills are not as strong as they appear.

Empirically, the Universal Design for Learning is made up of two dimensions: a) *Practice-based models for teaching and assessment*; and b) *Inclusive teaching methodologies and a personalized accompaniment*. Regarding the first, it is worth highlighting one of its principles, that is, the person-centered approach. Likewise, it is mentioned that the expansion of teaching-learning methods towards more practical models linked to competencies, as opposed to the memorization and development of theoretical contents, favours the consideration of different talents, and therefore inclusion. This is referred to as "other intelligences." Regarding the second dimension, it is proposed to develop innovative, inclusive, and personalized complementary methodologies, as well as to strengthen transversal skills to promote inclusion with all university students. Examples of this are tutorials between students and between teachers and microlearning.

References used

Ferguson, Iain (2012), Personalisation, social justice, and social work: a reply to Simon Duffy, *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 26, (1), 55-73.



Fontes, F. (2016) People with Disabilities in Portugal. Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation
 Oliver, M. 1990. The Politics of Disability: A Sociological Approach. New York: St. Martin's Press
 Pinto, Paula Campos (2011), "Family, disability and social policy in Portugal: Where are we at, and where do we want to go?", Sociologia On-Line, (2), pp. 39-60.

Online Resources for Chapter 1

[Social Model Vs Medical Model of Disability](#)

A brief explanation, from Disability Nottinghamshire about the differences between the two **models of disability**

[Inclusion Europe](#)

European notion about **Independent Living**

[The UDL Guidelines](#)

A **Universal Design for Learning** framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights

[Independent Living Center](#)

The CVI (2015), a non-profit organization, constituted and directed by people with functional diversity, with the objective of defending and disseminating the philosophy of Independent Living in Portugal.

[CAST: Until learning has no limits](#)

CAST bust the barriers to learning that millions of people experience every day, by helping educators and organizations apply insights from the learning sciences and leading-edge practices to educational design and implementation.

[Center for Teaching Innovation](#)

Founded in 2017, CTI supports Cornell University teaching community members, from teaching assistants and postdoctoral fellows, to lecturers, to professors, with a full complement of individualized services, programs, institutes, and campus-wide initiatives.

Downloadable Documents

[Production of knowledge, Professional Practice and Public Policies](#)

The text mentioned here constitutes one of the chapters of the e-book, presenting a reflection on the theoretical construction of the concept, the processes associated with its implementation, and some of the challenges

[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

The basic Human rights **legal framework** to understand how disability is understood within the United Nations range.

[European Pillar of Social Rights](#)

An explanation for understanding the broad **Social Rights** where disabilities are included

[Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2030](#)

Explanation of the Strategy based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities



Learning objects/practical activities

1. To know about the main component of what theoretical approaches should integrate under the intellectual disability perspective.
2. To better understand what the social paradigm of disability means as a theoretical approach for intellectual disability and how it differs from others.
3. To apprehend theoretical notions about independent living as a framework for disability.
4. To know about universal design for learning as a teaching approach for all learners.

Activity 1: According to the Social Paradigm of Disability, reflect on how adaptations should be made in the inclusion of students with disabilities at the university

Activity 2: How can Universal Design for Learning be a tool for self-determination?

Chapter 2. CURRICULA

The CURRICULA, from the perspective of "teaching", implies four dimensions, which are: a) cognitive accessibility; b) university support; c) academic skills and competencies; and d) transversal competencies. These will be briefly explained below through theoretical notions as well as the opinions of specialists from four different countries (Spain, Italy, Ireland, and Portugal) and stakeholders from these same countries (students with and without disabilities, university professors/researchers, and university staff).

COGNITIVE ACCESSIBILITY

The main principle of Cognitive Accessibility is promoting adaptability rather than conformity. The cognitive accessibility standards therefore aim to avoid prescriptive rules, instead providing principles and strategies, consistent with a UD approach, which promotes features in the built environment that are functional and comfortable for everyone (Steel & Janeslätt, 2016).

Empirically, the subdimensions that characterize cognitive accessibility are a) Inclusive Learning Methodologies/Strategies; b) teacher training; and c) Coordination of university and extra-university support.

Regarding *inclusive learning methodologies*, stakeholders refer that curricular adaptations must be made through learning support tools (such as easy reading or pictograms) that are available to everyone. They refer that it is not a lack of skills but rather a lack of recognition of different talents. Therefore, tools must be provided so that all students can achieve their goals (considering that these goals are not only related to intellectual abilities).

Teacher training is focused on the specificity of functional diversity to promote an inclusive university. One of the most important aspects is that the teachers involved in this inclusive training are equipped with tools and reasonable adjustments so that this training is of quality and transformative and implies a quality education where solid support networks are generated, and the students acquire autonomy in their independent lives.

Finally, the *coordination of university and extra-university support* focuses its idea on the co-responsibility of all those involved, with the commitment of the students, their peer networks, and their families being just as important for inclusion as the responsibility of the university itself.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS

The university must provide a specific structure for welcoming and monitoring students with specific needs, to inform and support the student and facilitate the entire process of inclusion in the university. On the other hand, they must articulate with other university services, when necessary, as well as with teachers, providing information and training, namely with the creation of pedagogical teaching resources.

On the other hand, the Erasmus+ Program finances extra financial support for students with Specific Educational Needs who wish to undertake mobility to study or do an internship. Information is also made available on inclusion and the support services of different educational institutions.

University support at the curricular level is focused, empirically, on teacher specialization in inclusion. This means that university professors must obtain additional training to acquire tools that allow them to teach inclusively.

ACADEMIC SKILLS AND COMPETENCES

Starting with the identification of two broad approaches to curriculum design, a standards-based curriculum, and a functional curriculum, Kim, S. et al (2021) states that academic skills for persons with ID can include a body of knowledge or skills that it deems to be understood or done, according with a national agency, professional body or panel of experts – standards-based curriculum, and also skills that are of value immediately or shortly, according with the definition of functional curriculum. Functional skills can include not only vocational and social skills but also the everyday application of reading and writing to tasks. The authors also highlight the need to involve the family in the process of decisions about what to teach and how to teach.

Academic skills and competencies refer, empirically, to innovative teaching strategies for learning, such as developing skills for presenting a topic in a group context, or slow exposition, and respecting each student's time.

TRANSVERSAL COMPETENCES

Transversal competencies, from the curricular point of view, are those that facilitate the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities through the recognition of other knowledge, talents, and competencies that go beyond the rational and academic vision, such as experience and practice.

References used

- Steel, E. J., & Janeslätt, G. (2016). Drafting standards on cognitive accessibility: a global collaboration. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 12(4), 385–389.
- Kim, So Yeon & Lory, Catharine & Kim, Soo & Gregori, Emily & Rispoli, Mandy. (2021). Teaching Academic Skills to People with Intellectual and Developmental Disability. In Russell Lang & Peter Sturmey *Adaptive Behavior Strategies for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities* (pp.103-135) 10.1007/978-3-030-66441-1_5.



Online Resources for Chapter 1

[Cognitive Accessibility Standards in the Web and its practicalities](#)

Standards from the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) for **Web-based Cognitive Accessibility**

[Cognitive Disabilities and the Web: Where Accessibility and Usability Meet?](#)

How to avoid creating problems with the use of **computer technologies for teaching** with ID users

[Assessing Cognitive Accessibility](#)

e-book derived from a research project with comprehensive explanations of how to **assess cognitive accessibility** from an architectural point of view

[Digital accessibility for content creators and programmers](#)

A comprehensive technique guide for **digital accessibility** construction from Harvard University

[Blended Framework](#)

Guide to understanding, creating, and developing blended programs, including reflections on teaching adaptation, student involvement, and institutional investments.

[Inclusive Mobilities on Higher Education](#)

The European platform about inclusion and support services offered by higher education institutions, national agencies and ministries for education to international students.

Downloadable Documents

[Students with Specific Learning Disabilities' Experiences with Instructional Materials and Programs in a Blended High School History Classroom: A Phenomenological Study of Accessibility](#)

A 2020 Case Study from Alvarado-Alcantar and Keeley explaining experiences of Blended Learning applied to ID students and conclusions from what they

[Teaching Academic Skills to People with Intellectual and Developmental Disability](#)

The article describe what to teach and how to teach students with ID in academic subject areas using empirically supported practices that increases the likelihood that the intervention leads to positive outcomes of students

Learning objects/practical activities

Learning objectives:

1. To know about the main component of what curricula should integrate under intellectual disability perspective.
2. To better understand what cognitive accessibility looks like on curricula.
3. To better differentiate between academic skills and competences and transversal competences.

Activity 1: Considering that the University Supports are focused on specialized resources to improve the training of teachers for inclusion, what should be done so that this training considers the notions of Cognitive Accessibility?



Activity 2: Identify the transversal competencies that must be part of the curriculum to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities in the university

