

Contributions and limitations of the reception protocols for students of foreign origin: Recommendations for their improvement

Contribuciones y limitaciones de los protocolos de acogida para estudiantes extranjeros: Recomendaciones para su mejoramiento

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Background

Consolidation of migratory phenomena in Chilean educational system, added to diversification of countries of origin and the lack of a formal model for the management of cultural diversity, has generated a scenario of schools' self-taught response for schooling foreign students. This self-driven effort produced a set of reception devices to respond to these students' needs, among others, we find reception classrooms, hiring interpreters, Spanish as a second language programs, interactive groups, reception protocols. Recent literature warns that this logic involves a set of difficulties related to the design, implementation, evaluation and sustainability of the different reception devices. Implementing reception protocols responds to a continuity of actions that have been implemented in Chile and is also related to international evidence. However, what we know so far is that there are persisting tensions of curricular and didactic nature both in their design and in their execution. In this scenario, it is relevant to provide empirical evidence that favors local decision-making regarding the future of the protocols, as well as at the level of educational policies.

Aims

The objective of this study is to analyze the implementation of reception protocols in Chilean schools with a high enrollment of migrant population. From a qualitative methodology, 42 reception protocols were analyzed and systematized and in a second phase interviews were conducted with key actors in the school environment.

Method & procedure

From a qualitative approach, we carried out two sequential phases: a documentary one, aimed at analyzing reception protocols of Chilean schools with a high rate of migrant enrollment; and a second phase consisting of semi-structured interviews, with focus on the implementation of these instruments. In the documentary phase, an intentional sample corresponding to 42 reception protocols from schools belonging to the Metropolitan, Tarapacá, Maule and Biobío Regions was used during the first semester of 2020. In the second phase, six semi-structured interviews were conducted with key professionals from six of the 42 schools in the sample, where we find cultural diversity coming from different Latin American countries: Haiti, Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, mainly.

Results & discussion

The analysis of the documents showed that the psychosocial teams are the main actors involved in the implementation of the actions included in the protocols. Head teachers and heads of UTP are on a secondary level, and intercultural mediators, families and students remain on a more peripheral level. Administrative and coexistence dimensions are the main ones covered by the protocols and actions reported are receiving and evaluating the student and interviewing the family, informing the student about the school's regulations, enrolling and following up with him/her. It is possible to identify three approaches in the protocols consulted: intercultural, inclusive and integrative approach. However, there are schools that have protocols without a specific approach; they only designate actions not linked to a particular paradigm. There are also schools where approaches and concepts are mixed, making it difficult to categorize them into one in particular. The mainly declared approaches are inclusive and intercultural. Most of the school's ascribed focuses emerged from communal educational projects and therefore it is expected that they will be open to dialogue among schools in the same city.

Conclusion

Tensions are observed in its design and implementation, such as the absence of certain central educational dimensions to respond to cultural diversity. It is especially relevant to highlight the pedagogical dimension, as it entails concern for teaching and learning processes in all disciplines, critically appropriating the national curriculum, implementing an intercultural approach, which assumes its commitment to quality education considering the principles of equality and non-discrimination, the principle of participation and the elements of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability in the educational processes, as stated in the Annual Human Rights Report of the National Human Rights Institute (INDH, 2020). This implies establishing processes of evaluation, adaptation, monitoring and constant assessment to evaluate the progress of foreign students and at the same time, evaluate the impact of the program itself. We are well aware that we cannot speak of inclusive or intercultural schools if the work carried out by these schools is not reflected in greater learning opportunities and a narrowing of the achievement gaps between native and foreign students.

Keywords: Chile, inclusion, interculturality, migration, reception protocols

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