

# Diversity of Students in Bilingual University Programs: A Case Study

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*Abstract: This article not only aims to illustrate the diversity of the bilingual, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) programs offered by Spanish primary and secondary schools but also the degree programs offered by higher education institutions, in addition to the diversity of the participating university students. Even though detailed and abundant legislation exists on diversity in primary and secondary education, the regulation of diversity is scarce at the university level, and it mainly focuses on handicapped students and equal opportunities. Furthermore, little reference to diversity exists in the field of teaching methodology and evaluation, and no pedagogical measures are normally taken to compensate for the heterogeneity of students. Thus, the descriptive research that we present here illustrates the variety of reasons university students allude to when choosing the bilingual program at the Faculty of Education (University of Granada), the problems they encounter when following their classes in English as an L2, and to what extent they learn more effectively when they receive instruction in their native language (Spanish) or in the L2. In addition, it presents various methodological strategies that can be applied to such diverse groups of students.*

*Keywords: Bilingual Education, Content-Based Instruction, CBI, Content and Language Integrating Language, CLIL, Diversity of University Students*

In the Spanish education system, special attention has been given to diversity as an ongoing concern in the last two pieces of education legislation, which are generally referred to as LOE (2006) and LOMCE (2013). The objective of the two highly regulated laws has been to contribute to the enhancement of the quality of education. While there are similarities between the laws, there are also important differences which can be appreciated in their salient educational values: The LOE seeks to reconcile the quality of education with equality while the LOMCE places more emphasis on the capacities of individual students and their empowerment by emphasizing competitiveness, social mobility, and employability.

This respect for diversity is managed with the aim of delivering a proper education to all students with regard for their personal traits and needs on the levels of cognition, culture, and language. In both Spanish primary and obligatory secondary education, special emphasis is given to the prevention of learning difficulties and the educational treatment of students with special needs based on their social circumstances, physical or mental disability, or serious behavioral issues. In addition, special consideration is given to those students with high intellectual capacities.

In order to provide students with special needs the necessary educational support, educational institutions facilitate adequate material and human resources. The necessary school organization is adopted, and the corresponding curricular diversification and adaptations are carried out.

Likewise, inclusivity is promoted as well as social integration and inclusion in the labor market (Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou 2010). The current education policies also intend to identify students with high intellectual capacities, detect their needs early on, and adopt the proper action plans to suit those needs.

The principle of *differentiation*, which consists in offering educational options and curricular adaptations for different student groups, is adopted so as to favor respect for diversity. There are a number of models that enable personalized curricular adaptations with the intention of incentivizing positive social and academic outcomes. To that end, learning aims are individualized by adapting curricular objectives, simplifying the curriculum, or looking for alternative objectives. Similarly, teaching methodology is also individualized.