

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

EDUCATIONAL TOURISM: A LEARNING FOCUS FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS AND TO BENEFIT ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY IN SCHOOL

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, and for several years now, travelling has become one of the main purposes for families in our country, probably because enjoying a holiday has gone from being a privilege -or luxury- aimed at a small percentage of the population, to being one of the tasks that -generally- a large majority of families include in their annual calendars. This is so because its practice means -among many other benefits- cognitive stimulation that involves new scenarios and takes travellers away from their day-to-day occupations, as well as increasing cultural, historical, geographical and social knowledge, facilitating the development of skills and the understanding of everything that surrounds us. From a legal perspective, travel is closely related to the free development of the individual, as it is a reality for all citizens that travel brings important health benefits (Terán, Tapia and Gómez, 2019).

Specifically, over the last few decades, tourism has positioned itself as one of the most important factors in Spain's economic development. In this sense, educational tourism has increased to the extent that teaching teams and students have wished to improve the teaching-learning processes through visits whose mission facilitates the proximity of students to their usual contexts of coexistence, as well as the acquisition of competences and the increase of significant learning. In this sense, and in accordance with the belief that educational tourism is already a right - and not a luxury - for the adequate development of students, as well as for the facilitation of scenarios in which the curricular proposals

proposed by the Administration can be actively developed, in order to comply with the exposure of educational competences, it should be mentioned that - with all certainty - educational projects that incorporate educational tourism as part of their teaching plans will be well recognised by the Administration, which legislatively supports the implementation of this (Parente, 2022).

Likewise, the increase in attention to diversity in the classroom has posed a challenge for teachers, who have had to adapt to different and highly variable casuistries that have given rise, on numerous occasions, to situations in which they have had to innovate by including new methodologies in their daily work, with the aim of being able to respond to the wide variety of educational needs they face in their classrooms. In this way, and since the advent of the UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006), the participation of students with low functional performance in ordinary educational centres has acquired the status of a right since this Convention was ratified by Spain in 2008 (Álvarez, Díaz and Molina, 2021). From this perspective, it is a reality that teachers are increasingly faced with the challenge of designing teaching plans that offer appropriate responses to all their students. All this, together with the fact that people with low functional performance learn to a greater extent through experiences that they can deploy in their closest environments, which can improve the quality of their autonomy and independence. In this sense, the need to promote and increase the implementation of an educational tourism with which to triangulate the formative development through the competences that, internationally, the European educational regulations point out, as well as the curricular proposals of the national educational legislation, and therefore, their observance would necessarily lead us to improve the educational response for students with low functional performance.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There is a correspondence between the fundamental principles of the basic pillars of education, consolidated towards the integral development of the person, and educational tourism (Tuárez, Bravo and Vera, 2019; Álvarez *et al.*, 2021). For example, when we refer to learning to know, it is easier to recognise the evolution of cognitive capacities or the growth of social skills in an open environment where this promotion of curiosity or critical thinking can be observed rather than in the classroom, where resources are more limited. On the other hand, learning to do is undoubtedly integrated into reality, facilitating the development of key competences such as civic competence, competence in cultural awareness and expression or entrepreneurial competence (Álvarez *et al.*, 2021). It is a way of working on all those aspects of everyday life that are usually cultivated in the classroom through activities that laboriously try to put students in a real situation. This would involve improving communication or collaborative work through direct implementation in many more areas typical of natural environments. Another strategic way to work on education in a tourist environment is learning to be, given that students have the capacity to relate with greater respect for diversity, with empathy, in addition to intervening with greater self-knowledge, since all the activities they carry out in a classroom not only do not have the supervision and feedback of their teachers when they subsequently transfer them to

other spaces, but are often restricted to the imagination and creativity of both the teachers in creating them, and of the students in executing them. Finally, learning to live together, although also defined in schools, is much more beneficial in social environments, involving skills such as emotional awareness, empathy and social skills (Pennac, 2012). All these pillars worked on through educational tourism would be framed within the framework of universal design for learning, with the understanding that curricular proposals would be much more attainable for students as long as they can link them to the performance of daily life activities.

Evidently, there are still several challenges facing educational tourism in order to expand and combine the multiple didactic opportunities with the exploration of tourist environments. This is due to the difficulty of access and cost, given that this type of getaway is often restricted to the economic capacity of families, among whom - in addition - there is no certainty that tourist activities can be as educational as those carried out in schools (Zagalaz, Latorre and Cachón, 2002).

There is an important barrier related to the perception of safety, both of the places visited and of the parents themselves, as well as the overprotection that usually exists towards children with low functional performance, a concern that is transferred to the teachers and the rest of the professionals who will accompany them, to ensure that their children are going to be well. This is connected to the possible health problems that the children may have and which, depending on where the trip is going to take place, will surely be seen as a difficulty of accessibility to be able to make it. Consequently, although educational tourism is widely valued for its value in the development of fully experiential learning, it is limited to the low sustainability that educational institutions and the administration plan among their educational programmes (Delors, 2013).

3. CONCLUSION

It seems evident that there is an important link between educational tourism and pedagogy (Cañellas and González, 1993), and that is that they are two fields that promote a preponderantly experiential learning; that is, outside the classroom environment. This approach to learning maximises the acquisition of knowledge, allowing students to participate in and reflect on their learning and not just passively receive information. In this way, they can participate and live a direct experience with reality, being able to recognise those experiences that are viable and those that are not. Another important fact, particularly because of the relevance that schools give to it, always trying to give full observance to educational regulations, is the connection with the curriculum, since it can be more difficult to find cohesion between the curricular proposals that appear in the legislation and their possibility of being acquired in these natural environments. This is nothing more than the need for teachers to develop new skills, methods and strategies on which they can rely and not leave it all to pen and paper. Not only because there is a clear collaborative component that favours this work with the community, or because of the flexibility that allows students to adapt to different circumstances, as well as the increase in responsibility and self-confidence, but also because this field promotes critical thinking, self-discovery or motivation and curiosity, leading to the integral growth of the student.

In short, on the basis of the specialised literature reviewed, it should be noted that educational tourism can also be beneficial for teachers, as it can broaden their perspectives and enrich teaching processes in environments that transfer much more significant knowledge to students than that contained in an enclosed space. Likewise, the variety of activities offered by tourism at the educational level facilitates the improvement of social and cognitive skills, as well as the development of a more inclusive curriculum through which students with low functional performance can feel represented and fully participate in the activities planned by teachers in natural environments, eliminating stereotypes that may occur in classroom settings. Undoubtedly, educational tourism - currently on the rise - implies the creation of reliable spaces for teachers so that their didactic proposals can be much more innovative and, consequently, revealing for their students, as well as for children to be able to deploy their capabilities to the maximum, generating research spaces that deepen curricular aspects with the transfer that learning truly deserves, positively influencing the creation of community ties and with their peers, favouring - in addition - inclusion through the achievement of their goals and the correct response to the needs of the entire student body.