

1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF 2 ACTIONS IN LOCAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY TO THE PEDAGOGICAL- 3 EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF INTEGRATION AND INCLUSION OF 4 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PUBLIC SOCIAL SPHERE

5 6 7 **Abstract**

8 Local history, as a form of experiential and cultural knowledge and experience, is directly
9 connected to space and place, since it facilitates all students –particularly students with
10 disabilities– to connect social narratives and personal experiences and memories with real
11 environments, thereby providing them in this way with a content-rich framework for the
12 meaning-making of teaching and learning. Geography, on the other hand, offers additional
13 tools of organization, understanding, movement, and orientation, which in turn enhance the
14 social participation and autonomy of students with disabilities in the public space and
15 sphere, through the analysis of social interactions, routes, spaces, and mappings. The present
16 scientifically critical and interpretive work and study aims to analyze and highlight the
17 contribution of the design and implementation of actions in local history and geography to
18 the educational and pedagogical process and practice of integration and inclusion of
19 students with disabilities in the social becoming. Furthermore, it is observed and
20 simultaneously established that the utilization of the two aforementioned fields can function
21 as a lever for the strengthening and empowerment of the participation, expression, and
22 visibility of students with disabilities in public life and, at the same time, constitute a factor
23 and component of social change.

24
25 **Keywords:** local history, local geography, students with disabilities, integration and
26 inclusion, public social sphere

27 28 **Introduction**

29 Students with disabilities can develop and use skills and abilities of observation, social
30 engagement, and empathy, through targeted activities and actions, such as walks in historic
31 neighborhoods, visits to monuments, the collection of oral testimonies, and the mapping of
32 changes (Sopacua et al., 2020). Under this prism, it is noted that local history and geography
33 –as teaching subjects with a strong experiential and interdisciplinary dimension and impact–
34 provide an extremely fertile, appropriate, and effective field through real-life experiences for
35 the cultivation of participatory skills, the development of social roles, and active citizenship
36 (Kinsley, 2016; Hayhoe, 2017). In this way, it is recognized that through the combined
37 utilization of the two aforementioned fields, a dynamic framework of inclusive learning is
38 created, which allows all students –regardless of functional level, knowledge, and abilities–
39 to express ideas and emotions, to activate sensory channels, to collaborate with peers, and
40 to connect more strongly with the local community and public sphere (Vakulik et al., 2024).

41 Specifically, it must be emphasized that the integration and inclusion of students with
42 disabilities constitute a central objective and practice of contemporary education systems
43 and, in particular, emphasis is placed on differentiated instruction, on the creation of equal
44 and fair social and learning conditions, and on the removal of public barriers, ensuring equal
45 opportunities for their participation in the public social becoming and life (Wulong, 2023).
46 Social cohesion, self-perception, the sense of “belonging,” and the development of personal
47 identity as active members of the community, therefore, are found to be cultivated and
48 structured through these processes. In any case, it is observed that local history focuses on
49 the memories of the community, on the discovery of place, and on the narratives that
50 connect people with space and its transformations, naturally, over time (Armiyati et al.,

51 2025). With regard to local geography, it is underlined that it confers upon actions a
52 systematic conceptualization and meaning-making of space, where all students (with and
53 without disabilities) come into contact with cognitive and practical tools that enhance their
54 participation and action in the real world, perception, navigation, and self-awareness,
55 through and within natural formations up to the social structures and the spatial
56 organization of the respective community to which they belong and in which they live
57 throughout their lives (Schreffler et al., 2019; Stokes et al., 2019).

59 **The role of locally historical and geographical teaching and learning in the** 60 **promotion and consolidation of inclusive culture**

61 Local teaching and learning transform each respective student from a passive
62 recipient of knowledge into an active creator of meaning, values, and attitudes, since they
63 draw and extract material and content of transmission from the place, the memories, the
64 environment, the narratives, and social life (Tural, 2023). With reference to students with
65 disabilities, it is noted that this approach has double significance, because on the one hand,
66 it offers opportunities for social interaction, communication, and practical autonomization
67 and self-sufficiency, through environments that have specific meaning and substance for
68 their everyday life, and on the other hand, it reduces the cognitive and social demands of
69 abstract concepts, insofar as it is connected with real objects, images, stimuli, lived
70 experiences, and experiences. More analytically for students with disabilities, it becomes
71 apparent and is ascertained that the connection with real events, spaces, and objects
72 facilitates the development of their cognitive skills such as classification, comparison, the
73 recognition of causality and sequence, as well as the improvement of memory, attention,
74 and the ability to execute all the stages and steps of various historical events and situations
75 (Zafri-Hastuti et al., 2021). Contact with photographs, narratives from members of the
76 community, oral history evidence, historical monuments, and maps enriches and develops
77 sensory experience and allows the substantial understanding and interpretation of all local
78 events (UNESCO, 2019a; Walter, 2021).

79 Geography as a cognitive teaching subject can become –particularly for students with
80 intellectual disability and learning difficulties– accessible and
81 comprehensible/understandable through digital maps, mapping, tactile materials, three-
82 dimensional models, photographic series, and large-scale visual material. In addition, it is
83 recognized that through the use of differentiated instruction, students can work on activities
84 and projects such as the design of school routes, the recognition of buildings, the recording
85 of locations, and on orientation through images and simulations of real routes (Mol &
86 Atchison, 2019; Absady & Matyzhanov, 2023). Knowledge of geography also contributes to
87 the improvement of social participation and acceptance, since it provides the possibility for
88 all students without exception to understand the role of green spaces and cultural
89 structures, public spaces, and community services (Saripudin et al., 2021; Sarbaini-Hernawan
90 et al., 2022). All the aforementioned, moreover, are directly connected with the
91 development of social autonomy and, in essence, functionality, that is, the ability to
92 participate, to move, to listen to ongoing events, and to interact in the public space with
93 greater self-confidence, certainty, self-awareness, and safety (Ibragimovna, 2022; Rahimov,
94 2022).

96 **Pedagogical-scientific approach and use of the principles of local history and** 97 **geography in the inclusion of students with disabilities**

98 The implementation of actions in local history and geography in inclusive education
99 requires specific pedagogical principles that ensure the active participation of all students.
100 Differentiation of instruction –which includes the adaptation of content, teaching practices,
101 process, product, and the learning environment– constitutes a fundamental foundation of

102 teaching for students with disabilities. This entails the use of tangible materials, the
103 integration of multisensory approaches, the simplification of conceptual maps, the provision
104 of structured instructions, and the use of frequent repetition and reinforcement (Greeno,
105 2016). The implementation of the actions and activities of local history and geography in the
106 inclusive education of students of this particular group, therefore, requires the use and
107 utilization of specific pedagogical principles and teaching methods that ensure the active
108 participation of all students (Seok et al., 2018; Gutiérrez et al., 2020; Morgado et al., 2024).

109 The project method offers a flexible framework and environment for the integration
110 of local actions, providing the possibility and opportunity for students to work toward a
111 common goal and to present the results to the school community. In addition, it is
112 recognized that cooperative learning and the group-collaborative approach enhance the
113 participation of all students, facilitating and allowing mutual support and the development
114 of bonds among the members of the group (Tenerife et al., 2022). Beyond the above, it is
115 observed that the interconnection of the school with local bodies may create a broader
116 network of pedagogical support and social integration of students with disabilities within the
117 local and supra-local context of the public sphere (Sunarti et al., 2023). Experiential learning
118 also constitutes the central method of approaching these students, since through walks,
119 observations, explorations, mappings, discussions with members of the community, small-
120 scale research, and group projects, students with disabilities develop skills such as
121 communication, collaboration, problem-solving, the undertaking of initiatives, and the
122 management of emotions, which certainly transcend the limits of the subject matter.
123 However, it is underlined that an important element is the use of photographs, videos,
124 digital media, as well as the connection of activities with real events and local histories that
125 mobilize their interest (Tobin & Behling, 2018; Triviño-Amigo et al., 2022).

126

127 **The contribution of local history and geography actions to the cognitive, psycho-** 128 **emotional, and social development and advancement of students with disabilities**

129 It is established that the participation of students with disabilities in actions of local
130 history and geography (Carabajal et al., 2017) may bring them multiple and diverse benefits
131 and advantages, since the cognitive, psycho-emotional, social, and functional domains of
132 their development and progress are supported, cultivated, and constructed (Sakti et al.,
133 2024). More specifically, it appears that at the cognitive level, students with disabilities
134 improve attention, observation, the ability of classification, the understanding of sequences,
135 the comparison of information, and the processing of events. Admittedly, it is emphasized
136 that the connection of concepts with real materials, landscapes, and situations facilitates
137 understanding and strengthens working memory (Shiu, 2024). Experiential environments,
138 now, at the psycho-emotional level and outcome, enhance joy, curiosity, interest, and their
139 engagement in teaching and learning (Pickrell, 2020; Rimatuzzahriah et al., 2024).

140 In other words, it is underlined that the possibility of exploring real spaces encourages
141 and facilitates autonomy, freedom of movement, and the development of positive identity
142 and independence (Ramlan et al., 2023; Nurdauletova et al., 2024). In light of this reasoning,
143 it is supported that geography and local history contribute significantly to the development
144 of functional and practical skills of everyday life, such as orientation, the recognition of
145 routes, environmental safety, and the utilization of public services, that is, abilities and
146 capacities which are necessary for the social and personal autonomy and self-sufficiency of
147 students with disabilities (Setiyonugroho et al., 2022). Actions at the social level, on the
148 other hand, strengthen cooperation, participation in the group, communication, and the
149 management of social interactions (Carabajal & Atchison, 2020; Saefudin et al., 2024). In this
150 case, it becomes evident that students with disabilities acquire experiences of coexistence
151 and interaction with different people, a fact that contributes to the reduction of social
152 anxiety and to the strengthening of self-confidence. Local learning helps them to understand

153 their role in broader social structures and to develop the sense of community (Dzombak,
154 2020; Muhamad et al., 2024).

155 **Conclusions – Proposals**

156 In any way and form, it becomes understandable that through the exploration of place
157 –students with and without disabilities– acquire knowledge deeply connected with their
158 everyday life, develop skills of navigation, communication, collaboration, and problem-
159 solving, while at the same time self-esteem, self-awareness, emotional stability, and the
160 sense of “belonging” are strengthened. When local history and geography programs are
161 designed on the basis of the principles of experiential learning, differentiated instruction,
162 and cooperation between school – community, then they can function as catalysts of social
163 innovation and community cohesion. Furthermore, it is demonstrated that the participation
164 of the family, the involvement of local bodies, and the utilization of innovative digital tools
165 enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the actions, transforming the school into a
166 center of social change and promotion of inclusion of students with disabilities in lived
167 reality. In this sense, it is recognized that actions of local history and geography constitute
168 strong pillars of inclusive education, since they strengthen social participation, cultivate the
169 active citizenship of students with disabilities, and promote experiential learning.

170 Based on the above, there should exist networks of school units that will cooperate
171 for the development of innovative inclusive practices of local history and geography; digital
172 tools (multimedia applications, accessible maps, geotagging, etc.) should be developed by
173 each respective local school which will facilitate the access of students with disabilities to
174 knowledge; there should be the involvement of parents and the local community as bodies
175 and partners for the promotion of issues of local history and geography in the educational
176 process and practice; accessible learning routes should be created with municipalities and
177 various cultural bodies; and the systematic adoption and utilization of oral history and
178 mapping should be designed for the empowerment and strengthening of students with
179 disabilities.

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