DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED SCHOOL WELCOMING: RESULTS OF A SCOPING REVIEW

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT E ACCOGLIENZA SCOLASTICA SUPPORTATA DALLA TECNOLOGIA: RISULTATI DI UNA SCOPING REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores the use of technology in schools to meet the needs of migrant students with diverse cultural backgrounds and language skills. Through a literature review and analysis of Diversity Management models, it outlines the process and results related to the inclusion of linguistically disadvantaged students. The study provides guidelines for inclusive digital teaching that supports student growth in multicultural school environments.

Il lavoro esplora l'uso delle tecnologie a scuola per soddisfare le esigenze di studenti migranti con background culturali e competenze linguistiche differenti. Attraverso una revisione della letteratura e dei modelli di Diversity Management, vengono descritti il processo e i risultati per l'accoglienza scolastica di studenti con svantaggio linguistico. Si delineano le linee guida per una didattica tecnologica inclusiva che valorizzi gli studenti a crescere in contesti scolastici multiculturali.

KEYWORDS

Inclusive education, Diversity Management, Scoping review Educazione inclusiva, Diversity Management, Scoping review

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Introduction

In recent years, the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity of school classrooms has posed new challenges to the education system, making it necessary to rethink strategies and tools to ensure fair and inclusive integration. In this context, digital technologies represent an increasingly valuable resource to support the inclusion of migrant students and promote teaching practices that embrace and enhance diversity.

1. Diversity management and school

The concept of Diversity Management originates from organizational sciences and refers to the systematic and planned commitment by organizations to welcome and collaboratively coordinate their members with diverse backgrounds and abilities, namely characterized by cultural, age, gender, and ability differences (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1992; Lauring, 2013). The underlying hypothesis of Diversity Management is that managing an organization through an inclusive and diversity-promoting approach offers competitive advantages such as: 'incentive for change, talent enhancement, drive for innovative solutions, ability to respond to client and market heterogeneity, increased employee commitment, enhancement of educational and experiential backgrounds, creation of a more harmonious work environment' (Buemi et al., 2015, p. 13). As an organizational approach, Diversity Management is based on fundamental assumptions that guide intervention planning, including:

- considering people as a fundamental resource for achieving the organization's objectives;
- recognizing that people are characterized by primary diversity (such as gender, age, ethnicity, congenital disability, sexual orientation), secondary diversity (such as family context, cultural background, nationality, language, religion, acquired disability), and organizational diversity (such as work experience, seniority, skills, and role);
- assuming that top-down and uniform organizational solutions for all system members are not the most efficient strategic choice for member well-being and the achievement of the organization's goals.

In educational and school contexts, the Diversity Management model has been identified as 'a tool capable of promoting greater education on diversity' (Peluso Cassese, Tafuri, Di Palma, 2017, p. 319; Tafuri & Torreggiani, 2018). In the context

of educational and inclusive leadership (Rayner, 2009; Dimmock & Walker, 2005), Diversity Management is generally useful to 'understand the systemic and human interaction between structure and action in implementing the educational diversity offer in the learning community' as well as to 'further establish an integrated management of a personalized and social approach to education' (p. 434). It is seen as a 'management approach' (ibid.), aimed at achieving – through the acceptance and enhancement of "diverse" individuals within the school system – cultural change, with the consequent social and ultimately economic benefits.

The study by Konings, Ağırdağ, and De Leersnyder (2023) revealed that the usual descriptive models of school diversity are based on general and abstract measurement scales (mainly referring to ethnic-cultural diversity — e.g., assimilation, colorblindness, and pluralism), without intersecting data on the perceptions of organizational actors. The study proposes, instead, a concrete model based on so-called 'domains' (language, religion, curriculum, and identity), more closely tied to teachers' perceptions of the types of diversity encountered at school: these are filtered by personal beliefs and knowledge about diversity, as well as by self-efficacy beliefs related to culturally responsive teaching.

1.1. Use of Technology for Diversity Management

The use of technology and electronic devices is transforming both teaching and learning methods and school organizational practices: on one hand, it poses challenges in terms of device access and user training (both students and teachers); on the other hand, it offers significant opportunities to promote more inclusive and welcoming education (Calvani, 2020; Agostini, 2024).

Although limited in number, studies investigating the relationship between technology and organizational practices have demonstrated the usefulness of the former in terms of inclusion and participation. Starting from a close connection between diversity and inclusion as fundamental organizational priorities, the multidesign exploratory study using both primary and secondary data conducted by Triplett (2023) showed that technology plays a fundamental role in promoting diversity and inclusion, provided that full access to digital technologies is ensured regardless of the users' economic, social, and cultural background. The study's data demonstrate a direct correlation between the implementation of technological tools and increased perception of diversity and inclusion across various social domains. The research findings state that technology 'possesses the transformative power to dismantle entrenched patterns of discrimination and create new opportunities for all individuals' (p. 38).

The results of the recent systematic review by Navas-Bonilla et al. (2025) indicate that educational technologies – such as mobile devices, interactive applications, and augmented reality – transform the learning environment into a more inclusive and accessible space, especially when used to adapt and personalize educational paths according to the diverse needs of students and teachers.

2. Scoping Review: Technologies for the School Reception of Students with Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

The conscious use of educational technologies represents a strategic lever to address the challenges posed by increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in schools. This scoping review aims to provide an initial mapping of the scientific literature on the use of digital technologies in the school reception of students with linguistic disadvantages, offering evidence and guidelines for inclusive practices based on Diversity Management models.

The scoping review followed the five-stage methodological framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005, pp. 7-8; Pham et al., 2014):

- a) Defining the research question
- b) Identifying relevant studies
- c) Study selection
- d) Document tracking
- e) Collection, synthesis, and reporting of results useful for optional wider consultation

a. Defining the research question

The main questions guiding the review were:

- Q1 What technologies are used to support the learning of students with linguistic disadvantages, and how are they integrated into schools' educational and organizational models?
- Q2 What technologies are adopted in schools to facilitate the reception and learning of students with linguistic disadvantages, from a perspective of inclusive education and Diversity Management?
- Q3 What does recent literature reveal about classroom inclusion systems?

b. Identifying relevant studies

The research was conducted in databases such as Scopus and Google Scholar, using the keywords "inclusive education" and "Diversity Management." The search

considered studies from 2021 to 2025 and retrieved 426 documents. The search was then limited to English-language articles using the query: (TITLE-ABS-KEY-FULL "inclusive education") AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY-FULL "Diversity Management") AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE "English")) AND (LIMIT-TO ("Open Access")), yielding 96 publications. Zotero software was used for citation management and RIS file export, while Rayyan was employed to assist in the screening process.

c. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria: English or Italian language studies; primary or lower secondary school settings; technologies targeting linguistic support or the inclusion of students from different cultural backgrounds. Exclusion criteria: Studies focused on higher education; those addressing cognitive disabilities not related to language; non-accessible full-text articles.

d. Study selection

The selection process occurred in two stages: an initial database search and screening of titles and abstracts, followed by full-text reading of selected articles to access relevance based on population, content, and objectives (see Fig. 1). Three articles were finally selected.

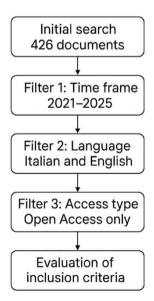


Fig. 1 – Selection process of the scoping review

e. Document tracking

A brief comparative analysis was conducted on the documents considered – Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2021; Wakat et al., 2023; Hendriksen et al., 2024.

Inclusive education today represents one of the main challenges for educational systems worldwide. In light of the growing linguistic and cultural diversity within schools, the effectiveness of inclusive practices depends on the combination of pedagogical, organizational, and relational factors. Recent literature provides significant insights into how schools can promote more equitable and welcoming educational environments. Three studies, in particular, offer an integrated perspective on leadership, teaching practices, and teacher agency.

The first study by Gómez-Hurtado, García-Carmona, and Castro (2021) demonstrates that inclusive leadership is essential for building an inclusive school culture. The analysis conducted on six schools in Spain and Chile identifies four key dimensions for effective diversity management: continuous professional development of staff, expanded school participation, fostering an inclusive culture and positive management of differences.

It is not just about implementing formal practices, but about driving a cultural change that impacts every level of the school. According to the authors, leadership functions as the main engine of inclusive transformation, making the integration of migrant students more effective and sustainable. The methodology used involves interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The main findings converge on the fact that leadership plays a crucial role in building inclusive and collaborative schools. Schools that promote inclusive leadership are, according to this work, successful in integrating migrant students and creating an equitable school environment.

In parallel, the research by Wakat, Paulino, Cagaoan, and Ulla (2023) focuses on the teaching strategies adopted in primary school classrooms in the Philippines, characterized by significant linguistic heterogeneity. The teachers interviewed implemented techniques such as material diversification, multimodal communication, and activity adaptation based on the linguistic backgrounds of the students. However, time management and organizational complexity emerged as significant obstacles. This study highlights that adopting inclusive strategies cannot disregard systematic support for teachers, especially in terms of training and tools for managing classroom complexity. The methodology employed by the authors involves semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, visual materials, and learning logs. The study finds that teachers have adopted inclusive strategies by diversifying teaching materials, communication channels, and activities to respond

to different linguistic backgrounds. According to this study, these strategies are effective, but the challenges sometimes lead to minimalized learning. There is a need to improve time management and enhance support for teaching in linguistically complex contexts.

Finally, Hendriksen, Logtenberg, Westbroek, and Janssen (2024) examine the role of teacher agency in developing inclusive teaching projects in Dutch secondary schools. Using the Personal Project Analysis (PPA) methodology, the authors note that, while teachers perceive inclusive projects as highly meaningful, they face difficulties in integrating them into the daily curriculum. Support from school leadership and the ability to adapt projects to official educational goals emerge as decisive factors for the success of inclusive practices. The study emphasizes the importance of strengthening the professional autonomy of teachers by promoting school contexts that recognize and value inclusive educational actions. They use a methodology based on Personal Project Analysis (PPA) with semi-structured interviews with 12 teachers. The findings show that inclusive projects are perceived as meaningful but are often difficult to integrate. Teacher agency is fostered by supportive school management and the connection between the project and the existing curriculum. Promoting autonomy and institutional support is key to developing truly inclusive teaching practices.

From the comparative analysis of the three studies, several common themes emerge:

- School inclusion cannot be the result of individual initiatives, but requires
 a systemic approach integrating leadership, teaching practices, and teacher
 agency. In this perspective, educational technologies can play a strategic
 role.
- The use of multilingual platforms, automatic translation tools, Al-based adaptive learning environments, and collaborative digital projects appears to be a potential lever for enhancing inclusion.
- However, the effectiveness of such tools depends on their integration into a well-structured and conscious school model.

In conclusion, the literature examined converges in supporting that only through a balanced combination of innovative teaching, inclusive leadership, and the development of teacher agency will it be possible to guarantee equal opportunities for participation and academic success for all students, regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

f. Collection, synthesis, and reporting of results for potential further consultation

The analysis of the three selected studies highlights that the construction of an inclusive school environment depends on the integration of leadership practices, targeted teaching strategies, and the strengthening of teacher agency. First and foremost, inclusive leadership is an essential factor for the effective management of cultural diversity in schools (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2021). In light of these findings, it is clear that the introduction of inclusive educational technologies represents a promising path to consolidating practices of school reception and integration. Schools can intervene by: producing multilingual digital materials; using contextualized automatic translation tools; adopting Al-based adaptive learning platforms; promoting collaborative digital projects that value linguistic identities; and providing continuous professional development for teachers on inclusive technological teaching methodologies. The literature analyzed converges in asserting that only through a systemic and intentional approach, supported by adequate digital tools, can truly inclusive education be realized for students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

3. Results

Q1 – What technologies are used to support the learning of students with linguistic disadvantages, and how are they integrated into schools' educational and organizational models?

In the three articles analyzed, the direct use of technologies to support language learning is not the central focus, but some implicit insights emerge regarding the potential of technologies in supporting inclusive practices.

In particular:

- In the study by Wakat et al. (2023), teachers adopt multimodal strategies that can be easily supported by technological tools (e.g., the use of digital visual materials, audiovisual aids to overcome language barriers).
- In Hendriksen et al. (2024), inclusive teaching projects are discussed which, although not specifically technology-based, could be enhanced through adaptive or collaborative digital tools that facilitate the integration of students from diverse backgrounds.

Technologies are therefore viewed as tools that can potentially be integrated into school organizational models, but their effective use requires:

- support from school leadership;
- alignment with the existing curriculum;

- targeted teacher training for conscious implementation;
- Technologies can be incorporated into educational models as support tools for differentiated instruction and linguistic inclusion practices, but they require clear governance focused on inclusion.

Q2 – What technologies are adopted in schools to facilitate the reception and learning of students with linguistic disadvantages, from the perspective of inclusive education and diversity management?

The three studies show that:

- A structured technological approach to facilitate linguistic inclusion is not yet systematically adopted.
- Wakat et al. (2023) indirectly suggest the importance of visual and alternative communication tools that can be supported by technology (e.g., educational apps, translation tools, multimedia resources).
- Gómez-Hurtado et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of school leadership in promoting integration: in this context, technologies could be employed as tools to support intercultural communication and the construction of a shared school culture.

Technologies indicated as potentially useful include:

- automatic translation tools (e.g., Google Translate, Microsoft Translator);
- multilingual learning platforms (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom);
- digital visual and audiovisual resources;
- multimedia storytelling co-creation tools (e.g., Padlet, Canva).

However, the use of technologies must be consciously embedded within a broader Diversity Management strategy involving both teachers and school leadership.

Q3 – What does the recent literature say about systems of inclusion in classroom contexts?

The literature from the three articles converges on several key points: classroom inclusion requires intentional, multilayered strategies—strong school leadership, flexible teaching practices, and support for teacher autonomy.

Effective strategies identified include differentiated instruction to address various linguistic and cultural levels, through the active engagement of students from different backgrounds and continuous institutional support for teachers.

The main obstacles are the lack of time to plan and manage differentiated interventions (Wakat et al., 2023); poor integration of inclusive projects into the

regular curriculum (Hendriksen et al., 2024); and the need for school leaders capable of culturally guiding the entire institution (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2021). Recent literature highlights that inclusion systems only work if action is taken simultaneously at the instructional, organizational, and cultural levels, and if a structured approach is promoted that views diversity as an educational resource, not a barrier.

4. Discussion

In light of the evidence gathered through the scoping review, it is possible to reflect further and explore opportunities for technological intervention in schools. Above all, it becomes clear that educational technologies can serve as powerful tools to promote linguistic and cultural inclusion, provided their use is guided by pedagogical awareness. Firstly, the production of multilingual digital materials through platforms such as Google Classroom or Moodle enables content to be made accessible to students with different language proficiencies, thus supporting more equitable and inclusive learning processes. Moreover, the use of automated and assisted translation tools, such as Google Translate or DeepL, can facilitate initial communication with non-Italian-speaking students, as long as these tools are accompanied by pedagogical pathways aimed at developing authentic language skills. Special attention should be paid to the integration of adaptive learning platforms based on artificial intelligence, which offer personalized learning paths that consider students' diverse linguistic and cultural levels. Similarly, the promotion of collaborative digital projects—such as the creation of multimedia narratives or intercultural content—can help value students' identities, fostering a sense of belonging and active participation in the classroom.

However, to ensure the effectiveness of such initiatives, continuous teacher training on the pedagogical use of inclusive technologies is essential. Only well-prepared teachers can design meaningful educational interventions that integrate digital tools in a purposeful rather than superficial way.

In conclusion, technology represents a key resource for school inclusion, but its effectiveness depends on schools' ability to embed it within a broad and systemic educational framework that recognizes diversity as an asset rather than a challenge.

Comments

The concept of Diversity Management, originally developed in organizational sciences, refers to the set of systemic and planned strategies that organizations adopt to value diversity among their members and promote inclusive and equitable environments (Betters-Reed & Moore, 1992; Lauring, 2013). In the educational field, this approach is recognized as a useful tool for fostering an educational culture oriented toward inclusion and the appreciation of differences (Peluso Cassese, Tafuri & Di Palma, 2017).

Applied to schools, Diversity Management goes beyond the formal recognition of cultural, linguistic, or religious differences. It proposes a systemic vision of organizational change that involves leadership, teaching, relationships, and school policies (Rayner, 2009; Dimmock & Walker, 2005). Recent studies, such as that by Konings, Ağırdağ, and De Leersnyder (2023), suggest adopting models based on "concrete domains" (language, religion, curriculum, and identity), which are closer to teachers' perceptions and capable of triggering truly effective educational responses.

In this context, educational technologies emerge as strategic resources for supporting schools in managing diversity in an inclusive manner. Recent research shows that the integration of digital tools not only enhances access and personalized learning but also contributes to strengthening participatory and inclusive dynamics within school communities (Calvani, 2020; Agostini, 2024). In an exploratory study, Triplett (2023) demonstrated that the targeted use of technology can significantly contribute to the perception of inclusion, provided that equitable access to digital resources is guaranteed regardless of users' socioeconomic background. In parallel, Navas-Bonilla et al. (2025) confirm that tools such as educational apps, mobile devices, and augmented reality enhance the school experience, especially when used for instructional adaptation and personalization according to individual needs.

Inclusive leadership proves to be a crucial factor for effectively managing cultural diversity in schools (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2021). School leaders who promote participation, intercultural dialogue, and continuous professional development are able to create more equitable and integration-friendly environments.

At the same time, the crucial role of inclusive teaching strategies emerges, as shown in the study by Wakat et al. (2023). Adopting diversified teaching materials, communication methods, and learning activities makes it possible to address the linguistic needs of students from multilingual backgrounds. However, such

practices require careful time planning to avoid negative impacts on teaching effectiveness.

Finally, teacher agency stands out as a key element in implementing inclusive educational practices (Hendriksen et al., 2024). Teachers' ability to integrate inclusive projects into everyday school life is strongly influenced by the organizational support they receive and the alignment with the existing curriculum. When agency is supported by positive leadership, inclusive practices tend to be more stable and embedded.

In light of this evidence, it is clear that the introduction of inclusive educational technologies represents a promising avenue to strengthen practices of reception and school integration. Schools can intervene through:

- the production of multilingual digital materials,
- the use of contextualized automatic translation tools,
- the adoption of adaptive learning platforms based on artificial intelligence,
- the promotion of co-creative digital projects that value linguistic identities,
- and the continuous training of teachers in inclusive digital teaching methodologies.

The reviewed literature consistently affirms that only through a systemic and intentional approach—supported by appropriate digital tools—can a truly inclusive education be achieved for students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Author contributions

The article is the result of shared work. However, L.S. Agrati wrote abstract, paragraphs 1 and 1.1, F.P. Dilillo wrote paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and comments.

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