



Inclusive practices in education

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Abstract

The article seeks to challenge researchers in the field of inclusive education's conceptions and methods. This is based on a review of publications that appeared in the International Journal of Inclusive Education between 2005 and 2015, which identified the subjects and research methods covered in those segments. The analysis draws attention to the fact that few research use collaborative, transformative methodologies and that the majority only focus on certain groups of learners. It is stated that the principles of inclusive education are violated by concentrating solely on a select group of pupils rather than on all of them. At the same time, given the emphasis of inclusion on enabling the participation for all students, it is argued that more research needs to adopt collaborative approaches that set out to change thinking and practice in the field. Illustrative examples from articles that used such approaches are discussed to highlight their potential benefits.

Keywords: Conceptions, transformative methodologies, emphasis, inclusion, potential

Introduction

Inclusive education has been a contested term since its appearance, with strong advocates as well as strong opponents (Brantlinger, 1997). Others have argued that it has become a buzzword, implying that it is simply a fashion (O'Hanlon and Thomas, 2004). The term has gained grounds internationally since the United Nations Salamanca Statement (1994), signed by 192 member countries, which argued for schools with an inclusive orientation as being "the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all".

Since then, the term has undergone considerable scrutiny, with a variety of definitions used by different authors.

Operti, Walker, and Zhang (2014) suggest that there are four core ideas internationally that relate to the continually-evolving journey towards inclusion: the human rights based perspective (1948 -), a response to children with special needs (1990 -), a response to marginalised groups (2000 -), and transforming education systems (2005 -). As they rightly argue, "regions are still far from effectively implementing the concept of inclusive education as transforming the education system at large" (p. 159), and a number of countries are still focusing either on special needs or other marginalised groups.

As a result of their review of international trends, Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (2006a) ^[3] suggest a typology of six ways of thinking about inclusion. This is useful for thinking about the various ways in which inclusion has been conceptualised. These are:

- **Inclusion as concerned with disability and 'special educational needs:** This is thought to be the most typical strategy. As the authors point out, limiting one's understanding of inclusion to issues related to disability and "special educational needs" can prevent the growth of a more comprehensive perspective on inclusion. In addition, the way categories are used to highlight individuals' flaws rather of addressing broader contextual problems may put impediments in the way of people participating.

- **Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusions:** here, inclusion is connected with kids that exhibit problematic behaviour and may be expelled from school. The contextual circumstances that might result in these exclusions are once more highlighted by the writers.
- **Inclusion as the promotion of the school for all:** This method is related to what is known as the comprehensive school in England, which refers to the creation of a school for everyone instead of dividing up students into several school types based on their academic performance at the age of 11, as it was done in the past.
- **Inclusion as a principled approach to education and society:** Here, it is believed that it is crucial for guiding general policies and practises to articulate inclusive principles such as equity, participation, community, and respect for diversity.

The process of analysis

Methodologies and emphasis areas I conducted an examination of the research that has been done in the area of inclusive education over the past seven years with this goal in mind. I chose "Inclusive Education" as the name for my study, which focused on inclusive education and learning support in schools.

As can be seen, the biggest proportion of studies focus on particular groups/categories, particularly disability (21 %) and special needs (15 %), or a combination of the two (3 %). Others are concerned with a combination of categories (15 %), such as gender and disability, ethnic minority and disability, etc. Though the percentages of other groups might seem small, such as ADHD for example (2 %), or behaviour (3 %), what is important is that, if they are all added up, then the percentage rises to 82 % of the studies focusing on individual 6 groups/categories. Significantly in terms of my argument, studies that focus on all children, or address diversity - which is more compatible to the broad

concept of inclusion that I have adopted - make up only 8 % of the studies. In addition, 10 % of studies is what I called "other" which relate to issues such as reading interventions, equity, etc.

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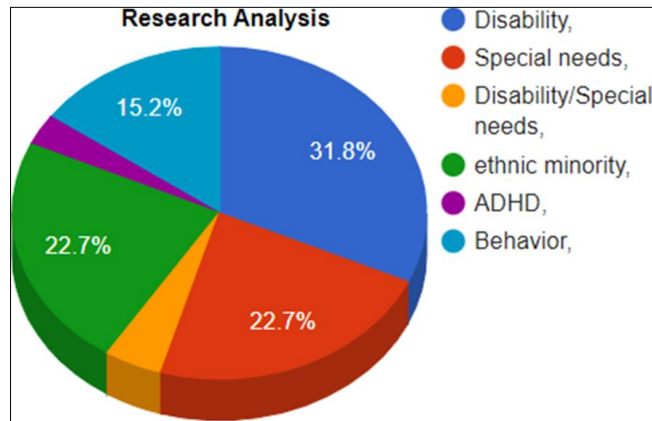


Fig 1

Conclusion

In two schools, Model High School (English medium) and Princess Duru Shevar High School (Urdu medium), I conducted research using a qualitative methodology. I worked with an 11-year-old boy named Abdullah who was a CP child and had a learning handicap at the English Medium school. He has improved both physically and cognitively since enrolling in the regular students' class, demonstrating improvements in his focus, engagement with peers, and general demeanour. Additionally, his ability to walk without assistance has improved significantly up until a certain point.

When I first arrived at Princess Duru Shevar School, I observed a 13-year-old girl by the name of Samreen. She was an autistic child who struggled to communicate with people and convey her emotions. When I looked into her past to learn more about her conduct and autism, I discovered that she had been homeschooled for ten years and was a very antisocial person. Later, when she enrolled in this school, she initially had a difficult time adjusting to the crowd and the people, but gradually noticeable changes in her behaviour that benefited her anti-social disposition started to appear.

References

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