

Assignment on
Inclusive Education



BY

Noman Hafeez

M.Phil Edu (morning) 1st semester

Session: 2015-17

Submitted To:

Dr. Sayed Anees ul Husnain Shah Bukhari

Department of Education

University of Education, Lahore

Campus, Dera Ghazi Khan

SUMMARY

Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and support staff. The social worker applies various theories in their work so that the most appropriate and systematic help can be given to their clients. Inclusive Education is a movement and numerous theories are applicable in inclusive classroom settings. This assignment will debate on inclusive education and then will present what theories can be applied in inclusive classroom environment.

Introduction: Inclusive Education

The term “inclusive education” is the combination of two words; “inclusive” and “education”. Inclusive is derived from include. It means, “Including many things or everything”. Inclusive education means “including people of all kind in education, so that they can learn together.”

Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and support staff.

Inclusion in education is a process of enabling all children to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school systems. It does not segregate children who have different abilities or needs. Inclusive education is a rights-based approach to educating children and includes those who are subject to exclusionary pressures.

In almost every country, some children and adults who cannot compete in school are being excluded from formal education altogether. They are gradually and deliberately pushed out of the school system because schools are not sensitive to their learning styles and backgrounds. In a gesture of sympathy some children are sorted out into categories and placed in separate special schools, away from their peers. This has led to the development of two separate systems of education within countries: regular and special education-teaching for students with special needs. However, in recent years the rationale for having two parallel national systems of education has been questioned and the foundations of 'special education' have begun to crumble. The thinking that has developed during the last 50 years in the disability field has had significant influences not only on special education but also on practice in regular education. Current thinking and knowledge demands that the responsibility for ALL learners should remain with the regular classroom teacher.

Why Inclusive Education

The United Nations and other international organizations are encouraging the development of inclusive education systems for a number of reasons.

The most important reason is the human rights for all children to receive education. Providing education for all children in one educational system has educational, social and economical advantages. The UN Salamanca statement 1994 states that:

“Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to all the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system”.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) sets out children’s rights in respect of freedom from discrimination and in respect of the representation of their wishes and views.

We are all now familiar with the 1990 *World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs*. The Declaration states that, inter alia:

Basic education should be provided to all children... To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded, and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities (Article 3.1). (UNESCO, 1998:3)

So this is the philosophy of inclusive education that education is the right of every child and all children should be given education equally in the same classroom.

Special Education

Special education refers to education for students who may require additional support to be successful students. It also refers to education for those students who will not be able to compete in a regular classroom setting. Since universally, all children are entitled to receive an education, even those children who lack the mental abilities to take on more advanced education are offered schooling which can help those master basic skills.

Thus some special education services may involve separate classrooms for students unable or unready to be in a mainstream course. Other times, special education services may help children with a particular issue. For example, students with speech delays may have speech therapy and students with physical problems might take special occupational therapy courses.

But the creation of special education introduced several educational problems. I will list only five here. These are:

1. Children who qualify for special education have something wrong with them that make it difficult for them to participate in the regular school curriculum; they thus receive a curriculum that is different from that of their peers.
2. Children with disabilities and other conditions are labeled and excluded from the mainstream of society. Assessment procedures tend to categorize students and this has damaging effects on teacher and parent expectations and on the students' self-concept
3. The presence of specialists in special education encourages regular classroom teachers to pass on to others responsibility for children they regard as special.
4. Resources that might otherwise be used to provide more flexible and responsive forms of schooling are channeled into separate provision.
5. The emphasis on Individualized Educational Plans and task analysis in special education tends to lower teacher expectations of the students. In addition, task analysis and the associated behavioral teaching strategies introduce disjointed knowledge and skills thus making learning less meaningful to students.

To respond to these apparent weaknesses, integration was seen as a reasonable arrangement. Integration recognizes the existence of a continuum of services, from the special school, special class to the regular class with or without support.

Integrated Education

Integration calls for separate arrangements in the regular school for exceptional children, mainly those traditionally labeled as disabled, through such practices as withdrawal, remedial education and/or mainstreaming.

Inclusion vs. Integration

The new idea is that the concept of integration should be replaced by a move towards inclusive schooling/education. Integration demands that "additional arrangements will be made to accommodate" pupils with disabilities "within a system of schooling that remains largely unchanged"; inclusive education, on the other hand, aims to restructure schools in order to respond to the learning needs of all children.

Thus integration calls for separate arrangements in the regular school for exceptional children, mainly those traditionally labeled as disabled, through such practices as withdrawal,

remedial education and/or mainstreaming. However, inclusive schooling, in the first instance, recognizes that special learning needs can arise from social, psychological, economic, linguistic, cultural as well as physical (or disability) factors, hence the use of the term "children with special needs" rather than "children with disabilities". Second, it recognizes that any child can experience difficulty in learning, short-lived or long-term, at any time during the school career and, therefore, the school must continually review itself to meet the needs of all its learners.

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of 'integration' and 'mainstreaming', which tended to be concerned principally with disability and 'special educational needs' and implied learners changing or becoming 'ready for' accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child's right to participate and the school's duty to accept. It is about ...

- rejecting segregation or exclusion of learners for whatever reason – ability, gender, language, care status, family income, disability, sexuality, colour, religion or ethnic origin;
- maximizing the participation of all learners in the community schools of their choice;
- making learning more meaningful and relevant for all, particularly those learners most vulnerable to exclusionary pressures;
- Rethinking and restructuring policies, curricula, cultures and practices in schools and learning environments so that diverse learning needs can be met, whatever the origin or nature of those needs may be.

Inclusion is about school change to improve the educational system for all students. It means changes in the curriculum, changes in how teachers teach and how students learn, as well as changes in how students with and without special needs interact with and relate to one another. Inclusive education practices reflect the changing culture of contemporary schools with emphasis on active learning, authentic assessment practices, applied curriculum, multi-level instructional approaches, and increased attention to diverse student needs and individualization. The claim is that schools, centers of learning and educational systems must change so that they become caring, nurturing, and supportive educational communities where the needs of all students and teachers are truly met. Inclusive schools no longer provide

"regular education" and "special education". Instead, inclusive schools provide an inclusive education-which is the inclusion of all kind of people-and as a result students will be able to learn together. In other words, it is open to all students, and that ensure that all students learn and participate. For this to happen, teachers, schools and systems may need to change so that they can better accommodate the diversity of needs that pupils have and that they are included in all aspects of school-life. It also means identifying any barriers within and around the school that hinder learning and participation, and reducing or removing these barriers. Inclusive education is a process of enabling all students, including previously excluded groups, to learn and participate effectively within mainstream school systems. Placing excluded students within a mainstream setting does not of itself achieve inclusion.

Need for Inclusive Education, for ALL Children

All children have dreams, interests and needs. They need to explore the world to learn. They need to socialize with their peers to develop their identity. The separation of disabled children deprives them from the basic stimulation of daily life. Disabled children need protection like all children do, but keeping them fully dependent on careers threatens their cognitive and social development and increases the risk of neglect and abuse. Exclusion from education reinforces and deepens illiteracy and it increases dependency and poverty for disabled children and for those who care for them in their families. All children have unique capacities, opinions and needs and have their own styles of learning. The capacity to learn does not depend on the impairment of a child but on the potential and the way that the child is enabled and encouraged to develop this potential. If decisions are made with their consent, if their learning potential is challenged to the fullest, if they can play and learn together with their peers, all children will be valued and encouraged to learn on their own merits. This is why all children need to learn in inclusive educational settings.

Principles of Inclusive Education

Some of the principles, identified by experts, are following;

- Every student has an inherent right to education on basis of equality of opportunity.
- No student is excluded from, or discriminated within education on grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, birth, poverty or other status.
- All students can learn and benefit from education.

- Schools adapt to the needs of students, rather than students adapting to the needs of the school.
- The student's views are listened to and taken seriously.
- Individual differences between students are a source of richness and diversity, and not a problem.
- The diversity of needs and pace of development of students are addressed through a wide and flexible range of responses.

Benefits of inclusive education

To briefly describe, the benefits of inclusive education are the following;

- All children are able to be part of their community and develop a sense of belonging and become better prepared for life in the community as children and adults.
- Inclusive education provides better opportunities for learning as children with varying abilities are often better motivated when they learn in classes in schools and are surrounded by other children. Children are exposed to a wide range of activities and people.
- In an inclusive education environment, the expectations on all children are higher. Successful inclusion attempts to develop an individual's strengths and gifts. Higher expectations usually lead to more success.
- Inclusive education allows children to work on individual goals while being with other students their own age.
- Inclusive education encourages the involvement of parents in the education of their children and in the activities of their local schools.
- Inclusive education fosters a culture of respect and belonging. It provides the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences. Typically, issues such as harassment and bullying are not as serious when a culture of inclusion and belonging is created.
- Inclusion provides all children opportunities to develop friendships with one another. Friendships provide role models and opportunities for growth. They are essential to a successful and fulfilling life in the community.
- Inclusive education usually has a positive effect on our communities. As children learn to accept one another, it is less likely that certain individuals will be rejected by society as they have been in the past.

Social Work Theories and Inclusive Education

In the practice of inclusive education a blend of various theories are used. The three major theories applied are:

- Empowerment Approach to social work
- Problem-solving Theory
- Behavioral Theory

Empowerment Approach and Inclusive Education

We see historically the persons with disability (PWD) were being stigmatized and this was due to this stigma that a separate educational system had developed for PWD. But contemporary trend is now changing. According to the empowerment approach PWD is not a disable but the stigma imposed on him is making him disable.

The empowerment approach deals with a particular kind of block to problem-solving: that imposed by external society by virtue of stigmatized collective identity. It will be better if we clarify our concept of empowerment a little more.

Empowerment Defined

Empowerment means, “To give power or authority”. Empowerment is a process by which individuals and groups gain power, access to resources and control over their own lives. In doing so, they gain the ability to achieve their highest personal and collective aspirations and goals.

Key Concepts

- Empowerment resides in person not the helper or social worker.
- Empowerment addresses oppression, stratification, and inequality as social barrier.
- This approach does not blame for lack of resources or power.
- This approach rejects that problem develops because of personal difficulty.
- Empowerment is the process of increasing interpersonal, intrapersonal, and political power so that individuals can take action to improve their own lives.

In the context of empowerment approach inclusive education is the empowerment of all children of a community through inclusive classroom practice where each and every child learns according to his needs and capacities. The curriculum is not predetermined and imposed on children rather it is developed and modified according to the needs of children overtime.

According to empowerment perspective the workers role in inclusive education is a resource consultant, a sensitizer of the community, a teacher/trainer, and a cooperator.

Problem Solving Theory and Inclusive Education

The major contributor of the problem-solving theory was H.H. Perlman. This theory assumes that “problems in living do not represent weakness and failure on the part of client, but rather are the outcome of a natural process of human growth and change. If problems are an inevitable part of life, the capacity to solve them is also accessible to people. The process may be blocked for clients because they lack knowledge, have inadequate resources, or experience emotional responses that impair their ability to problem solve. But the social worker consciously creates a collaborative relationship with the client that can be used to motivate and support clients to do the hard work of thinking and feeling through their problematic situation.

John Dewey said that “learning is problems solving.” In inclusive classroom practice the teacher use this theory in order to solve the problems of those pupils who may be feeling/experiencing problem with the current system.

Let us see how this theory works in inclusive classroom practice.

If some students are experiencing problem behavior in classroom, we have to make a functional assessment of this problem behavior. It will help us in modification of curriculum according to the students need. Now a team of students, parents, professional social workers and teachers is to be involved who ask questions about the physical environment, social interactions, instructional environment and non-social factors.

For example questions concerning the physical environment may include;

- Are there too many people in the room
- What about the physical arrangement of the class
- What about the lighting of the room

Instructional environment questions may include’

- Is the work too hard? Too easy?
- Is the pace too fast? Too slow?
- Is the teacher too loud?

Social and non-social factor questions may include;

- Has the student had enough sleep
- Enough to eat
- Is the student involved in delinquent behavior

Based on the assessment answers the team plans a strategy to modify the environment so that the problem behavior does not occur.

This is how the problem-solving theory is applicable in inclusive education when some students are experiencing problem it is not considered as their weakness as a natural part of life and the capacity to solve the problem is there within the students themselves.

Behavioral Theory and Inclusive Education

The major assumption of behavior theory is that *All behavior-maladaptive or adaptive-is learned*. A maladaptive behavior is adapted through learning and can be modified through additional learning.

The behavioral model says that there are three major types of learning;

- Respondent conditioning/Classical Conditioning
- Operant Conditioning
- Modeling.

The classical conditioning is the most familiar type of learning to all of us in which a neutral stimulus is conditioned with the help of an unconditioned stimulus. According to Operant learning theory much of human behavior is determined by positive and negative reinforcers. A positive reinforce is any stimulus that when applied following a behavior, increases or strengthen that behavior. A negative reinforce is any stimulus that a person will terminate or avoid if given the opportunity. Briefly rewards increase a behavior and punishment decreases a behavior.

Modeling is the 3rd type of learning. It refers to a change in behavior as a result of the observation of another's behavior-that is, learning by vicarious experience or examination. Much of everyday learning takes place through modeling.

Modeling is that technique which is used in inclusive classroom settings to develop new appropriate behaviors in students. The inclusive classroom need one rule-respect one another.

This is now the teacher who has to show the student how to respect one another and this has to be done through modeling and behavioral rehearsal.

Both the normal and disabled-special-pupils can be taught that there is no difference between them. They are only students and every student has unique learning capacities and learning needs and requirements. This has to be done through modeling. But the technique of operant learning can also be utilized for making behavior more appropriate.

These are the three major theories which-according to my opinion-can be applied in inclusive education practice. But remember that inclusive education is not theory bound. A teacher has to time and again observe and assess student's needs, whether the curriculum is meeting their requirement and are the students satisfied with the current arrangement etc.

Conclusion

Pointing to the conclusion Inclusive education is not a system of education rather it is a movement based on the belief that people/adults work in inclusive communities, work with people of different races, religions, aspirations, disabilities. In the same vein, children of all ages should learn and grow in environments that resemble the environments that they will eventually work in. but inclusive education has also been criticized on various grounds. Opponents of inclusive schools believe that individual differences will slow the progress of students without special needs. Therefore, this will create problems for teachers. Some argue that inclusive schools are not a cost-effective response when compared to cheaper or more effective interventions, such as special education. They argue that special education helps "fix" the special needs students by providing individualized and personalized instruction to meet their unique needs. This is to help students with special needs adjust as quickly as possible to the mainstream of the school and community. Proponents counter that students with special needs are not fully into the mainstream of student life because they are secluded to special education. Some argue that isolating students with special needs may lower their self-esteem and may reduce their ability to deal with other people. In keeping these students in separate classrooms they aren't going to see the struggles and achievements that they can make together. Now this has become a debate that whether inclusive education is better or special education. But the future as we see is more inclusive oriented. Equal attention should be given to both children with and without disability if inclusion is to be achieved.

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