INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an overview of the developments of inclusive education in India. The challenges and progress are being discussed as well as the main trends in policies and practices. The consequences for teaching in mainstream classes are being addressed with a special focus on effective approaches in inclusive settings. It is argued that at the end the success and failure of inclusive education depends on the strategies and practices that teachers in ordinary classrooms use in order to deal with a heterogeneous class with a variety of learners.

Keywords: Inclusion, Inclusive Education, Special Education, Effective Approaches.
INTRODUCTION

The paper is focused on revealing, analyzing, describing and disseminating classroom practices in inclusive settings in such a way that Indian teachers can implement inclusive practices on a wider scale in their classrooms. The paper is mainly focused on primary education; however, an extension to the secondary phase is planned for the near future.

Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practices contains an overview of the findings of the first phase of the European Agency's Classroom and School Practice project in September 2001, while Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice in Secondary Education focuses upon the secondary level of educational provision in 2004. The project was focused on revealing, analyzing, describing and disseminating classroom practices in inclusive settings in such a way that European teachers can implement inclusive practices on a wider scale in their classrooms.

The Classroom and School Practice project is of particular interest for the field of special educational needs since it focuses directly on practical aspects of special needs education. As such it may have a great impact on the field of special education, especially for the main user group of the Agency's work: classroom teachers.

Two main questions form the basis for the study:

1. How can differences in the classroom be dealt with?

2. How can mainstream schools be equipped and organized in order to deal with pupils with special educational needs?

We should always refer to this change in thinking as Inclusive Education and not just Inclusion with children. Inclusion on its own is simply incorporating students with
disabilities into regular classrooms in a meaningful and respectable way. We see Inclusive Education as an umbrella for many traits a school should have: inclusion of ALL students, co-teaching teams, differentiated instruction, learning centers, a welcoming school environment, positive behavior supports, a safe and happy place to be! It is a school where all children’s needs are met at their own respectable levels through a variety of differentiated activities and learning centers where choice is given in the way learning takes place. It is a school where children feel safe, ready and able to take new risks in their learning and development to achieve at their full potential. It is a school where children feel worth and value for their efforts. It is a school where everyone demonstrates a tolerance and acceptance for individual differences and abilities. It is a school where children learn how to manage choice and make good life long decisions.

Does Inclusive Education make our school a better place? How can it not? When you have teacher teams collaborating together for the betterment of student learning and a concentration on choice and learning styles, it is a recipe for success! Does it have its challenges? Any recipe is challenging when you are mixing many ingredients together. No change is easy, no change is fast, but the outcome is very beneficial and worthwhile for all teachers and students. It takes time, effort and collaboration to create, understand and implement the vision of Inclusive Education. All staff has had the opportunity to attend, participate and discuss the philosophy and practices of an Inclusive school. With presenters, workshops and hands on training, staff members have broadened their understanding of the variety of teaching/learning styles that can be implemented to help students achieve. Teachers have had to change their way of thinking and instructing, even down to changing classroom management, to accommodate the needs of all children in their classrooms.

All members of school community are to be credited for making the learning path of each and every child a successful journey in their overall academic, social, and emotional growth.
All staff members are team players with the same goals. Teaching and learning is more meaningful, engaging and fun through an Inclusive Education approach. As we roam around the building popping in and out of classrooms, we have seen so many smiling, engaged, and happy learners. They enjoy their group work which allows them the choice of activity which enhances their learning style and a chance to build bonds with classmates. The engaged children has taken on a new way of learning that continues to develop general learning skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners. Schools have created a very welcoming environment for the children and parents of our community. Our understanding and implementation of Inclusive Education continues to grow each day, as each individual follows the recipe in their own unique and creative ways. As our journey continues, we will continue to grow and learn while facing new challenges. The children’s overall growth and development will continue to flourish allowing them to become the best they can be! As an Instructional Resource Teacher, first thoughts and impressions of Inclusive Education was not necessarily a positive one. After discussions on the philosophy behind Inclusive Education, we are ready for more intense training as my understanding and role became clearer and the benefits of Inclusive education became more obvious. Through staff education, training, and personal research, we can realize that Inclusive Education is the door that opens so many opportunities for all. It gives all children a chance to grow as individuals, to respect the differences of all people, to realize their own potential and to reach their goals in a way that is relevant for their own needs and learning styles. We understand that Inclusive Education is the welcoming of ALL children to learn with their peers in a safe, nurturing environment that enables everyone to feel important and successful.

Even though the pull-out of students is not something that is taboo within the philosophy of Inclusive education, it is a practice that we have avoided. The children are no longer learning in an isolated environment. As children become more involved in learning centers,
take on more responsibility for their own learning, and provide and acquire help from their peers, it is obvious that all children are happier, more engaged learners. Children no longer need to feel inferior to their peers. They are no longer labeled by their classmates and are accepted for who they are. Children in the classroom are more active learners as they are involved and included in many of the same activities. The time of children with disabilities, or any child, being passive and voiceless is no longer a part of the learning community. Some Schools has demonstrated the positive changes that can occur in a school community when all involved were working toward a common vision for ALL students!

GOALS OF THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL PRACTICE

The following issues are important:

1. Who is the target group for this study?
2. What kind of output is aimed for (report, examples of practice)?

   There is always a strong need to reflect more explicitly on the precise target groups and on
   the way we can or should reach them, in other words on the output of the study.

TARGET GROUP

PROBLEMS OF TEACHERS

It can be argued that problems faced by teachers are mainly practical. Furthermore, generally teachers look for answers that can be applied in the very near future (today, tomorrow). It can also be argued that teachers are not particularly interested in solutions developed in other countries. In the main, they have a rather small circle within which they
look for answers to their questions: they consult colleagues or professionals in or close to the school. If a teacher is interested in a more systematic approach to a certain problem(s) he will try to find answers by reading a relevant book or report, attending a conference or workshop or following a course. In sum: it is very unlikely that a teacher will consult international resources in order to address his or her problems.

**HOW DO TEACHERS LEARN?**

Generally teachers learn through ITT, IST, by reading books, journals and attending courses, but it can be assumed that they mostly learn from significant key persons in their immediate environment: colleagues and professionals in or around the school. In order to influence daily practice, the emphasis should be placed upon the professionals in or around schools that are significant for teachers.

*The main task is thus to provide those key persons with knowledge about possibilities (models) for handling differences in the classroom and the conditions necessary for those models (resources in the class or outside the classroom) to be successful.*

**CLASSROOM PRACTICE AND TEACHER FACTORS**

Inclusion largely depends on teachers’ attitudes towards pupils with special needs and on the resources available to them. In quite a number of studies, the attitude of teachers towards educating pupils with special needs has been put forward as a decisive factor in making schools more inclusive. If mainstream teachers do not accept the education of these pupils as an integral part of their job, they will try to ensure that someone else (often the special teacher) takes responsibility for these pupils and will organize covert segregation in the school (e.g. the special class). The different types of resources available to teachers can be deduced from the microeconomics of teaching (Brown and Saks, 1980;
Gerber and Semmel, 1985). In these theories the term 'resources' refers not only to teaching methods and materials but also to time available for instruction and to the knowledge and skills of teachers acquired through training and experience. All these resources can be used when handling differences in classrooms. Teaching pupils with special needs in the mainstream classroom no doubt deviates from the 'regular' programme. Teachers are confronted with the question of how to instruct these pupils. Pupils with special needs may require more instruction time or other learning methods and professional knowledge. In that case, teachers will feel the need for more time, materials and knowledge. Generally, this can be achieved in two ways: by an increase in resources (more time allocated to teachers) or by re-arranging available resources (other use of available time).

Increasing available time (e.g. through the use of educational assistants) or enhancing teachers' professional knowledge (e.g. consultation teams) are ways of increasing the necessary resources for inclusive education, but teachers may also need to rearrange available resources across the pupils in the classroom. Teachers can, for example, encourage above average pupils to work more independently, to work with computers and to help each other, so that more teaching time is left for pupils with special needs.

To realize the inclusion of these pupils in mainstream education, teachers will try to enhance the level of resources and differentiate between pupils with respect to the amount and type of resources available to them. The idea is that a successful inclusion of pupils with special needs depends largely on the availability of resources in the mainstream classroom and on the way teachers differentiate the resources between pupils.

A final important issue at the teacher and classroom level is a teacher’s sensitivity and skills in order to enhance significant social relations between pupils. Particularly for children with special educational needs (and their parents) meaningful interactions with non-disabled
peers are of utmost importance. The teacher should have the right attitude, but also needs a good understanding of how to develop these interactions and relationships. In summary, teachers’ attitudes, available instruction time, the knowledge and skills of teachers and teaching methods and materials seem to be important prerequisites for special needs education within mainstream settings.

SCHOOL FACTORS

It is clear that caring for students with special educational needs is not only a question of the necessary resources at classroom level. It should be recognized that the organizational structure at a school level also determines the amount and type of resources teachers can use in teaching children with special needs. Support can also be made available through other support services such as school advisory centres or special visiting support staff. In some countries co-operation between (mainstream) schools means additional resources can be provided for the care for pupils with SENs. It is clear that the creative strengths, knowledge and expertise, as well as the facilities of a group of schools, exceed those of a single school. The ability of co-operating schools to find ways to handle special needs may be essential for integrating special needs pupils into mainstream settings. The issues involved in organizing inclusive education at the school level centre upon structures for providing special support within schools, the involvement of external special education services and other means of organizing support such as cooperation between schools.

THE MAIN QUESTIONS

The factors mentioned above are potentially relevant to special needs teaching in mainstream schools. At the classroom level, available instruction time, the attitude, knowledge and skills of teachers and teaching methods and materials can be distinguished
as important prerequisites for special needs teaching in mainstream settings. The issues involved in organizing inclusive education at the school level are:

1. A structure for providing special support within schools;
2. The role of special education services;
3. Other support systems and co-operation between schools.

For this study, it is proposed to focus on all these aspects, but with an emphasis on the teacher and classroom level. Generally, it can be assumed that integration or inclusive education depends on what teachers do in classrooms. The way in which teachers realize inclusion within the classroom can take different forms. It is the goal of this paper to describe these different approaches and to make them available for others. To detect various models of dealing with differences in classrooms (also labelled as ‘differentiation’, ‘multi-level instruction’ and others) thus forms the main task of the project. But it should be clear that the existence of different models of dealing with differences in classrooms depend not only on teacher factors but also on the way in which schools organize their education.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT & SCHOOL INCLUSION

This paper produces some generalizations on school programs and practices. Some of them have to do with inclusion in schools.

Some Observations on Inclusion

- Elementary schools flag and respond to learning challenges more quickly
- Schools are less well equipped to manage severe behaviour challenges
- Pyramids of academic and behaviour intervention are not systematically established in many schools
- Student Services Teams are not equally able to mobilize services and supports

**Use of Personnel: Resource & Methods Teacher (R&M)**
- R&M not in classrooms; pull-outs only vs. R&M teacher in classrooms monitoring individual student progress and working with the teacher
- R&M teacher is less effective when student services team is not working collaboratively with teachers (admin, guidance, R&M)

**Use of Personnel: Teacher Assistants (TA)**
- TA is primary person working with a student vs. TA is part of team planning for students with exceptionalities
- TA schedules do not meet student needs

**Instructional Practice & Differentiation**
- In many classrooms can’t tell which student has an Special Education Plan;
- Student acceptance of all peers and varied assignments among students (observed at all levels of the system) and willingness to help when help is needed
- Very little differentiated instruction; whole-class instruction is still the norm

**Flexible Grouping**
- Grouping/re-grouping is not yet carried out well; multi-age groupings are not being used effectively
Pyramids of intervention not entrenched; need school-wide and strategic approach.

Not clear about what is streaming and what isn’t – sometimes still within-class exclusion.

Behaviour & Bullying

Lack of resources for students with high behaviour needs (SIW, Guidance); safety issues.

Other Observations re: Inclusion

Greater awareness (staff and students) of particular types of student conditions/challenges.

Some high schools finding ways to foster independence and build school belonging.

Outside agencies sometimes not providing needed supports and attending meetings.

TRANSITION TOP TEN QUESTIONS???

Questions that are top priorities when planning what questions should a parent ask when their son/daughter is about to transition from school to community. This question on the minds of many parents as schooling comes to an end.

Here are some for a transition from school to the community as an adult.

1. When should planning begin?
2. Who should be involved?
3. How can we support our son/daughter through this process and into adulthood?
4. What do we, as parents, need to do?
5. What are some of the options that are out there for our consideration?
6. What is my son/daughter eligible for in terms of support from different service providers when they become an adult?
7. Who makes the decision about which pathway to graduation my son/daughter will take?
8. How long can my son/daughter remain within the education system receiving their supports?
9. How can we, as parents, make sure that our son/daughter remains a part of their community once they graduate?
10. Who is responsible for planning the transition from school to the community?

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION (SNE) AND INCLUSION: THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

The most important and recent policy document is the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities (2006). Within the Convention, Article 24 is crucial for guiding work in educational policy and practice: States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels. Most European countries have signed the Convention (although it must be noted not necessarily ratified the convention or signed or ratified the optional protocol. The Council Resolution of 2003 on Promoting the employment and social integration of people with disabilities and the Council Resolution, 2003, on Equal opportunities for pupils and students with disabilities in education and training are two of the main EU level statements that guide member states policies for special education. Most importantly, all European countries have ratified the UNESCO Salamanca Statement.
and Framework for Action in Special Needs Education (1994). This collective statement is a major focal point special needs education work in Europe - it is still a keystone in the conceptual framework of many countries; policies. One extract from the statement is used repeatedly as a guiding principle in policy level debates: Regular schools with an 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 the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. (p8)

All European countries agree that the key principles encompassed in the Salamanca Statement of equal opportunities in terms of genuine access to learning experiences that respect individual differences and quality education for all focused upon personal strengths rather than weaknesses, are those principles that should underpin all education policies - not just those specifically dealing with special needs education.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Definitions and categories of special educational needs and handicap vary across countries. Some countries define only one or two types of special needs. Others categories pupils with special needs in more than 10 categories. Most countries distinguish 6-10 types of special needs. These differences between countries are strongly related to administrative, financial and procedural regulations. They do not reflect variations of the incidence and the types of special educational needs between these countries. In almost every country the concept of special educational needs is on the agenda. More and more people are convinced that the medical approach of the concept of ‘handicap; should be replaced with a more educational approach: the central focus has now turned to
the consequences of disability for education. However, at the same time it is clear that this approach is very complex, and countries are currently struggling with the practical implementation of this philosophy. Nevertheless, this topic, the description of disabilities in terms of educational consequences, is being debated in most European countries. In relation to this discussion in more and more countries, using the assessment of pupils with special needs for the implementation of appropriate education is being developed. This is mostly done through individual education programmes (other terms are in use in the different countries, for example, Individual Educational Plan).

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

As expected, numbers vary considerably across countries. Some countries register a total of about 1% of all pupils with special educational needs; others register more than 10%. These contrasts in the percentage of registered pupils with SEN reflect differences in legislation, assessment procedures, funding arrangements and provision. Of course, they do not reflect differences in the incidence of special needs between the countries. Information is also provided on the percentage of pupils educated in segregated settings (special schools and classes). All countries considered together, about 2% of all pupils in Europe are educated in special schools or (full-time) special classes. Some countries place less than 1% of all pupils in segregated schools and classes, others up to 6%. Especially the countries in northwest Europe seem to place pupils more frequently in special settings as opposed to southern European and Scandinavian countries.
THE NEW ROLE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The transformation of special schools and institutes into resource centres is a very common trend in Europe. Most countries report that they are planning to develop, are developing or have already developed a network of resource centres in their countries. These centres are given different names and different tasks are assigned to them. Some countries call them knowledge centres, others expertise centres or resource centres. In general, the following tasks are distinguished for these centres:

1. provision for training and courses for teachers and other professionals;
2. development and dissemination of materials and methods;
3. support for mainstream schools and parents;
4. short-time or part-time help for individual students;
5. support in entering the labour market.

Some of these centres have a national level task, especially with respect to certain specific target groups (particularly milder special needs); others have a wider and more regional levelz task.

A few countries have already gained some experience with resource centres (Austria, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland, for example); others are implementing the system (Cyprus, Portugal). In some countries special schools are obliged to co-operate with mainstream school in the catchment area (Spain), or special schools supply ambulant or other services to mainstream schools (Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, the UK). The role of special schools in terms of inclusion is, of course, strongly related to the education system of the country. In countries with almost no special schools, like Norway
and Italy for example, their role is structurally modest (in Norway, 20 of the previously state special schools, are defined in terms of regional or national resource centres). In Cyprus, the 1999 Special Needs Education Law demands that new special schools must be built within the boundaries of a mainstream school to facilitate contacts and networking and, where possible, promote inclusion.

In countries with a relatively large special needs education system, special schools are more actively involved in the process of inclusion. In those countries co-operation between special and mainstream education is key. However, in those countries voices are heard that special schools are threatened by the process of inclusion (Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and France for example). This is a more or less direct consequence of having a relatively large special school system: on the one hand, co-operation of special schools in the process towards inclusion is necessary; on the other hand, the inclusion process itself is a direct danger for them. At the same time, inclusion in these countries is difficult to achieve, since mainstream schools are more or less used to transferring their problems to other parts of the school system, the special schools. Besides, specialist teachers and other professionals working in the special school system often consider themselves to be the experts on special educational needs and usually think that they fulfill the need and challenge the notion of inclusion. It is extremely difficult to change such a status quo. Of course, this transformation implies huge consequences for special needs education. Briefly, pupil based educational institutes have to switch into support structures or resource centres for teachers, parents and others. Their new task is to give support to mainstream schools, develop materials and methods, gather information and provide it to parents and teachers, take care of the necessary liaison between educational and non-educational institutions, and give support when transition from school to work takes place. In some cases special educators and special schools arrange short-term help for individual pupils or small groups of pupils.
INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Most countries use individual educational programmes for pupils with special needs. This document presents information on how a mainstream curriculum is adapted, and what are the necessary additional resources, goals and evaluation of the educational approach. Adaptations can take different forms and in some cases, for specific categories of pupils, they may even mean omitting certain subjects of the general curriculum.

Recent views on inclusion have stressed the fact that inclusion is in the first place an educational reform issue and not a placement issue. Inclusion starts from the right of all pupils to follow mainstream education. A few countries (for example, Italy) have expressed this clearly in direct and legal terms and they have changed their educational approach so as to offer more provisions within mainstream education. Of course, the different approaches are narrowly correlated to the current position of special needs education in those countries.

The countries, aiming at providing SEN facilities within the mainstream school, stress the view that the curriculum framework should cover all pupils. Of course, some specific adaptations to the curriculum may be necessary. This is mostly done in terms of an individual educational programme. It is clear that in almost all of the countries the individual educational programme plays a major role for inclusive special needs education. It is one of the current trends across Europe to use such an individual document to specify the pupils’ needs, goals and means, and to detail the degree and type of adaptations to be made to the mainstream curriculum to evaluate the progresses of the concerned pupils. It may also serve as a ‘contract; between the different ‘actors’: parents, teachers and other professionals.
SECONDARY EDUCATION

Another topic in the field of special needs and the curriculum is the provision of special needs at the secondary level. Inclusion generally progresses well at the primary education level, but at secondary level serious problems emerge. It is well known that an increasing topic specialization and the different organization of secondary schools result in serious difficulties for inclusion at the secondary level. Generally the ‘gap between pupils with special needs and their peers increases with age. It should be stressed that the topic of inclusion at the secondary level should be one of the main areas of concern. Specific problem areas are insufficient teacher training and less positive teacher attitudes.

ROLE OF PARENTS

Attitudes of parents are largely determined by personal experiences. Thus, positive experiences with inclusion are quite rare in countries where the facilities are concentrated in the special school system and not available for the mainstream schools. However, if mainstream schools can offer these services, parents soon develop positive attitudes towards inclusion (Pijl, Meijer, Hegarty, 1997).[3] The media can also play an important role here (as the experience in Cyprus has shown). Parental choice is an important issue in Austria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK. In these countries, parents generally assume that they have the legal right to express a preference for the school they would like their child to attend. In other countries the role of parents seems to be rather modest. In Slovakia, for instance,
although parental opinion is needed, the decision for the transfer of a pupil to a special school lies within the competence of the headmaster from the special school.

**BARRIERS**

Quite a number of factors can be interpreted as barriers for inclusion. In some countries the funding system is not enhancing inclusive practices (see Meijer, 1999). Not only the funding system may inhibit inclusion processes; but also the existence of a large segregated setting itself is a hindrance for inclusion. As shown before, in countries having a relatively large segregated school system, special schools and specialist teachers may feel threatened by the inclusion process. They fear that the survival of their position may be endangered. It is even more the case when the economic context is quite tense and finally their jobs may be in danger. In such situations it is very complex to debate inclusion on the basis of educational or normative arguments.

Other important factors are the availability of sufficient conditions for support within mainstream schools. If knowledge, skills, attitudes and materials are not available in the mainstream settings, inclusion of pupils with special needs will be difficult to achieve. An adequate teacher training (in initial teacher training or through in-service) is an essential prerequisite for inclusion.

**COMMON TRENDS IN EUROPE**

What are the common trends in Europe? Has there been any progress on the issue of special needs education? What are the main challenges for the future? The most important developments within European countries in the last ten years are pointed out below.
TRENDS AND PROGRESS

1. There is a movement in which countries with a clear two-track system of special needs education (relatively large special needs education system beside the mainstream system) are developing a continuum of services between the two systems. Furthermore, special schools are more and more defined as resources for mainstream schools.

2. Legislative progress regarding inclusion was achieved in many countries. This applies especially to countries with a big segregated special needs education system, which developed new legislative frameworks concerning SEN within the mainstream school.

3. A few countries have planned to change their funding system in order to achieve more inclusive services. In other countries, there is a growing awareness of the importance of an adequate funding system.

4. The transformation of special schools in resource centres has been continued in most countries. In some other countries this model is being initiated.

CHALLENGES

1. In general, the tension between, on the one hand, the pressure for better outputs of schools and, on the other hand, the position of vulnerable pupils, is increasing. There is a growing attention in the society for the outputs of educational processes. One of the most explicit examples can be found in England where the publication of pupils; performance, by
school, at the end of key stage assessment, including performance in public examinations at the end of statutory education (16+), has drawn much attention and discussion. The results are published by the media in the form of ‘league tables, by rank order to ‘raw; scores. Of course, it is not surprising that societies generally ask for more outcomes and benefits. As a result, market thinking is introduced in education and parents start to behave as clients. Schools are made ‘accountable; for the results they achieve and there is an increasing tendency to judge schools on the basis of their outputs. It should be stressed that this development presents some dangers for vulnerable pupils and their parents. First, parents of children who are not identified as having special needs could tend to choose a school where the learning process is efficient and effective, and not hindered by slow learners or other pupils who need additional attention. Generally, parents want the best school for their child.

Secondly, schools are most likely to favour pupils who contribute to higher outputs. Pupils with special needs not only contribute to more variance within the class but also to lower average achievements. These two factors are a direct threat for pupils with special needs. This is especially the case within the context of a free school choice and the absence of an obligation for schools to admit all pupils within the catchment area. In this sense, the wish to achieve higher outputs and to include pupils with special needs can become antithetical. This dilemma needs serious attention. A few countries have pointed out this dilemma and it can be expected that others will follow in the near future. It is a clear area of tension that has to be addressed in order to protect the position of vulnerable pupils.

2. Inclusion at the level of secondary education is also an area of concern. Development of possibilities for (in-service) teacher training and positive attitudes are challenges for the near future.

3. A ‘rough estimate of the percentage of pupils with special needs in European countries
reveals that about 2% of all pupils are educated in segregated settings. It is difficult to assess to what extent progress has been made considering the number of pupils in segregated or inclusive provisions in European countries. However, during the last few years, countries with a relatively large special needs education system in segregated settings showed an ongoing increase in the percentages of pupils educated in special schools. Though exact figures are lacking, it could be said that not much progress has been made towards inclusion at the European level during the last ten years. On the contrary, the most reliable estimation tends to reveal a slight increase in segregation. Some countries still have to put their policies into practice. However, there is a general basis for optimism, especially in those countries that experienced an important growth in the number of pupils in segregated provisions, and which are now implementing promising policies.

WHICH GROUPS CAUSE MOST PROBLEMS?

In Sweden there is no research on which groups of pupils with SEN cause most problems within the mainstream classes. It is generally felt that such a question is too much focused on the owner(s) of the problem. Today more often context, communication and interaction are seen as essential for causing at least as many problems for children with SEN. The situation for a pupil with SEN when situated in a mainstream class is new both for the pupil, the ordinary class teacher and for the special teacher. In one way or the other the situation is problematic. But in looking at which courses are attractive to attend in special education, teachers often ask for knowledge about the ‘new’ disabilities, e.g. dyslexia, DAMP/ADHD, autism, Asperger’s syndrome etc. It is unknown if it is because these groups cause more problems or because the teachers don’t know so much about these disabilities. On the
other hand teachers often refer to difficulties in handling bad behaviour and unmotivated pupils. But research is not available here.

THE MAIN PROBLEMS RELATING TO INCLUDING PUPILS WITH SEN

The main problems based on much research on special education could be described as follows:

- Schools know very little about how to work with diversity without dividing the class in levels.
- There is no, or at least very little, documentation on good inclusive social practice.
- Old structures still dominate, i.e. class teachers rely on special education to ‘fix’ education for pupils with SEN.
- Teachers hardly have any education or knowledge on how to work inclusively and for diversity.
- Different theories on learning have appeared about how pupils learn and develop, but older theories still decide the organization and structure of subjects and plans, and sometimes also the attitudes of teachers.
- The National Curriculum and school law are ambiguous about special education. Sometimes they give expression to a view where a pupil’s problem is associated with characteristics within the pupil but sometimes within the context.
- Schools have been and still are in a state of reorganization. Financial resources have been cut down during the 1990s.
- Many schools need a change in ways of working. There are still many schools using too passive methods or just practicing isolated skills instead of using progressive learning in a context.
• The communicative elements in classes and schools are not used frequently. The collective conversation, the reflection and discussion must be given more space. To discuss and reflect upon the goals of the school and on education as a whole are seen as strategic.

• The special support is used insufficiently.

• Assistants as well as teachers need guidance on how to work with disabilities.

• There is little connection between ordinary education and special education.

• Schools don’t use the special teacher as a counselor. More often he/she is working traditionally, i.e. individually or in smaller groups with children with SEN.

• Schools don’t follow up and evaluate the special actions taken.

• Teachers’ attitudes towards knowledge, methods, special education and pupils with SEN need to change.

• Teachers and schools have too little knowledge about group processes and interactions.

• Teachers work too much alone. Instead teachers must help each other to develop their communication and be more reflective on their own teaching.

• Teachers do not regularly discuss the overall aim and use of the National Curriculum, diagnosis and tests.

• There is little or no development of theories on special education in co-operation with research departments and schools.

FACTORS INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

Important factors are as follows:

• General organization of schools;

• The role of the head teacher;
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND CLASSROOM PRACTICE

The centre of attention for the paper is the work of teachers. However, it was also recognized that teachers mainly learn and develop their practice as a result of input from significant key people in their immediate environment: the head teacher, colleagues and professionals in or around the school. These are the professionals who are therefore considered to be the main target groups for this study. The main task of this paper is to provide key people with knowledge about possible strategies for handling differences in the classroom and school and to inform them about the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of these strategies. The paper has attempted to answer key questions concerning inclusive education. In the first instance, it is argued that an
understanding of what works within inclusive settings is necessary. Furthermore, it is felt that a deeper understanding of how inclusive education works is needed. Thirdly, it is important to know why it is working (the conditions for implementation).

The first main conclusion is that inclusive classrooms do exist throughout European and other countries. The evidence also suggests that what is good for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good for all pupils.

A second main finding is that behaviour, social and/or emotional problems are the most challenging within the area of inclusion of pupils with SEN.

Thirdly: dealing with differences or diversity in the classroom forms one of the biggest problems within European and other classrooms.

**APPROACHES APPEAR TO BE EFFECTIVE IN SCHOOLS**

1. **Co-operative teaching**

Teachers need support from, and to be able to co-operate with, a range of colleagues within the school and professionals outside the school.

2. **Co-operative learning**

Peer tutoring or co-operative learning is effective in cognitive and affective (social-emotional) areas of pupils; learning and development. Pupils who help each other,
especially within a system of flexible and well-considered pupil grouping, profit from learning together.

3. **Collaborative problem-solving**

Particularly for teachers who need help in including pupils with social/behavioural problems, a systematic way of approaching undesired behaviour in the classroom is an effective tool for decreasing the amount and intensity of disturbances during the lessons. Clear class rules and a set of borders, agreed with all the pupils (alongside appropriate incentives) have proven to be effective.

4. **Heterogeneous grouping**

Heterogeneous grouping and a more differentiated approach in education are necessary and effective when dealing with a diversity of pupils in the classroom. Targeted goals, alternative routes for learning, flexible instruction and the abundance of homogenous ways of grouping enhance inclusive education.

5. **Effective teaching**

Finally, the arrangements mentioned above should take place within an overall effective school/teaching approach where education is based on assessment and evaluation, high expectations, direct instruction and feedback. All pupils, and thus also pupils with SEN, improve with systematic monitoring, assessment, planning and evaluation of the work. The curriculum can be geared to individual needs and additional support can be introduced adequately through the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This IEP should fit within the normal curriculum.
The factors mentioned above are important at both primary and secondary education level. For secondary schools two additional effective approaches emerged:

1. **Home area system**

In some schools the organisation of the delivery of the curriculum has been changed drastically: students stay in a common area consisting of two or three classrooms where nearly all education takes place. A small team of teachers is responsible for the education provided in the home area.

2. **Alternative ways of learning**

To support the inclusion of students with special needs, several models that focus on learning strategies have been developed over the past few years. Such programmes aim to teach students how to learn and to solve problems. Furthermore it can be argued that giving students greater responsibility for their own learning can contribute to the success of inclusion in schools.

The case studies have highlighted the importance of each single factor. However it should be emphasized that some of the case studies seem to have demonstrated that the combination of some of these approaches is important for effective classroom practice within inclusive secondary schools.

### POSSIBLE MODELS OF CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS AND EFFECTS

1. **Co-operative teaching**

In co-operative teaching settings, students with special needs are not pulled out of their classroom for supplemental instruction. Instead, the special education staff provides
instruction in the regular classrooms, to increase learning time, reduce behaviour problems, give students an opportunity to participate fully in their classrooms, and teachers an opportunity to learn from each other. Co-operative teaching appears to be an effective strategy for students who are at risk of academic failure (Self, Benning, Marston and Magnusson, 1991). To improve communication and instruction skills, in-service training and co-operative planning is important. Scheduled meetings are considered to be of great importance for planning, problem solving and sharing instructional strategies. The division of responsibilities needs to be clear. Jenkins, Jewell, Leicester, Jenkins and Troutner (1991) report on a study in which the special education teachers sometimes 'felt like aides rather than teachers'.

2. Peer tutoring or co-operative learning

In most peer tutoring settings, students are assigned to heterogeneous ability pairs. During tutoring sessions, students read aloud and work on comprehensive activities after receiving reading instruction. Tutor-learner roles are reciprocal, and students give each other feedback. In most cases, students are assigned to teams. Peer tutoring programmes seem to be easy to implement and any reading material can be used. Peer tutoring has been proven to be an effective strategy in increasing the academic achievement of students with and without disabilities (Kamps, Barbeta, Leonard and Delquadri, 1994; Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes and Simmons, 1997; Stevens and Slavin, 1995a, 1995b) and in increasing social interactions (Kamps, Barbeta, Leonard and Delquadri, 1994).

3. Curriculum based measurement

In curriculum based measurement (CBM) conditions, pupil progress is monitored using a computer program. Performances are weekly tested and results are entered into a
computer program that summarizes performances in a graph. Both teachers and students are taught to interpret graphs. Teachers who use CBM appear to make more instructional adjustments than teachers who don’t systematically monitor student’s performances. The use of CBM does not directly lead to higher student achievement. To increase performances, the use of a computer program, which gives recommendations about instructional adjustments, appears to be essential. (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett and Stecker, 1991; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips and Bentz, 1994).

4. Collaborative problem-solving

In a collaborative problem-solving (CPS) programme, students are asked to solve problems together whenever a physical, social or instructional exclusion of a student occurs. To create a climate of shared responsibility, students are encouraged to initiate the process themselves. During a CPS session, the teacher leads the students through the steps of a structured process; identifying the issue, discussing all possible solutions, screen solutions, choosing and evaluating the solution. CPS is judged to be an effective program to promote inclusion, and easy to implement according to the teaching staff (Salisbury, Evans and Palombaro, 1997).

5. Mixed designs

Many studies report on designs that combine several treatments. It is hard to determine the effects of the various components of these programmes. Several models use co-operation as an overall approach to change the school organization and create a climate of shared responsibility. In addition to co-operative teaching and cooperative learning (e.g. peer tutoring), parents are involved, teachers coach each other and teaching staff
collaborates in instructional planning (Saint-Laurent, Dionne, Giasson, Royer, Simbard, and Piérard, 1998; Stevens and Slavin, 1995a, 1995b; Banerji and Dailey, 1995).

ENGAGEMENT OF TEACHERS, OTHER PERSONNEL AND TEAMWORK

Special pedagogues and common teachers should generally keep an open mind for differences in the learning suppositions, and should not have any emotional problems concerning pupils who need nursing, physically handicapped pupils or pupils with any other disorders (basic attitude for integration). This also holds for the administrative staff of a school. Special pedagogues and common teachers of a class should meet at least once a week to evaluate last week’s work and to plan the next week together. In larger intervals it would be good to organize grade meetings for all pedagogues and their assistants who work in one grade.

1. Co-operation with parents and other people

Good integrative instruction is always open for critical questions asked by parents of both handicapped and non-handicapped children. This co-operation must take place on the basis of equality. The same holds for the co-operation concerning other experts who work for handicapped children and their families (therapists, school psychologists, family aids, doctors, youth welfare officers, welfare officers for the handicapped etc.).

2. Equipment

It makes sense to give schools an idea of what they need before they make a decision for or against inclusion. This should be based on realistic situations. Both additional personnel and material costs should be covered. The conveniences are designated as favourable if they allow flexible (group-) lessons (flexible furniture, enough large rooms, if needed, the
inclusion of halls or corridors and other areas). For physically handicapped people, of course, the appropriate equipment of stairs, toilets, common door widths and classrooms is necessary.

3. Anchorage of special pedagogues
Special pedagogues should spend at least half of their working time in a common school, and at best be anchored completely to their teaching staff. They should be involved in all rights and duties in the same way as other teachers (e.g. the supervision of pupils, conferences, the attendance of special tasks etc.). Their instructive work should normally take place in mainstream classes and not separately in group rooms. Occasionally children without clear special educational needs should also be included in the special instruction.

4. Flexible, differentiating instruction
During the lessons the teacher should differentiate according to the pupils’ achievements, time and interest. Differentiating implies the usage of differentiated material and the admission of different goals (internal differentiation). Differentiation according to time allows different working paces; in this case, it is sensible to work within a weekly plan and to organize the daily work more flexibly beyond the fixed 45-minute lesson. Differentiation according to interest implies that all children (including those with special educational needs), single or in small groups, can carry out different projects that are not necessarily assigned to the curriculum. However, this can only be allowed under the condition that the projects’ results are regularly introduced to and discussed with the learning group.

5. Concentration and relaxation
Phases of concentration and relaxation, of cognitive and physical work, of aesthetic presentation (singing, moving, and acting) and quiet work, working alone and working in the group, should always vary and alternate during the school day. The same goes for
different kinds of plenary work (teacher lectures, pupil lectures, playing, singing, celebrating etc.). This also includes a flexible handling of time.

6. Evaluation

Children with special educational needs should receive regular feedback about their learning development, just as their other schoolmates do. In doing so, two standards should operate: as an individual standard, in reaching or not reaching the learning goal (with the reference standard: individual learning development); as an external standard, the respective curricular requirement or the teacher’s requirement can both be valid. The evaluation must not only refer to the usual scholar achievements, but should also always consider the aims included in the remedial plan.

7. Curriculum framework

The curriculum framework of the respective mainstream school and those of the corresponding school for special education are integrated in good integration classes: diverging or additional aims are included in the common framework in the respective grades in the respective subject or learning area. The curriculum frameworks that were separated are now bundled, also to give all teachers a summary of the learning (objects). Parents should be informed about the learning objects.

8. Plans for support

Plans for support should exist for all children with special educational needs. They should be discussed and improved at regular intervals within the team of all involved people, possibly including other external experts (therapists, psychologists etc.). This does not need to be only on special occasions. The best possible interval would be every three months.
9. Counsel

For all teachers who work in integration classes, but also for all parents, there should be a counsel system. This counsel system can be established not only to serve a single school but also to serve other schools in the region. It can only exist if it keeps its institutional independence (i.e. it should not be part of a special institution) and should include a mixture of subjects (‘multi-professional team’).

10. Training and further training

All teachers should already have experienced basic knowledge of integrative instruction during their initial training. They should be offered further training possibilities permanently while teaching integration classes. If yearly working times (YWT) for the teachers are established, further training for those who work in an integration class should on the one hand be binding to a certain extent; on the other hand this training would be creditable within the YWT. Supervision could also be offered as a type of further training. Regional working teams of several teachers of integration classes have also proved to be worthwhile, because here problems are not discussed within a hierarchy. These working teams could be attended by the counsel institutions.

CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Research in Luxemburg shows that for most professionals, integration of a disabled child is quite a positive experience. Three-quarters of the questioned professionals think that for the disabled child, integration is a rather good experience. Nearly 70% think the same for the other pupils in the class. The aim of integration is the acceptance of each person in his/her own environment, which then allows him/her to act as a full member of society.
Integration must be understood as a means to guarantee the fulfillment of potential of children with special needs. The future aim is integration into society. The right of instruction and education includes the right for common instruction and education for all children. The educational mission of school involves the bringing together and the mutual respect of all children in spite of their social, cultural, physical or intellectual differences. The disabled child can and must learn in the context of normal daily life, which offers him or her best stimulation. The child learns through other children and thanks to other children. The two authors analyse the viewpoints and anxiety of parents of disabled children. They draw the conclusion, that parents are aware of different problems occurring while integrating their child in mainstream schools. Difficulties often appear because of the voluminous school programme and not always adapted methodology. Evaluation of the disabled child’s work remains a problem.

The teachers are aware of the rigours of Luxemburg’s school system, in matter of quantity and level of school programme because of the three languages. They deplore their lack of information, knowledge and advice concerning disabilities. Sometimes they refuse to integrate a child, because they don’t want a second professional in their classroom or because of increasing workload. The specialists regret missing structures for good teamwork: very often time for dialogue between specialist, teacher and family is insufficient.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that change in thinking as Inclusive Education will bring positive and effective change in special education. Inclusion on its own is simply incorporating students with disabilities into regular classrooms in a meaningful and respectable way. We can see that Inclusive Education as an umbrella for many traits a school should have: inclusion of
ALL students, co-teaching teams, differentiated instruction, learning centers, a welcoming school environment, positive behavior supports, a safe and happy place to be! It is a school where all children’s needs are met at their own respectable levels through a variety of differentiated activities and learning centers where choice is given in the way learning takes place. It is a school where children feel safe, ready and able to take new risks in their learning and development to achieve at their full potential. It is a school where children feel worth and value for their efforts. It is a school where everyone demonstrates a tolerance and acceptance for individual differences and abilities. It is a school where children learn how to manage choice and make good life long decisions.

Co-operative teaching, Peer tutoring or co-operative learning, Collaborative problem-solving, Counsel and Co-operation with parents and other people are some recent approaches which help most in inclusive setting of children.

REFERENCES


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