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Inclusive education and teachers negative attitude

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Abstract

Incorporating of a special education pattern with an individualized education program is referred as Inclusive education they do not focus on having a separate world but operate on the need to have the experience of the students to be more successful by social interaction by mainstreaming. It is about the child's right to participate and the schools duty to accept the child. Students with special needs are educated in regular classroom settings with additional help or special instruction. In inclusive education there lies the responsibility of the teacher to assist these students so that they can achieve their individual educational goals and the attitude of the teacher matters a lot. The teachers' attitude should lead to a successful learning by the student catering to their existing demands. It is seen that regular classroom teacher continue to express discontentment with the implication of Inclusive Education as it demands additional responsibility and time and energy. These negative attitudes create negative perception and detrimental impact on the students learning, in-spite of the fact that it receives regular support from the administrators. This survey of literature aims to look into these negative attitudes that directly affect students learning, thereby contributing towards a positive social change in the field of Inclusive Education.

Keywords: Inclusive education, negative attitude, regular classroom, mainstreaming

Introduction

It is believed that the successful implementation of any inclusive policy is largely dependent on educators being positive about it, a great deal of research has sought to examine teachers' attitudes towards the integration and, more recently, the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the mainstream school.

Negative attitude or positive attitude of any teacher is a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation. Attitude of the teacher influences the student's choice of action, and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards.

Benefits of inclusive education

Promotes individual strengths and talents with high and appropriate expectations for each child. Figures out the individual goals while participating in the life of the classroom with other students of their own age. Enables parents to participate in education and in other activities. Promotes school culture of respect and belongingness. It provides ample opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying. Develops a friendship with a wide variety of other children, depending on their individual needs and abilities. Positively affect both their school and community to appreciate diversity and inclusion on a broader level.

History of inclusive education

In the 1950s, the fundamental right of children with developmental disabilities to receive an education was the first issue to mobilize the community living movement, it was widely believed at that time that it is impossible for children with developmental disabilities to learn. This was accepted as a challenge by the government and they took responsibility for their education. Parents of children with developmental disabilities, understanding the potential of their sons and daughters to learn and grow, responded by creating their own schools in places like church basements and private homes.

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In 1955 parents created a provincial organization, which eventually grew into the BC Association for Community Living, and now, Inclusion BC. Ever since, families have steadily advocated for changes in government laws and policies so that their children with disabilities would have the same right to be educated as other school-aged children. Government slowly accepted responsibility for funding parent-run schools and eventually agreed that not just funding, but public schooling, should be available to children with disabilities.

Although the first educational programs developed by school boards were segregated, they successfully laid the groundwork for parents and others to call for the inclusion of children in general education classes. The move to inclusive education throughout BC came in the late 1980s. Now, however, reduced funding for public education threatens to erode the gains that have been made in inclusive education.

Negative attitude of the teacher

During the last few decades, the view of special education has changed in all societies. Instead of segregating students with special needs in special classes and schools, the ideology of inclusive education is about fitting schools to meet the needs of all students. The educational system is responsible for including students with special needs for appropriate education for all.

Several laws have proposed to open doors of public schools to students with special educational needs. The first one, that provided these services to children with special educational needs in the USA, was Public Law 94-142, the Education for All the Handicapped Act (1975). This law features two

Provisions

All handicapped children should be provided a free appropriate public education this education must take place in the least restrictive environment. The attitude of the teacher also matters.

Teacher's attitudes towards inclusion vary across the education field. Numerous studies have involved teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, in the review below some of the studies referred to have used the term integration or mainstreaming, while others have used the term inclusion with the right attitude to meet the needs of students with special needs.

A teacher's positive action combined with positive attitude results in meeting the goals. Yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose.

If you have a positive attitude and constantly strive to give your best effort, eventually you will overcome your immediate problems and find you are ready for greater challenges.

A negative attitude is a disposition, feeling, or manner that is not constructive, cooperative, or optimistic.

Parental attitudes

Attitudes of parents whose children have experienced inclusive education vary. Some parents believe that their children have benefited from participation in an inclusive educational program. Such views include the perception that their special needs child was provided access to positive role models, a more challenging curriculum, higher expectations and achievement, and better preparation for the real world situation

Review of literature

It is argued that teachers' beliefs and attitudes are critical in

ensuring the success of inclusive practices since teachers' acceptance of the policy of inclusion is likely to affect their commitment to implementing it.

Teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education must be studied to identify deficiencies within the education system, which may create negative perceptions. DeBoer *et al.* (2011) suggested that the successful implementation of inclusive is dependent on the teacher's willingness to accept the inclusion model. The negative attitudes toward IE extend beyond by the teachers in the current local school district, and they are reflective of attitudes conveyed by regular classroom teachers in school districts throughout the United States. In a meta-analysis of the research addressing attitudes toward IE practices, de Boer, Pijl Sip, and Minnaert (2011) revealed that most teachers hold neutral or negative attitudes towards the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom setting. Accordingly, although IE continues to receive support from the federal government and is supported in the professional literature, many regular classroom teachers continue to have negative attitudes toward IE (Andrews & Frankel, 2010; McCray & McHatton, 2011).

The negative attitudes that teachers have toward IE can have a detrimental impact on student learning and may impede the success of the IE model (Cassady, 2011). Teacher attitudes contribute to teaching effectiveness and subsequent student learning (Cassady, 2011). Gal, Schreur, and Engel-Yeger (2010) concluded that teacher attitude is one of the most important aspects of teaching and that negative attitudes negatively affect the teaching practice in the classroom. The importance of teacher attitudes was highlighted by Hattie (2009). Hattie highlighted the importance of teacher attitudes as an important factor contributing toward student learning via the influence that teacher attitudes have on teaching practices and the classroom environment. Taylor and Ringlaben (2012) highlighted the detrimental impact of negative attitudes toward IE as these attitudes extend throughout the school culture, and these attitudes result in teaching practices that impede student learning.

Regular classroom teachers continue to have negative attitudes toward IE practices. These attitudes manifest in undesirable and ineffective teaching practices and have a negative impact on student learning.

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) an attitude can be defined as an individual's viewpoint or disposition toward a particular object (a person, a thing or an idea, etc). An attitude may include cognitive, effective and behavioral components.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Jordan.

The majority of the teachers surveyed had strong negative feelings about inclusion and felt that the decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. Leyser, Kapperman and Keller (1994)^[17] conducted a cross-culture study of teachers' attitudes towards integration in the USA, Germany, Israel, Ghana, Taiwan and the Philippines. Their findings showed that there were differences in attitude to integration between these countries. Teachers in the USA and Germany had the most positive attitudes. Teachers' attitudes were significantly less positive in Ghana, Philippines, Israel and Taiwan. The authors reasoned that this could probably be due to limited or non-existent training to acquire integration competencies, the limited opportunities for integration in some of these countries, teaching experiences and experience with students with special education needs. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996)^[28] in their meta-analysis of 28 survey reports from 1958 until 1995, reported that two thirds of the respondents agreed with

the general idea of integration, and a little more than half of them expressed a willingness to teach students with special educational needs in their classrooms. Another study by Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumeel (1996) examined special education teachers' perceptions of inclusion using focused group interviews. The majority of these teachers, who were currently participating in inclusive programs, had strong negative feelings about inclusion. The teachers identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusion, such as class size, inadequate resources and lack of adequate training.

Research has suggested that teachers attitudes might be influenced by a number of factors, these are discussed below.

The nature and severity of the disabilities

The nature and severity of the disabilities influence the attitudes of the teachers. Florin (1995) found that acceptance of inclusion was lower for children with an intellectual disability than children with a physical disability. This seems to be a tendency also in other studies (Sodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998, Al-khatteeb, 2002, Al-Khatteeb, 2004, Al-khatani, 2003). Whereas, in the Clough and Lindsay (1991) study, the majority of teachers surveyed ranked the needs of children with emotional and behavioral difficulties as being most difficult to meet, followed by children with learning difficulties, followed by children with visual impairment, and followed by children with a hearing impairment. They attributed the low ranking of children with sensory and physical impairments to the relatively infrequent existence at that time of these children in mainstream classes. Teachers' attitudes appear to vary with their perceptions of the specific disability, as well as the demands that students' instructional and management needs will place on them.

Teaching experience

Teaching experience is cited by several studies as having an influence on teachers' attitudes, Clough and Lindsay (1991) found that younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience have been found to be more supportive of inclusion. Florin's (1995) study, showed that acceptance of a child with a physical disability was less than six years of teaching for those with six to ten years of teaching. The most experienced teachers more than 11 years of teaching were the least accepting. Similar results found by Leyser *et al.*, (1994)^[17] also found that teachers with 14 years' or less teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their attitudes to inclusive than those with more than 14 years. They found no significant differences in attitudes to integration among teachers whose teaching experience was between four, five and nine years and ten and 14 years. In the Roberts and Lindsell (1997) study, teachers who taught students with physical disabilities in their classes were more positive in their attitudes than teachers with no experience of inclusion. Teachers' attitude appear to vary with their perceptions of the inclusion according to teaching experience, However, although the above studies indicated that younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience are more supportive of inclusive, other investigators have reported that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' studies (Avramids *et al.*, 2000).

Training

Another factor that has attracted considerable attention is the knowledge about children with special education needs during pre-and in-service training. This was an important factor in

improving teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion. The importance of training in formation of positive attitudes towards inclusive education was supported by the findings of Al-Khatteeb (2002) and Beh-Pajoooh (1992). Marchesi (1998) found that professional training of teachers was reported to be one of the key factors of successful inclusion. In the Siegel and Jausovce (1994), in-service training was highlighted as an effective way of improving teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

Factors related to the school

Schroth, Moorman and Fullwood (1997) suggested that teachers' concerns about moving towards inclusion can be minimized using a number of strategies. They suggested that teachers should be empowered to initiate changes in their lessons and teaching plans, and they should have opportunities to visit settings where inclusion is practiced. Factors external to the school that affect the working conditions of teachers, such as financial rewards, status in the society and professional expectations, have also been found to influence the teachers' motivation and dedication (Marchesi, 1998).

Gender

In the Beh-Pajoooh (1992) and Leyser *et al.*, (1994)^[17] found that female teachers expressed more positive attitudes towards the idea of integrating children with behavior problems than male teachers. However, Hannah (1998) did not mention that gender was related to attitudes.

Grade level taught: Leyser *et al.*, (1994)^[17] found that high school teachers displayed more positive attitude towards integration than elementary schools. This was supported by Alvrמידis, Bayliss and Burden (2000)^[2] and Hanwi (2003) who found that high school teachers showed more positive attitudes towards integration than primary school teachers. Children do better academically when in inclusive settings provides opportunities to develop relationships like friendships, social skills, personal principles, comfort level with people who have special needs, and caring classroom environments. The most important function of friendships is to make people feel cared for, loved, and safe. Thus inclusive educational setting, with positive attitude a low-achieving student is able to get extra help even though he did not qualify for special education.

Although many schools are moving towards special needs inclusive classrooms, there are a number of issues or challenges that need to be addressed. Preparing and training a teacher is the first step in making special education a success.

Challenges to implement Inclusive Education in India

In India the number of the disabled people is so large, their problems so complex, available resources so scarce and social attitudes so damaging. The road to achieving inclusive education is a long and varied one, on which challenges and opportunities will arise. India is a multilingual, multicultural, multi-religious country, and its people are stratified along sharp socio-economic and caste lines. With an estimated 1,210 million people, India is the world's second most populated country after China. It has 17 percent of the global population and 20 percent of the world's out-of-school children. The key purpose of inclusion of bringing change in the life of the child has become more challenging as schools accommodate students with increasingly diverse backgrounds and abilities.

It requires a lot of training, patience and compassion on the

part of these teachers.

Fully inclusive classrooms have students across the educational and developmental spectrum, ranging from typically developing students to severe and profoundly disabled students. For this reason, it becomes a challenge for the teacher to find enough of a balance to serve all the students.

Implications

Importance of a broadened concept of inclusive education that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.

- A policy of inclusion needs to be implemented in all schools and throughout Indian education system.
- Develop a positive attitude in teachers to prepare children for life and ensure children in difficult circumstances get the maximum benefit of this critical area of education.
- The preparation of teachers for rural special education programmes should be planned differently, as the aim of these Programmes would be to integrate disabled persons in their own environment and community.
- A school-based support team should develop strategies for the whole school to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs. This team should also be a resource for teachers experiencing problems in their classrooms.
- Parents to be involved in all decision-making concerning their child. They should be seen as partners in the education process.
- Families with children without disabilities should develop relationships with families with children with disabilities and be able to make a contribution.
- In-service training programmes of two to three weeks' duration for teachers and it should be ongoing.
The reform of the curriculum should be made in parallel with a proper training for teachers regarding their knowledge of inclusion and its principles.

Conclusion

The review findings show that while teachers' positive attitude has positive effects on students' performance and personality developments, negative attitude has a negative effect on both the performance levels and personality development of students. This in turn clearly shows that especially teachers surpass the boundaries of the classroom in individuals' educational lives and its evident how effective they can be during the whole life of the student after parents. It must not be forgotten that children take on role models while learning and that is why perhaps the behavior and attitude of teachers, which they spend the most time with apart from their parents, has an effect on their personality development. Teachers with positive attitude towards inclusive education and good role models should precede classes because their views on life and behavior guide the student. In short an attitude which gives the child confidence, questions him/her and gives him/her responsibility should be the priority.

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