



IMPACT OF INCLUSION EDUCATION ON ATTITUDE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION OF STUDENTS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES

Education

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education lets children with varied background learn and thrive together in a way that benefits them all equally. When children with and without disabilities work together they are building an environment that accepts everyone the way they are rather than differentiate them. Inclusive education strategies help these children builds stronger bonds and imbibe values like empathy and kindness. However, limited research has been conducted on the actual behaviors of students among those with and without disabilities regarding social inclusion. This study aims to examine the attitude and social interaction of students with and without disabilities in inclusive education system.

KEYWORDS

Inclusive education, attitude, Children with and without disabilities

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive Education builds an atmosphere for all children both with and without disabilities. One of the key features of inclusive education is the opportunity to grow in a diverse learning environment among an assorted group of students. Mutual learning helps create a creative interaction and promote self-confidence and development. This kind of education culture builds awareness among children as they learn to respect each other's differences and accept the diversity around them. The paper explores impact of inclusive education on the attitude and social interaction of students with and without disabilities.

Understanding Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means that all children learn together in schools that recognize and respond to the diverse needs of students, ensure quality education for all through appropriate curricula, organization, teaching strategies and resource use (UNESCO, 1994), and overcome the barriers to the presence, participation, and achievement of all students in general education classes (UNESCO, 2017).

Inclusive Education (IE) is a distinctive approach towards educating children with disabilities and learning challenges with other children of their age in a similar setting. This kind of environment brings all learners collectively in one space, indifferent to their strengths and weakness in any field or manner and attempts to maximize their potential. IE is a very significant strategy because all kids are able to part of their community and create a sense of belonging and are fully equipped to build a future as youths. It presents better opportunities for children special needs to cultivate necessary life skills as individuals and learn education skills. Inclusive education is aimed to help all kids learn and grow equally.

Inclusive education needs to look at the diverse personalities and temperaments of each child in the system. Each child is differently abled and so are their needs which affect their level of development. Inclusive education aims to remove boundaries to build an ecosystem which takes care of every individual. However not everytime these boundaries are well defined and so building the system becomes difficult. Many efforts are being made at national and international level to address the learning needs of differently-abled children.

Social competence is the degree to which students are able to create and sustain good interpersonal relationships, gain peer approval, make and keep friendships, and end negative relationships, while strengthening interpersonal relationships.

Effective social problem solving includes being able to read one's feelings and being able to accurately express oneself.

Good social skills can enable youth with disabilities to create positive peer relationships, success in school, and begin to successfully explore adult roles such as employee, co-worker/colleague, and community member. Social skills also support the development of healthy adult relationships with family members and peers. Such skills are aspects of social and emotional learning (Christine, 2004).

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Scope Of Inclusive Education

Inclusion is often looked at as though it implies only to students with disabilities, however there is a much larger scope to this. According to Booth and Ainscow as stated in their book *Index for Inclusion: developing learning and participation in schools*, 2002 Inclusion in education involves:

1. Valuing all students and staff equally.
2. Reducing student's exclusion from schools and focusing their increase participation in the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
3. To respond to the diversity of students in the locality, there is a need for restructuring the culture, policies and practices in schools.
4. Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students in the schools. Especially those who are categorized as having special educational needs.
5. Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.
6. Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome.
7. Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality.
8. Improving schools for staff as well as for students.
9. Emphasizing the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
10. Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.
11. Recognizing that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society. (Booth and Ainscow, 2002)

Impact Of Inclusive Education

1. Inclusive Education allows students to learn as per their individual needs. Teachers and Special needs educator use differentiated instruction to cater to their needs by using presenting lessons in creative ways. Breaking students into smaller groups makes it easier to focus better on their needs.
2. Reducing stigma is one of the greatest strengths of inclusive education. An inclusive environment allows children to understand each other's strengths and weakness. This leads them to find more similarities with other kids rather than differences instilling more confidence in them. It will help them build and

- maintain friendships.
3. Creative and Effective use of resources in an inclusive environment helps students learn with multiple and diverse specialists. Various instructors like speech and reading therapist come together to teach both abled and non-abled students.
 4. Expectations Inclusion improves academic excellence. Higher expectations are set as children with special needs are expected to do as well as the others. This also puts other students spontaneously set a high standard for themselves.
 5. Inclusive Education helps raise an inclusive society. It introduces a culture of civic participation and community relationships. Students are encouraged to accept and respect those who are different to them.
 6. In developing countries like India where education funding is a problem and schools face lack of teacher, inclusive education saves the expense of constructing a new establishment for special needs children.

Principles Of Effective Inclusion

According to Salend (2001), there are four principles of effective inclusion:

1. Effective inclusion improves the educational system for all students by placing them together in general education classrooms-regardless of their learning ability, race, linguistic ability, economic status, gender, learning style, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, family structure, and sexual orientation. Inclusionary schools welcome, acknowledge, affirm, and celebrate the value of all learners by educating them together in high-quality, age appropriate general education classrooms in their neighborhood schools.
2. Effective inclusion involves sensitivity to and acceptance of individual needs and differences. Educators cannot teach students without taking into account the factors that shape their students and make them unique. In inclusive classrooms, all students are valued as individuals capable of learning and contributing to society. They are taught to appreciate diversity and to value and learn from each other's similarities and differences
3. Effective inclusion requires reflective educators to modify their attitudes, teaching and classroom management practices, and curricula to accommodate individual needs. In inclusive classrooms, teachers are reflective practitioners who are flexible, responsive, and aware of students needs. They think critically about their values and beliefs and routinely examine their own practices for self-improvement and to ensure that all students needs are met.
4. Effective inclusion is a group effort; it involves collaboration among educators, other professionals, students, families, and community agencies. The support and services that students need are provided in the general education classroom. People work cooperatively, reflectively, sharing resources, responsibilities, skills, decisions, and advocacy for students benefit.

Inclusion builds positive attitude and improves social interaction among students with and without disabilities.

An inclusive environment helps foster a sense of belonging. One of the key features of a successful inclusion is ability of a student with disability to feel a part of the general classroom. Feeling of being a part positively affects the child which motivates him to do his best. It helps improve his self-image and self-esteem. Both academic and social benefits of inclusive education are interconnected.

All students, including those with disability, are likely to achieve more academically if they are socially part of their classroom. Research shows that students who feel socially excluded and isolated are at higher risk of experiencing mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression. Teachers play an important role in preparing the general group to accept and accommodate the child with special needs into their classroom and school. Being prepared helps them understand the needs of their new classmates.

Creates A Sense Of Belonging Being accepted by children of their age and social group helps them grow better. Being loved, having relationships and friendships with other children enriches their lives.

Peer Connection In Classroom leads to peer learning and as well social relations. Connections in class leads to connection in the playground and ultimately workforce and community life in general.

To teach another one needs to learn his best first which improves learning and boosts confidence.

Higher Self Esteem. When children with special need become part of the general schools they tend to display more confidence and qualities of self efficacy.

Better social skills and communication. Children learn a lot through observing. Working in an inclusive environment helps children with and without disabilities understand the world around them. They learn to communicate and engage with all with respect and empathy and make each other feel a part of the class.

Some observations show that children with autism tend to benefit from social intention with other children. Even though there is non verbal communication the fact that someone else understands or is trying to understand what they wish to communicate makes them happy.

Becoming more tolerant. Interaction between children with and without disabilities creates an atmosphere of tolerance. It prepares them to face the world outside and work on ways to function in it with their abilities. Non disable children show an increased sense of self realization, self worth and tolerance and improve sense of understanding of other people.

Appreciate diversity with positivity. Inclusion allows children to develop a sense of positive understanding of people and their disabilities. While children with disability learn to accept their self, non disabled children learn to appreciate diversity positively.

Development of Leadership Skills. Children in an inclusive environment naturally learn to take up responsibility. As they build strong bonds, there are situations where they stand up and speak to protect their peers from bullies. Inclusion allows children to find themselves performing roles and taking up responsibilities they never would have done if they weren't in this system.

Building Self Esteem and Self Worth:

Being part of an inclusive education system helps children appreciate diversity. They not only learn to appreciate their peers but also themselves. When children are given a chance to play and learn without segregation a culture of respect grows.

Develops feelings of empowerment and the ability to make a difference. When children without disabilities stand up for their peers, they tend to feel empowered. The ability to help someone and make difference is empowering and worthwhile.

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