



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

What does it mean and (how) can it be accomplished?

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Inclusive education

One (actually several) ideas about what constitutes good environment for children (with disabilities)

In relation to the conference theme:
about creating learning (and other things) for all



Basic questions

- What is inclusive education?
- Is inclusion a reasonable goal ?
- How is inclusion to be accomplished? (what can be learned from research?)



Question 1

What is inclusive education?



One common misunderstanding

Inclusive education is when the educational situation fits the child with a disability, then the child is included (i.e. special schools can be inclusive)



Physical placement

Inclusive Education occurs when children (with a disability) are part of the mainstream classroom/preschool



Invidividual participation

Inclusion is not only about placement of children with disabilities, all children have to be educationally and socially included



Community

Inclusion is a concept which has implications for all children and the whole learning environment

Different aspects of a community

- Everyone involved in joint activities
(whole class teaching, group work)
- A sense of a "we"
- Joint goals
- Democratic processes
- Differences are celebrated/valued/accepted

Tentative (radical) definition

Inclusion means that one school system takes responsibility for all pupils regardless of their individual characteristics and that no segregated educational solutions are created for different categories of pupils. An inclusive system involves community at different levels of the system and differences are valued. Cooperation and joint problems solving are important aspects of such communities and democratic processes are central. All pupils feel socially and educationally included. To be educationally included means both to be a part of a learning community and the right to develop as far as possible given one's potential.



Question 2

Is (some form of) inclusive education a reasonable goal?



Educational philosophy

What environments are schools and preschools supposed to be?

The basic question in all forms of evaluation

Is inclusion a reasonable goal?

- It is one way of thinking about what schools should accomplish

Necessary distinctions:

- 1) what inclusion theorists want to accomplish
- 2) the goals that have been decided upon
- 3) the goals that are at work

Deliberation – the will for power

Three roles of the researcher

Missionary (help school achieve goals that from the researcher's perspective are good goals)

Civil servant (help schools achieve goals that have been democratically decided upon)

The ignorant (help schools achieve goals that the researcher believes are the goals of schooling; or does not understand the problem involved)



Question 3

How is inclusion to be accomplished?

How is inclusion to be accomplished?

Very little methodological sound research concerning how schools, classrooms or preschools are to become more inclusive given the community or the participation definitions

Most research is about effects of placement

Since inclusion per definition is prescribing certain effects (both in the community and participation definitions) it is strange to ask about effects of inclusion; however, one can ask about what makes inclusion come about



What is needed?

Research which has a clear basis in educational philosophy

Indicators (of level of community, celebration of difference etc)

Before/after designs



Factors that are mentioned to be important for making education inclusive

- A clear vision
- Resources
- Involvement
- Excellent teachers that can (and are willing) to adapt the curriculum to all learners



Returning back

Inclusive education -
what does it mean and (how) can it be
accomplished?