

The Application of Inclusive Education in China

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is a new educational concept proposed in a declaration at the 'World Conference on Special Needs Education' held in Salamanca, Spain on June 10, 1994. It means that every child has the basic right to education, unique sexual characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs. In other words, education should meet the needs of all children. Schools must accept all children in the service area and provide conditions for them to enjoy the education they need. Previous studies show that countries around the world have carried out certain inclusive education measures and achieved certain results. The historical education situation in China has separated the disabled from normal people. After accepting the concept of inclusive education proposed by UNESCO in 1994, our country introduced a policy to allow all students to enroll nearby and get the education they deserve. This research is to study the impact of inclusive education on students from school, family, teachers, students, classroom teaching, and extracurricular activities with the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The implication is that the development of inclusive education in Chinese first-tier cities has been promoted relatively quickly, but there are still many setbacks on the way forward. It is a policy that needs to be adjusted vigorously by the government. Schools should consider special children's needs so as to achieve the fairness, justice, and universality of education.

Keywords *inclusive education, special children, schools, family, China.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Compulsory Education Law (CEL, a Chinese law), passed in 1986 mandated that all children beginning at age 6 receive 9 years of free public education regardless of their "gender, race, ethnicity, family socioeconomic status, or religious beliefs"[1]. But it did not mention whether special students could be integrated into mainstream schools. The movement toward inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classes has become the over whelming trend in education [2][3]. Inclusive education has emerged as one of the greatest challenges faced by educational systems throughout the world in recent decades [4][5]. In China, until the reauthorization of both the CEL in 2006 [6] and the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons [7], children with disabilities have been accepted in regular schools.

However, the way that teachers work has not changed as expected, and challenges have arisen because they are neither well trained nor adequately resourced for the radical reform brought about by inclusive education. [8][9]. Teachers who have received inclusive education can handle students' emergencies and psychological

problems with ease. In this context, this study aims to explore the impact of inclusive education to educational environment in China.

2. METHODOLOGY

Teachers must learn inclusive education. Those who have this concept compare to those who don't have it will hold different attitudes toward special students. This study will use the observation method to compare the educational attitudes of different teachers in the two classes in China. It will also explore the tolerance of other students in the class to special students and the self-perception of special students.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What is the impact of inclusive education on the educational environment in China?

4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

It's commonly accepted that the attitudes of school principals, teachers and staff have a powerful influence upon both the nature and quality of the special education

provision made for children with disabilities. This assumption has been verified in a considerable body of research carried out in North America and Europe. [10][11][12][13][14]. In this study, it finds the following impacts of inclusive education:

4.1. Impact on educators

The first is that the teacher who receives inclusive education could clearly recognize the characteristics of this student and shows tolerance and fairness in their words, actions, and class activities. The students in this class get along well with the special students. There is no clear view that he/she is a special student. The tolerant and fair environment has brought positive psychological effects to the student. He/She has a high degree of self-recognition, more positive interactions with peers, and shows a positive psychological tendency.

Then the teacher who doesn't receive inclusive education could not realize that the student has learning disabilities and psychological problems. So the teacher treats him poorly in class, regrading him/her as a dumb student who loves to play and doesn't like learning. This results in the student in this class with low degree of self-recognition, and he/she becomes the object of collective exclusion. Peers and teachers often ignore or actively reject the overtures of such students, praise them less, and consider them less desirable than students without disabilities [15][16].

Finally, in the implementation of inclusive education in the future, the requirements for teachers will be particularly high. Teachers not only have professional knowledge, but also have more knowledge in psychology and pedagogy. However, there are a large number of non-teaching teachers who enter the teaching team. They need to obtain academic qualifications in psychology and education or the same qualifications before entering the teaching team. Only in this way can better educate these special learners.

4.2. Impact on Family

It is likely that the cultural background of different families and their acceptance of inclusive education will influence their treatment of children. Families with a certain level of cultural knowledge have the potential to receive inclusive education. These parents will immediately initiate positive psychological intervention, seek medical help, insist on training, let students regularly go home for small parties, create a good growth environment for children, communicate with teachers, and learn about the family's educational philosophy, so the special child could grow healthily. In class, the child is active and tries to integrate into the communities. Students will like to learn and play with the child, and she/he will not think they are exceptional children.

On the contrary, families who lack of higher education have limited parental awareness, are busy with work, and neglect to manage their children with disabilities. These children will be better when they meet teachers with learned inclusive education. If there is no teacher who accepts inclusive education, the child will be in a difficult situation. Not being recognized, being laughed at, having low self-esteem, having difficulty getting along with students, and even being discriminated against. Because these families have no idea what to do with their exceptional children, they are helpless, self-defeating, and letting their children develop freely and obey their fate.

4.3. Impact on student

Students with disabilities often exhibit more aggressive and negative verbal and nonverbal behaviors [17][18] and may be either disruptive or introverted [19][20].

Exceptional children in school will affect the behavior and habits of normal students. Through this experimental observation, the study finds that a small part of mainstream students are influenced by these special children, and they will imitate the behavior of special students. This is because that teachers care about special students, leading mainstream students to think that as long as they do the same behavior, they will receive attention. With the increase of the age, most of the children will gradually reduce such imitation behaviors as their minds become mature.

Students with disabilities can affect the class's learning progress. The presence of special children can easily distract other students. If they have an emergency, the teacher will spend a lot of time appeasing them, which will also affect the teacher's teaching. On the contrary, the presence of special children has a positive effect. Sometimes some classmates will realize that when a child with mental or physical disabilities is sitting in the same classroom, they will feel empathy. They can help special children in daily learning, these children will grow faster and become more mature than other classmates.

4.4. School Support

At present, China has launched inclusive education for special students. My internship school has implemented inclusive education. The school provides special classrooms for special children with various toys. There are psychology teachers and special teachers to deal with daily training, emergencies respectively. However, there are still many children with psychological or behavioral problems in society. Compared with my internship school, they are not enough to meet the requirements.

5. CONCLUSION

Teachers who embrace the concept of inclusive education will keep diaries about special children and report it to parents weekly. In contrast, those who have not accepted this concept simply think that these children are mischievous children who do not study hard, and blindly criticize them, causing secondary trauma to the children.

These special children in mainstream schools, for instance, Vaughn et al. (1996)[21][22][23] found that inclusive classrooms had a positive impact on the peer relationships and self-concept of students with learning disabilities.

Inclusive education develops with social civilization. Education serves all children and reflects the fairness of education, so that each child can get the fullest development. Chinese inclusive education has a promising future.

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