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## **Effective Teaching in Inclusive Classroom: Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

When we consider effective teaching, we mean the work of effective teachers. There are five key behaviours for effective teaching: lesson clarity, instructional variety, teacher task orientation, engagement in the learning process and student success rate, all of which are the teachers' responsibility. These responsibilities are evident in a regular classroom. However, in an inclusive classroom the situation is more critical because the term (inclusive) means integrating children of mixed abilities. In this situation the teachers must be especially skilled in organisation, management, appropriate teaching strategies and behaviour management among other things. This paper reviews the literature on effective teaching in regular and inclusive classrooms. It makes recommendations about the professional development needs of teachers who practice in mixed ability contexts.

### **Introduction**

The international move towards inclusion of special needs children into mainstreaming classrooms rather than educating them in an isolated environment has been a main concern raising, issues and interest for educators, policy-makers and researchers in recent times (Chalmers, 1998).

This paper will review the literature about effective teaching in general and in inclusive classroom specifically. In general this paper will discuss human rights and social justice and include students with special needs and the outcome of this inclusion, then literature relating to the effective school, after that the effective teaching and finally the effective teacher's characteristics in the inclusive classroom and the factors may influence students' achievement.

For a long time, there have been arguments about which factors influence the student's achievement. Some researchers attribute the student's achievement to the school; others indicate that the school makes little impact on academic outcome. Other researchers say that the effective teacher is the only one who can play the main role in terms of student progress. All the factors (teacher, school context, classroom

context and the community around the school) contribute or impact student's achievement. The effective school factors, which influence students, are: professional leadership, learning environment, high expectation, positive reinforcement, monitoring student's progress and parent-school co-operation (Ayres, Sawyer, & Dinham, 2004; Bentley, 2000; Steve Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995; Alma Harris, 1999; Owens, 1998). The effective teaching or teacher's characteristics are: "lesson clarity, instructional variety, teacher task orientation, and engagement in the learning process and student success rate" (Borich, 2000 p.8).

The effective teacher in the inclusive classroom possesses such characteristics as: efficient use of time; good relationships with students; provides positive feedback; has a high student success rate; and in general provides support for the students with and without disabilities (Larrivee, 1985).

## **Inclusive**

### **Human Rights and Social Justice**

The message from International Year of Disabled People (IYDP) in 1981 was clear in terms of human rights for students who have disabilities, stating that students with disabilities didn't want their future decided by others or limited according to their disabilities. They have the right to demonstrate the most positive significant ability in their personality not their disabilities and have the right to receive an education to develop their skills. Also the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990 embodied this right (Foreman, 2001; Jenkinson, 1997).

O'Brien argued that children with special education needs have the right to be educated in a full inclusive classroom, and should not be segregated for any reason. In addition there is different between those students to be accepted only and included as physical individuals, the reality should be accepted physically and morally without isolated them from their peers in regular classroom and preparing appropriate education which meet their needs (O'Brien, 2001).

Social justice means all members of a society are treated equally including those who have disabilities. In the past, schools have dealt with special needs students in terms of their difficulties, without taking into account the community, which they are,

part of. They are influenced by this community and they influence it as interchangeable relationships not labelling them as special people with special programs prepared for them may be because the law or the authorities (Foreman, 2001).

"Rather than a few students being seen to have 'special' needs, schools must regard all students' needs as part of the fabric of human experience and must become open, inclusive and responsive institutions which celebrate rather than eliminate human difference" Christensen 1992; cited in (Foreman, 2001)

Some, who advocate this inclusion, validate their argument by mentioning the advantages of inclusion. By including individuals with special needs civil rights can be achieved for those with disabilities, whereas separating them in special classes is not comparable to the inclusion environment which has advantages in terms of the social relationship, communication, friendship, self-esteem and confidence by reducing labelling or stigma. In other words by full inclusion schools do not need to pull-out the students for special services or special classrooms for a short time (resources room) which makes those students feel different to the others causing them to lose many important parts of the instruction, consequently leading to fragmentation and creating confusion between what they learn in the special and general classrooms (Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

In regard to this perspective, inclusive dealing and equality, Stainback and Stainback maintained that:

"The most important reason to include all students in the mainstream is that it is the fair, ethical, and equitable thing to do ...It is discriminatory that some students, such those "labelled" disabled, must earn the right to be in the regular education mainstream or have to wait for educational researchers to prove that they can profit from the mainstream, while other students are showed unrestricted access simply because they have no label. No one should have to pass anyone's test or prove anything in a research study to live and learn in the mainstream of school and community life. This is a basic right, not something one has to earn" ( Stainback and Stainback, cited in Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004).

Furthermore, disabled people have the same rights and the same equality as other people in any society in terms of basic needs (physical needs), psychosocial needs and participation on the political level (Alison Harris & Enfield, 2003).

Behind the evolution of treating the people who have disabilities, there are socio-economic and cultural factors. Following World War II, in the western countries unemployment influenced the population and people with disabilities struggled to alter their live demands, revolution in industries and economic sectors, which reflect positively in their daily lives. In affluent society, the people became concerned of changing their live of all the members of society and looking for success. Thus raised the idea of making the education system compulsory, which led to the demand that children with disabilities should participate with their peers in the regular classroom, from civil rights perspective (Clark, Dyson, & Millward, 1995).

In Salamanca, Spain in 1994 more than 300 people representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations came together under the Spanish Government and UNESCO organization. The conference was about "Special Needs Education: Access and Quality". In the final report (Salamanca statement) the Participants proclaim that:

- \* Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning,
- \* Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities, and learning needs,
- \* Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs,
- \* Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools, which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs,
- \* Regular schools with this 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.

(UNESCO, 1994par 2)

This evolution in the education of students with special education needs has progressed from isolation to mainstream to integration and recently to inclusion. This shift over such a short time period must have some disadvantages, reflecting on the extent the teachers, peers and parents accept this evolution and adapt themselves to it? In the following pages this phenomenon (inclusive) will be reviewed in terms of its outcome (advantages and disadvantages).

### **Inclusive outcome**

Banerji and Dailey in their study about the effectiveness of an inclusive outcome on students with learning disabilities, found that students with specific learning disabilities demonstrated academic progress at pace comparable to that of students did not possess such disabilities, in addition their teachers and parents indicated progress in self-esteem and motivation. The inclusive programme was applied to grades 2 and 5 (Banerji & Dailey, 1995). Vaughn, Elbaum and Schumm in their study about social function the students with learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom (peer acceptance, loneliness, self-concept and social alienation) found that such students demonstrated lower academic self-concept. The sample consisted of 16 students with learning disabilities, 27 with low achievement, and 21 with average/high level of achievement. The aim of this study was to determine the social function of the students in second, third, and fourth grade in an inclusive classroom. The social function was measured at the beginning and end of a full inclusive entire school year (Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996).

In another study about the social outcome for students with and without learning disabilities in an inclusive classroom, Vaughn and colleagues obtained a positive outcome. In this study the sample consisted 185 third through six-grade students distributed between learning disabilities, average achievement and high achievement. The participants were distributed between two different settings (co-teaching setting and consultation / collaborative teaching setting). According to the results the students on the consultation / collaborative teaching setting demonstrated a more positive outcome than their peers on the co-teaching setting. Further it was demonstrated that there was an increase in the number of reciprocal friendships formed (Vaughn, Elbaum, Schumm, & Hughes, 1998). But in a study by Pavri and Luftig students with learning

disabilities felt loneliness more so than did their peers without learning disabilities and were more controversial in their social status and less popular. In this study the sample was 15 students with learning disabilities and 68 students without learning disabilities in sixth-grade classrooms (Pavri & Lufting, 2000).

Stanovich and others conducted a study about the differences in terms of academic self-concept and peer acceptance in an inclusive classroom setting; the sample was 2,011 students in second to eighth grade and this sample divided to four categories (students with disabilities, students that had been identified as being educationally at risk, students whose native language was not English, and other students that were non categorized). The basic finding showed that the self-concept was the lowest among the students who were categorized in comparison to students who were non categorized, also the students who had disabilities and those whose native language was not English demonstrated low levels of social integration compared with those who were identified as being at risk. Further, peer acceptance was significantly higher for the non categorized students, the students who were at risk were accepted by their peers but had low perception in academic ability, and on other hand the students with disabilities rated higher in academic self-concept than in social closeness (Stanovich, Jordan, & Perot, 1998).

Klingner *et al.* Conducted study about which program students prefer (pull-out or inclusion). In the study 32 students were interviewed individually by the researcher using key questions assessing their perceptions, the results indicated that more children prefer the pull-out model, but many children confident that the inclusive program was more useful in terms of the outcomes and social skill development (Klingner, Vaughn, Schumm, Cohen, & Forgan, 1998; Owens).

In another study about students' perception of inclusion, Vaughn and Kingner indicated from review 8 studies these studies examined the students perceptions by interviews and surveys using a sample of 442 students with learning disabilities and found that students liked going to the resources room because they thought work in the resources room was easy and fun and because they received special help, yet students also stated that they liked the inclusive classroom because they were able to make friends (Vaughn & Klingner, 1998). Klingner and Vaughn investigated the

perceptions of 4,659 students from preschool to 12 grade, 760 of those students having high-incidence disabilities. They found that the students with high-incidence disabilities – in an inclusive classroom - wanted the same books, materials, activities, homework and group teaching as their peers without disabilities and it was also found that their peers agreed with them on the terms that every one should learn fairly. All the sample individuals recognized that the teacher should change their way of teaching according to individual student ability. Students appreciate a teacher who slows down the instruction, makes the concepts clear and teaches using learning strategies (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999).

Cook investigates teachers' attitudes toward their included students according the disability degree (mild and severe disability). The study sample consisted of 70 teachers, which 'nominated three students to promote corresponding with the attitudes of attachment, concern, indifference, and rejection' (Cook, 2001 p.115). On one hand Cook found that students with severe disabilities were significantly over represented among teachers' nominations in the indifference category, on the other hand, students with mild disabilities were significantly over represented in the rejection category, also the results indicated that teachers demonstrated different attitudes depending on the degree of disability. Therefore the study suggested that those students were at risk of getting appropriate educational interactions (Cook, 2001). Praisner surveyed 408 elementary school principals in order to determine their attitudes toward inclusion. It was found that 1: 5 principals' attitudes were positive, when the variable of special education concepts had been taken into account. In this study it was positive relationship between the attitude and principals' experience and training (Praisner, 2003). In terms of effects of included students with disabilities on students without disabilities, a literature review by Paterson, indicated, that when students with disabilities are include in regular classrooms with their peers without disabilities 'is neither detrimental nor beneficial on students without disabilities' in respect to academic achievement, but inclusion is useful in terms of the 'social development'(Paterson, 2000 p.20).

### **Effective Teaching in an Inclusive Classroom**

Teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom may be regarded, as a challenge for teachers accustomed to teaching in the regular classroom; therefore

teachers should require the basic characteristics of effective teaching. To be a successful teacher in inclusive classrooms is not easy, because usually in such cases the teacher is dealing with different abilities. Most of the effective teaching evidence comes from the research which involves the classrooms directly using several different techniques (Westwood, 1995).

Westwood, in his review of the literature on the effective teacher, found the effective teacher should be a good classroom manager, focusing on academic skills, with good expectation, enthusiasm, using effective strategies to keep students on task and using variety of teaching and resources styles, covering the material content. Also the effective teacher uses easy presentation of material, is direct in teaching, explains and outlines instruction clearly, frequently observe what students are doing taking into account differences between the students and re-teaching when necessarily, gives frequent feedback for all students and checks for understanding by using probing questions (Westwood, 1995).

Stanovich and Jordan indicate that effective teachers who are able to monitor the classroom and the students' behaviour in their class also demonstrate the ability to use body language. Further more they are able to manage the instruction time for the students and themselves and have good expectations for the lesson. In terms of academic ability, the effective teacher has the ability to review the previous days lesson, before start a new lesson which is important in connecting the previous and the new knowledge for the students, also ensuring their understanding by using questions and monitoring students progress frequently (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998).

Teachers behaviour has a significant link to students achievement (Englert, 1983; Westwood, 1995). Englert - in an study about teacher effectiveness - found that effective teachers had a high level of presentation and corrected student responses in a short time, also following the students error responses and informing the students of the correct response by giving the suitable feedback (Englert, 1983).

Shanoski and Hranitz indicated that an effective teacher: enthusiasm in their work, take care of the students and work cooperatively with parents. In terms of professional development, the effective teacher usually is interest in following the education journals and books, attending and presenting in conferences, and workshops in their field. Effective teachers are interest in participating on most committees in the school

and in the community around the school, able to know the students needs and supporting the individual differences, possessing high expectation, encourages the students to be optimistic about their ability, able to increase students' motivation, use different teaching strategies, have good communication skills, loves heir students and knowledgeable knowledge about their subject and subject matter (Shanoski & Hranitz, 1992).

Hattie indicate that expert teachers have sophisticated representation about what they teach, are able to solve problems without effecting the students personality and take time to understand the problem, and further can also make a decision in the suitable time and identify the important decisions. Expert teachers can prepare the optimal classroom climate by following the error and giving feedback, scan the classroom behaviour effectively and monitoring learning. Expert teachers are more able to monitor students' problems and assess their understanding whilst providing feedback at the same time, they can see the difficulties facing the students and build strategies and hypotheses and examine or test these strategies and the extent to which they are working by measuring students' outcomes, they respect their students, they have responsibility over their students, they motivate their students, they build self-concept and self-efficacy for their students, they have a positive influence on their students' outcome and lead the students through challenging tasks and they have content knowledge (Hattie, 2002). Effective teachers according to Murphy and others, are patient, caring, respect their students, organize their classrooms, and as a result their students are enthusiastic (Murphy, Delli, & Edwards, 2004).

In a study by Larrivee a sample size of 118 teachers in primary inclusive classrooms was used, and concentration was paid to the students with learning difficulties. Larrivee collected her data using four methods: observe the classroom directly, the teacher's records, self-report from the teacher and interview the teachers and the students. The 74 variables for this study were divided into seven categories. To collect the data she developed 14 instruments to assess all variables. She reported that students with special needs demonstrated a greater level of achievement in the mainstream classrooms when the teacher: used the time efficiently, his or her relationship with the students was good, gave the students positive feedback, made a high rate of success for learning tasks and responded for all students positively (Larrivee, 1985).

In contrast, the students who had lowest achievement were in classrooms with a high degree of: off-task actions or behaviour, wasted in the time transition process, teachers criticised students' responses and when there was a low ability in terms of behaviour problems interventions (Larrivee, 1985).

Summarised the study results in the following four main categories:

1. Classroom management.
2. Positive feedback during the instruction.
3. Creating appropriate conditions for instruction.
4. General supportive environment (Larrivee, 1985)

An effective teacher in an inclusive classroom has the ability and skills to plan for the content coverage and takes into account the difference between students by scope and sequences their objectives. Moreover, effective teachers have good strategies to take advantage of time by maximizing academic time-on-task and have good presentation skills including the variables which might influence the teaching process, thus making the presentation very clear and keeping the students active and engaged, monitoring the academic practices in the inclusive classroom with frequent questioning and giving immediate feedback (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2004; Westwood, 2003).

It is obvious that the effective school plays an important role in terms of students' outcome (socially and academically),

“The most persuasive research suggests that student academic performance is strongly affected by school culture. This culture is composed of values, norms, and roles existing within institutionally distinct structures of governance, communication, educational practices and policies and so on. Successful schools are found to have cultures that produce a climate or “ethos” conducive to teaching and learning...efforts to change schools have been most productive and most enduring when directed toward influencing the entire school culture via a strategy involving collaborative planning shared decision making, and collegial work in an atmosphere friendly to experimentation and evaluation”(Purkey and Smith cited in Owens, 1998 p.93).

Clark and colleagues indicate that an effective school reinforces students' performance, has a good work environment that meets the disabled peoples needs, and gives the opportunity for all the students to become involved and participate in school activities. Also the teacher is willing to deal with all students in terms of understanding their problems and provides positive behaviour models for students (Clark et al., 1995).

Including the students with disabilities and having the knowledge of how to treat them are important characteristics of the effective school, and in this regard, Ainscow indicated that the effective school has effective leadership and staff who are able to deal with all students and their needs, is optimistic that all the students can progress and develop their abilities toward successful achievement, has a willingness to support its staff by meeting their needs and taking into account the curriculum and ensuring that the curriculum meets all the students needs and also effective school reviews its programmes (teachers, curriculum, students progress) frequently making sure there is progress in terms of the effective teacher. Successful teachers challenge the students' abilities by setting good quality tasks, providing students with opportunities to choose their tasks, varying learning strategies and providing facilities that contribute to student learning (Ainscow, 1991).

### **Different factors influencing students' achievement**

All the education system, as one body, contributes to the learning process and if one section or part of the education system does not work or is isolated from the other parts students' achievement may be affected. In this sense Wang and Walberg review the professional literature and survey the experts in instruction and learning in order to develop a conceptual framework. Their final framework included 228 variable or factors categorized into six main categories: the context out of the school, variables relating to the students, variables relating to the district or education system in the state, variables relating to the school, variables relating to the program design and finally the students' outcome. In their content analysis in terms of the importance of these categories for effective learning environments, they found, that variables relating to the programme design possess the highest rating, followed by the context out of the school, classroom climate and instruction, the variables relating to the

students, variables relating to the school and district or state ranked as the lowest overall(Wang & Walberg, 1991).

Also, Stringfield and Teddlie conducted a longitudinal study at Louisiana school, the aim examine the conditions that influence student' achievement. The categories targeted, were teachers, principals and students, the sample was 76 schools from 12 districts and included 250 teachers and 5000 students. Stringfield and Teddlie found that the conditions relating to the school had a significant effect on student achievement more so than the conditions of the teachers. Also, it was found that the socio-economic conditions, school and teacher factors could influence students' achievement (Stringfield & Teddlie, 1988).

In terms of leadership, the study which mentioned above, found that the principals in effective schools were more active, had long plans for their schools, had a clear vision of how to achieve their goals for their schools, effectively concentrate, were involved about the classrooms in their schools and made the instruction processes more easy for the teachers and the students. In addition it was found that principals in effective schools usually remain close to the students in order to understanding the students and their needs. In terms of the connections between the effective schools and effective teaching, the researchers found that schools become more successful when the students receive from the teachers a good and an effective style of teaching, which thus increases the students' achievement (Stringfield & Teddlie, 1988).

In terms of school effectiveness, Teddlie and his colleagues indicate that the school and the teachers demonstrate the following effective teaching behaviours: Spending time on teaching the task, develop new ways of presenting material, practice independently, the school and the teachers have high expectations, encourage, giving feedback and reinforce the students frequently, minimizing the interruptions, controlling the students and all of the school in a positive manner, provide a friendly environment and thus the students work hard. In comparison an ineffective school has no such characteristics (Teddlie, Kirby, & Strinfield, 1989).

In the school context, the principal plays the main role in school improvement and effectiveness, leading to the students' achievement. Dinham and his colleagues conducted case study into three schools in NSW and found that the principals had

significant influence on the school climate and culture and also on school staff, which led to progress in the students' achievement (Steve Dinham et al., 1995).

Meta-analysis of the research into the influence of schools and teacher on students achievement has been done by Marzano found that student achievement was influenced by three main factors: those relating to the school, those relating to the teacher and those relating to the student. The factors relating to the school are: effective leadership, an orderly and safe climate in the school, providing the students with the opportunity to learn the basic skills, a high expectation for its students to gain a high achievement level, monitoring students' performance frequently and co-operation with parents. The factors relating to the teacher are: emphasis on the skill which provides the students with an ability to compare and classify, provide the students with skills about note taking, summarizing and analysing the information, feedback and reinforcement, giving homework and practice, providing the students with non-linguistic practices and presentations skills, concentrating on cooperative learning, encouraging the students to solve the problems by test theories and hypotheses in order to make the material easy to understand and classroom management. The factors relating to the students - which can influence their achievement - are: socio-economic status, students' prior knowledge, interest and enthusiasm and native ability or aptitude. The surprising thing in this meta-analysis is that the school-level factors account for 7% and the teacher - level factors account for 13%, whereas the students-factors account 80% overall (Marzano, 2000).

In terms of leadership and its influence on the school outcome, recently Dinham and his colleagues conducted case study based on AESOP (An Exceptional Schooling Outcomes Project), where the aim of the project was "to identify and analyse processes in NSW public schooling, in year 7-10 and produce outstanding educational outcomes to assist national renewal in junior secondary education". It was found that the principals play the main role in school outcomes by providing suitable conditions for the teachers and students to do well in terms of schooling outcomes which reflect eventually on the students' achievement. Also according to Dinham's model of principal leadership, the effective or the successful principal has the following characteristics or responsibilities: they take into account the external environment and engage with it, they have aptitude, ability to change and creativity, they have a good interpersonal skills and are respected by staff and students, they have long term visions and they prepare themselves to work toward these, they have responsibility,

trust and they are concerned about their teachers professional development, they support the students and co-operate with the teachers and other staff and they focus more on the students in terms of teaching and learning (S Dinham, 2004b p.8).

The 50-state survey by Darling-Hammond found that there was a significant relationship between teacher quality and students' achievement; in addition it was found that there was a strong relationship between students' achievement, and teacher preparation and qualification especially in reading and mathematics. Further, the survey found that a teacher's experience, creativity, enthusiasm, questioning skills, knowledge of the content, intelligence, planning for using the time and co-operation with colleagues contributed to an increasing student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). In this sense, Dinham and his colleagues conducted a case study which included 19 effective teachers of high - achievement grade 12 students in NSW, Australia; and found that there were eight categories which influenced a student's achievement: " School background and students, subject faculty, personal qualities, relationships with students, professional development, resources and planning, classroom climate and teaching strategies" (S Dinham, 2004a p.149).

Research-based conclusions about teacher behaviour and students achievement show that the following factors play the main role in student achievement:

Opportunity to learn/content covered, role definition/expectation/time allocation, classroom management/student engaged time, consistent success/academic learning time, active learning, whole-class versus small-group versus individualized instruction, structuring, redundancy/sequencing, clarity, enthusiasm, pacing/ wait-time, difficulty level of questions, cognitive level of questions, clarity of question, post question wait-time, selecting the respondent, waiting for the student to respond, reacting to correct responses, reacting to partly correct responses, reacting to incorrect responses, reacting to "no response", reacting to student questions and comments, handling seatwork and homework assignments, grade level, student *socio-economic status* SES/ability/affect, teacher's intentions/ objectives (Brophy & Good, 1986 p.360-365).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the right of students with special needs to be educated in an inclusive classroom rather than educating them in an isolated environment has been a main concern raising, issues and interest for educators, policy-makers and researchers in recent times and eventually became the basic issue in terms of teaching students with special needs. Effective school and teachers characteristics influence positively students' achievement or outcome in an inclusive classroom, school characteristics such as: qualified leadership, learning environment, high expectation, positive reinforcement, monitoring student's progress and parent-school co-operation. Teacher characteristics such as: efficient use of time; good relationships with students; provides positive feedback; has a high student success rate; and in general provides support for the students with and without disabilities.

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