A Literature Review of Inclusion for Students with Hearing Impairemetns in Elementary Schools

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The enrollment of students with disabilities in regular schools or classrooms with other students without disabilities has been a concern worldwide. In this paper, I review paer of the existed literature on the inclusion of students with hearing impairements in regular schools and classrooms. The first part of the paper focuses on the global perspectives o the inclusion of students with disabilities with their peers without disabilities. In the second part of the paper, I review the facilitating factors that help implementing inclusion for students with hearing impairemants more effective and succuessful. In the last part, the challenges that limit the inclusion of students with hearing impairements are reviewed and discussed. **Keywords:** inclusion, perspecrtives, deaf, hard of hearing, review.

Inclusion as a global perspective

The present study explores the concept and practice of full participation of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in Saudi Elementary schools thus unfolding the following aims: First, is to explore the knowledge, understanding, and attitudes of schools' teachers and parents regarding full participation of students who are deaf or hard of hearing in inclusive elementary schools. Second, is to examine the facilitators and barriers to full participation in the inclusive education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing and determine teachers' understanding of inclusive teaching in supporting students who are deaf or hard of hearing to fully participate in inclusive education. These aims are complex, as they are embedded in a social and cultural context in which inclusive education is relatively new, and ideological, religious beliefs and cultural practices impede the development and implementation of full inclusive education of students with disabilities.

Globally, current research into inclusive education for students with disabilities draws attention to access, participation and transformation in teacher attitudes (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2013; Kraska, & Boyle, 2014; Mintz & Wyse, 2015; Veck, 2014). In the early 1980s, inclusion began in the United States and Europe as a special education initiative to provide educational access to students with a disability (Ferguson, 2008). While at this time inclusive education was mostly focused on expanding access, current inclusive initiatives are more inclined towards whole school approaches that provide full participation and quality education to all students with or without disabilities in non-restricted settings (Berlach & Chambers, 2011; Loreman, 2013). Warnock (2010) for example, advocated for new thinking with regards to special education provision too for students with special education needs. Over the last few decades, there has been an aim to enrich the conceptualisation of inclusion to include perspectives that are more linked to quality education for all (Jordan & Ramaswamy, 2013; UNESCO, 2000; Warnock, 2010). In this context, the conceptualisations and practices become broadened and complex. In Canada, the Department of Education, New Brunswick (2013); for example, defines inclusive education as:

...a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can learn and develop to his or her full potential. It is based on a system of values and beliefs centred on the best interests of the student, which promotes social cohesion, belonging, active participation in learning, a complete school experience, and positive interactions with peers and others in the school community (p. 2).

This definition is broad as it calls for incorporating ways that are culturally relevant, and allows for successful participation, learning, and wellbeing of all students in society. In this way, inclusion defies simple explanation, especially with a global context where its meaning and significance arise from the context in which

it is implemented rather than the policy that defines it (Jordan & Ramaswamy, 2013; UNESCO, 2009). The literature states that current thinking needs to be refined to consider the uniqueness of various countries, and consequently discover new diversity and inclusion opportunities for individuals and organisations (Roberson & Stevens, 2006).

There are multiple factors that influence the conceptualisation and delivery of inclusive education, and its effectiveness varies across different countries (UNICEF, 2013). Perceptions of fairness and equity are related to inclusion, and research shows these can vary across cultures as well (Berlach & Chambers, 2011; Roberson & Stevens, 2006). Thus, it is important to be aware and critically consider institutional and cultural influences on inclusion particularly, when thinking about the concept and practice of full participation. Farndale, Biron, Briscoe and Raghuram (2015) suggest further research to improve knowledge of various diversities within countries and among individuals with disabilities in order to make sense of the inclusion practices that are used in other parts of the world. Furthermore, international resolutions such as Education for All (EFA) project and the Salamanca Statement on inclusive education by UNESCO uphold inclusion and fairness in education (UNESCO, 1994, 2000).

As inclusive education originated in Western countries, specifically the US, it is important to consider some of the inclusive education practices taking place in the US and Canada as well as Europe before considering the local situation in Saudi Arabia. In most provinces in Canada, education is provided for students with disabilities including those who are deaf or hard of hearing in the general education classroom (Eriks-Brophy and Whittingham, 2013). For example, the Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) developed a Barrier-Free Education Initiatives Project which was funded by the Ministry of Education with the purpose to assist the education sector in creating an accessible and barrier-free learning environment for students who are Deaf or hard of hearing in publicly-funded schools in Ontario (CHS, 2015). This initiative was to enhance access and participation, improve educational outcomes and student success.

A study by Eriks-Brophy and Whittingham (2013) of 63 classroom teachers in Ottawa, Canada, regarding inclusive education for students with hearing loss in the general education found that the teachers had favourable attitudes toward inclusion for students with hearing loss, had high self-efficacy in their ability to teach them. The same study reported that the teachers were knowledgeable about the effects of hearing loss on language and learning and claimed that their teacher education programmes had sufficiently prepared them to teach students with hearing the loss in inclusive settings.

In the US, children with a hearing loss, have access to a continuum of placement options such as residential and day schools for the deaf, a self-contained class on a public school campus and the majority students who are deaf or hard of hearing are included in the general education classroom (Roppolo, 2016; U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Gallaudet's Annual Survey of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Youth in 2013 reported that approximately 51.1% of students with hearing loss receive their education in an inclusive setting with their hearing peers (Gallaudet University, 2013). A further nationwide study focusing on the services provided by itinerant teachers in the United States indicated that students who are deaf or hard of hearing "spend approximately 76% of the school day in the general education classroom" (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013, p. 415). It is also argued that about 71% of students who are deaf or hard of hearing spend some time receiving direct instruction from itinerant teachers outside of the general education classroom (Luckner & Ayantoye, 2013).

It can be argued that the US operates on push-in and pull-out models. On the one hand, the push-in model is based on full inclusion practice where itinerant teachers provide service to the child who is deaf or hard of hearing in the general education classroom but this is not without challenges. One of the critical challenges is the noisy environment within the general education classroom, which may sometimes be distracting to other students. On the other hand, the pull-out model is based on partial inclusion where students who are deaf or hard of hearing are sent to a separate resource room for services (Roppolo, 2016). It is to be noted that the service models students' access, in the long run, depends on the individual's social and academic needs (Rabinsky, 2013).

Although itinerant teachers with specialist knowledge in deaf education may provide services to students with a hearing loss in addition to services from other professionals such as speech pathologists, many students who are deaf or hard of hearing, are taught by a general education teacher in inclusive classrooms. A recent study in the US by Roppolo (2016), investigated 105 general education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students who are deaf or hard of hearing by using an online survey throughout southeastern Mississippi. The results found that the general education teachers had an overall positive attitude toward the abilities and characteristics of deaf or hard of hearing children and their inclusion in the general education classroom, however, many of the teachers surveyed indicated their lack of adequate preparedness to teach students with hearing loss.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education reports that in the United Kingdom, the Education Act 2002 recognises the rights of all pupils with special education needs and made provision for them to have access to state-funded schools and participate in a broad and balanced National curriculum in all local authority schools (including special schools). In response, the National Curriculum is sufficiently flexible to accommodate different learning dispositions and capabilities of students with disabilities including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The introduction of the revised National Curriculum in September 2014 included a statement to reaffirm schools' responsibilities under equality legislation that mandates teachers to

determine the support and teaching interventions their pupils need to participate fully in all parts of the school curriculum, including the National Curriculum (U.K. Department of Education, 2016). This requirement allows teachers and teaching staff the freedom in tailoring the National Curriculum to the specific needs of pupils by making reasonable adjustments and modifications that meet the requirement of the Equality Act 2010.

Although the law assumes that pupils with special educational needs will be educated in mainstream schools, provision is available in 'resourced' schools if their needs cannot be met in a mainstream school. In addition, some children with Education, Health and Care plans can be dually placed in both mainstream and special schools. Furthermore, there are situations where mainstream and special schools have been co-located to promote contact between the mainstream and special school sectors and to promote the inclusion of children with disabilities and those with SEN (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, n.d).

These developments in inclusive education demonstrate the complexities of inclusive education, which are not peculiar to the highly industrialised nations. In developing countries, governments are struggling in the development of programmes to enhance inclusive education to a level that includes all students with disabilities, particularly those who deaf or hard of hearing full time in the general education classrooms (Kigotho, 2016; Odoyo, 2007). Some studies emerging from developing countries revealed several limitations regarding the implementation of inclusion, the main being teacher knowledge and resource issues (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014, 2015; Aldabas, 2015; Kigotho, 2016). This assessment also includes Saudi Arabia (Alothman, 2014), therefore, a further study on full participation in inclusive elementary schools by deaf or hard of hearing students in Saudi Arabia would likely increase awareness where little is known about such practices as full participation and inclusive teaching.

Facilitators of full participation

First, effective professional practice is fundamental in creating inclusive environments (Wen, Elicker & McMullen, 2010). For full participation to be achieved, the environment must be an inclusive one. Professional practice is a core component of facilitators of full participation, which is dependent on many factors. Some of these factors are collaboration with families, access to support, funding, policy, and teacher knowledge. Collaboration with families is essential to provide best practice and ensure participation for a child with a disability. This is also known as the parent-teacher relationship. Clarke, Sheridan, and Woods (2009) define this relationship as a child centred connection between individuals in the home and school who share responsibility for supporting the growth and development of children. It is argued that building rapport with parents will allow for a more cohesive and productive year from the beginning (Weasmer & Woods, 2010). If teachers gather information from parents regarding a child's strengths and abilities, it will highlight accomplishments and provide insights in relation to specific motivators for learning (Weasmer & Woods, 2010).

A student having increased levels of motivation may lead to them more fully participating. Engaging a child with disability is not an individual task just for the teacher to take on, rather the support of other key persons, such as families, is crucial to be able to cater to children with disabilities effectively (Garbacz, McDowall, Schaughency, Sheridan, Welch, 2015; Weasmer & Woods, 2010). Recent studies have established that quality parent-teacher relationships can support children with disabilities' academic and behavioural outcomes (Garbacz, Sheridan, Koziol, Kwon, & Holmes, 2015; Minke, Sheridan, Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014). Thus, to ensure optimal participation of students with disabilities, the parent-teacher relationship should be facilitated and acted on accordingly.

Successful inclusive education cannot be implemented without the necessary support mechanisms. There are many avenues of support available to teachers who deliver inclusive practice (e.g., professional development, policy, support from experts in childhood disabilities, intervention support services, funding, resources, and additional staff) (Zhang, 2011). Soukakou (2012) argues the importance of adequate support in order to achieve high-quality inclusive practice. For students to obtain maximum benefit from their education, these support systems must be utilised efficiently. Researchers have found that the lack of support for teachers (e.g. professional training and resources) is amongst the most cited reasons for educational institutions not providing successful inclusive education to all children (Allen & Cowdrey, 2015; Kemp, 2016; Zhang, 2011). Adequate skills, training of teachers, and supporting experts facilitate the full participation of students with disabilities (Kemp, 2016). In other words, although support is available, it must be tailored to the optimal benefit of individual students. An adequate support that considers differentiation is clearly vital to the provision of inclusive education, more specifically a critical component of delivering high-quality education to all students.

The facilitators of full participation in inclusive education include teachers' professional development. Effective and specific training in inclusive education that meets the learning needs of every child is essential (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015; Purdue, Gordon-Burns, Gunn, Madden, & Surtees, 2009). Professional learning helps teachers to better understand their roles and children's disabilities (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015). Teachers have a significant impact on the successful implementation of inclusive education and are required to take on new roles and responsibilities (Round, Subban & Sharma, 2016). Research findings indicate that, indepth theoretical and practical knowledge of inclusive education contribute to teachers' ability to

effectively take on the tasks of teaching students with disabilities (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015; Shady, Luther, & Richman, 2013. Further, teachers need professional development to work effectively with the required people in a child with disability's education (Carrington & Macarthur, 2012; Shady, Luther, & Richman, 2013).

Fulfilling these requirements is challenging without skills and training in teaching children with disability. Communicating and partnering with key persons is essential to optimally meet the needs of a child (Brebner, Jovanic, Lawless, & Young, 2016; Weasmer & Woods, 2010). It would be beneficial for teachers to receive professional development to attain proficiency in collaborating with other stakeholders towards best practices in inclusive education. This type of training is necessary to improve and extend their understanding of inclusive education and the crucial role and responsibilities they hold.

Barriers to full participation

Global research revealed multiple barriers to successfully achieving full participation in inclusive education. The main issues identified were lack of support, because of inadequate funding (Banks, Frawley, & McCoy, 2015), poor teacher attitudes resulting in concerns associated with ascertaining the necessary training, and sourcing relevant resources and support to be able to effectively implement inclusive education (Berry, 2010; Buysee, Wesley, & Keyes, 1998; Horne & Timmons, 2009), lack of professional collaboration (Pretis, 2016), inadequate teacher knowledge and training to be able to successfully execute inclusive education (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2015; Dyson & Gallannaugh, 2007), and components of students' physical, social and institutional environments (e.g. accessibility to school, noise levels, crowding) (Law, Petrenchik, King, & Hurley, 2007). These factors can pose significant barriers to children with disabilities. Removal of them is optimal, but not necessarily always easily achievable. Participation is fundamental to a child with disability's development. It is necessary to provide intervention via inclusion to children with disabilities in order to assist them to develop and reach their full potential (Griffiths & Fazel, 2016).

Many research studies (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2013; Ainscow, 2005; Berry, 2010; Buysse, Wesley, & Keyes, 1998; Kologon, 2014; Pretis, 2016; Purdue, 2009; Sherfinski, Weekley, & Mathew, 2015) have investigated the barriers to inclusive education. Some of the most significant issues include teacher knowledge, attitudes and professional practice, and lack of support (e.g. funding, additional staff, resources) to deliver an inclusive education which may lead to a better participation of students with disabilities. Specifically, teacher attitudes and values in relation to gaining new knowledge and implementing inclusive education were barriers to building new skills and knowledge (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2013; Pretis, 2016).

According to Ainscow (2005), the engagement of a child with disabilities in mainstream educational settings relies on teachers' understandings of inclusion. If they hold a negative attitude towards learning new knowledge, they will not develop a thorough understanding of inclusion, which may lead to less engaged children who are not reaching their full potential. Additionally, Buysse, Wesley and Keyes (1998), identified the significance of educators' attitudes and beliefs on inclusive education. They suggested that teachers develop resistance to inclusion when they are not adequately supported. This influences students' opportunities to fully participate in school, and prevents their chances to gain the maximum benefit from their education.

Another important area discovered in the literature in relation to inclusive education was utilising support services for children with disabilities. Buysse, Wesley and Keyes (1998) identified teachers having poor communication with families of children with disabilities, and inadequate support for teachers. Chambers (2015) emphasised the need for adequate support staff in order to meet children's learning needs, while Weasmer and Woods (2010) claimed that lack of community support, places inclusive education in a vulnerable position. Teachers working collaboratively and obtaining sufficient support is crucial to delivering inclusive education. Key persons (e.g. Intervention support services) provide necessary support for teachers, children and families of children with disability, thus making it extremely challenging if teachers do not access critical avenues of support (Brebner, Jovanovic, Lawless, & Young, 2016; Matsushima, 2015; Weasmer & Woods, 2010). In summary, according to the research reviewed for this study, it would be very challenging for a teacher to successfully cater, and develop a child with a disability to their fullest potential without the support of key persons.

Acknowledgment

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