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Examining the Readiness of Pre-service Teacher sto Implement Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Recent research shows that teachers who have a pro-inclusion mindset are more likely to alter their lessons and curriculum to meet their students' individual needs. Educator training programs are accountable for ensuring that teachers are prepared to teach inclusively. According to the findings of the study, pre-service teachers from two universities were polled about their attitudes toward inclusion and their readiness to teach in inclusive classrooms. A self-prepared questionnaire was utilized to gather data on the study's participants, who were all second-year preservice teachers in the teacher training program. Despite a positive attitude toward inclusion, the study found that student teachers lacked the skills and experience necessary to teach in an inclusive environment. Recommendations for improving teacher training programs were drawn from this study.

Keywords Teachers in preparation, teacher education programs, and universal access to education

INTRODUCTION

When students with special needs are integrated in the general education curriculum, they are considered members of the school community. All children, regardless of grade level or degree of aptitude, are entitled to the same educational opportunities as their peers, according to this perspective. Academics, policymakers, and others working in the subject have defined the phrase "inclusive education" in a variety of ways. Academic standards aren't compromised when all students are housed in the same building.

It's been a long journey in India for special education. Both the Sargent Report and the Kothari Commission advocated moving pupils

with impairments to mainstream classrooms in 1944 and 1964, respectively (Julka, 2005).

Education policy from 1986 stated that students with special needs should be included in general education classes, but provided no specifics on how to accomplish this goal. The enactment of the People with Disabilities Act in 1995 marked a turning point in India's history of special education and rehabilitation. An important part of this legislation was ensuring that students with impairments have a voice. When a comprehensive Plan of Action was released in 2005, it advocated inclusive education and

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into mainstream education, including flexible curricula, teaching approaches, accessible materials, support services, and curricular adjustments, including evaluation systems. Students with special needs rely on the inclusive attitudes of general education teachers to be successful in their educational endeavors (De Boer et al., 2011). According to Shahzadi's research, teachers, administrators, professionals, and parents are generally aware of inclusive education but unsure on how to put it into practice in the real world (2000). Rethinking teacher education courses to better meet the needs of students with and without disabilities was recommended by the study. Failure to implement inclusion is often caused by a lack of time and resources as well as an unfamiliarity with special education procedures. For example, (Blecker & Boakes, 2010, Brackenreed, 2011, Fuchs, 2010) Eighty-six percent of teachers had "little" or "very little" knowledge about inclusive education, according to Sadler (2005). It was clear to both teachers that they were incompetent. As Gaad and Khan (2007) found, teachers lack the training and expertise to fulfill the requirements of children in integrated settings. Participants blamed their inexperience for their lack of understanding of inclusive education. Teacher attitudes toward special needs students tend to be more negative because of this, and as a result, these students have less opportunities for achievement. The only time many aspiring teachers are exposed to inclusive education is during their teacher training program, where they attend a single session on it (Carroll, Forlin, & Jobling, 2003). The attitudes and self-confidence of future teachers may be changed by these foundational courses in inclusive education, according to recent study (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003; Loreman & Earle, 2007; Sharma et al., 2006; Stella, Forlin & Lan, 2007). This means that teachers should be required to take a course on inclusive education as part of their general education coursework in order to not

only change their negative attitudes toward inclusion, but also better prepare them to teach in inclusive settings by using a variety of models and techniques. Specifically, this study focused on Jammu City preservice general education teachers who were in the second year of a two-year bachelor's degree in education program. A general education program in the field of education.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- The study had the following goals: Second-year preservice teachers' opinions regarding inclusive education and their ability to successfully integrate integration into regular-education classes were evaluated.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

TOOL USED

Data was gathered through the use of a custom questionnaire that the researchers created themselves. They utilized a 5-point scale and two open-ended questions to measure the tool's 35 components. For the survey, teachers' opinions and beliefs, experience in teaching pedagogies as well as knowledge of different types of impairments were included, as well as resources for inclusive education that were available. Positive attitudes toward inclusion are associated with higher test scores, while negative attitudes are associated with lower test scores.

METHOD AND SAMPLING

In order to find out what preservice teachers think about diversity and inclusion, researchers employed the Simple Random Sampling method. Researchers in this study used a two-tiered approach, encompassing two institutions of education, to find potential preservice teachers. Students in their second year of a bachelor's degree in education were the subject of this research. Before anything could get started, I needed to talk to the college's principal and get his okay. An informal gathering was held for preservice teachers to determine whether they were interested in participating in the study. One hundred

preservice teachers, 93 of them female and only eight of them male, participated in the research. All of the volunteers were between the ages of twenty-one and thirty. Participants in the study were mostly recent college graduates from urban areas.

DATA ANALYSIS

This study relied on data gathered through a survey. It took me between 30 and 35 minutes to complete the survey. After receiving the responses, they were assessed and a percentage was calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Even though they had already attended a course on inclusive education in their first year, just 40 students in their second year of the B.Ed program finished the course. Overall, preservice teachers had a positive attitude toward inclusive education, which bodes well for the future implementation of inclusive practices at all educational levels.

An overwhelming majority (87%) of pre-service teachers who took part in the research agreed that integrating students with special needs into the general education curriculum is an effective way to foster their social and emotional development. 75 percent of students in pre-service teacher training agreed with the findings, while 25 percent were doubtful if inclusion would lead to better academic outcomes for adolescents with special needs than inclusion alone. Pre-service teachers who had taken an inclusive education course reported that "Inclusion sounds good in principle, but it doesn't work well in practice." Students in the study agreed that special training, skills, and knowledge of pedagogies are required to teach students with special needs, and this may have been a significant factor in the study's findings that student teachers were not comfortable teaching students with and without disabilities in an inclusive setting if given the chance. According to 87 percent of pre-service teachers, there was no role modeling of inclusive education by teacher educators, and some teacher educators were unsure whether inclusive education was

beneficial to children with disabilities themselves. There was only a theoretical understanding of a few inclusive models and instructional techniques among pre-service teachers. For more than half of all pre-service teachers, an inclusive classroom is an ideal setting in which to develop their skills as future general education teachers by fusing together different teaching approaches.

There is no evidence that pre-service teachers' qualifications influence their attitudes towards inclusive education. It was discovered that teachers with advanced degrees in special education were more likely to promote the inclusion of kids with disabilities in their classrooms (Hsien et al 2009). The acquaintance of preservice teachers with disabilities had little effect on their views toward inclusion. This means that preservice teachers' attitudes toward inclusion cannot be distinguished between those who are well-versed in disability issues and those who are not.

SUGGESTIONS

In light of the findings, the following recommendations can be made:

Although this study indicated that pre-service teachers' opinions toward inclusive education were positive, more research is needed to assess whether they are ready to implement inclusive education programs in their schools.. Participation in the teaching and learning process of children with special needs should be required of pre-service teachers and they should visit the inclusive school on a regular basis. Educators who lack adequate training or awareness of the necessity of inclusive education might impact the attitudes of pre-service teachers and trainees to inclusion. As a result, teacher educators will need to undergo additional in-service training and awareness campaigns.

Therefore, pre-service teachers should get training in inclusive education as part of their general teacher education programs, and also to revise the current curriculum.

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