

Inclusivity in education aspects



I will explain the political, economic, and social perspectives that surround inclusivity, reflect on my own professional practice and working environment, and identify the policies used, both nationally and locally. I will define my understanding of inclusivity, looking at the political ideology that surrounds inclusivity.

Inclusivity is the understanding and providing for different capabilities, using diverse resources for students.

Inclusivity is the understanding of students as individuals. It gives the opportunity for all students to become involved in classroom developments. All students should be given the chance to develop interests and experiences at their own pace and style of learning. No student should be discriminated against regarding colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion.

For lecturers in today's society, it is extremely challenging to incorporate inclusivity with the students that have developed in the last 10 years of British culture. Students with learning difficulties such as ADHD, Aspergers, and Dyslexia were barely heard of until recent years. Each individual situation calls for totally unique handling of the student without excluding the remainder of the class. Research has identified that teachers may feel there could be barriers to inclusivity:

Some of the thoughts are;

- Every student who attends college should be at a basic level of education before starting a course.
- The staff may not be prepared to meet the needs of the student

- The course and other students could be affected

To balance some of these negative attitudes;

- All students have the potential to achieve
- Many students learn through interaction with others.
- Teachers make a difference (Idol, 1997)

OFSTED published a report dispelling many of the negative thoughts that most of us had in the back of our mind.

Ofsted say. “ An educationally inclusive school is one which the teaching and learning is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements attitudes and the well being of every young person matter. This shows not only in their performance, but also in the ethos and willingness to offer new opportunities to pupils who may have experienced previous difficulties. This does not mean treating all pupils in the same way; rather, it involves taking account of pupils’ varied life experiences and needs” (OFSTED)

The start of Inclusion in Education dated back to the 1970 Education act which ended a practice to a minority of children being given the classification of unable to educate. It stopped classifying children with a learning disability unsuitable for school education. In the introduction of 1976 education act, the government looked at the local education authorities to amalgamate disabled students into so called ‘ ordinary’ schools in both England and Wales. This was never implemented! If it had been, disabled students were to be educated in ordinary schools unless it was impracticable due to excessive expenditure to the relevant educational body.

1978 saw the Warnock report on special education and at the time was the largest investigation into special education of disabled students being integrated into ordinary schools. He reported that the practice was good for some students but not for others. The report also stated that it was important for parents to have a view on their children and their educational process.

In 1981 the education act, brought in disabled students to mainstream schools. This stated that other children would not be affected by the integration and resources available to them to assist. This act opened the doors to both disabled and young students from special schools sector to a mainstream school; the act was under much pressure from the professional bodies not to implement it, due to the overall effect on all the students.

1992 saw the audit commission and her majesty's inspectorate look into a special needs provision for schools. One of the areas they found deficient was the way children with special needs were not being assessed very quickly and many statements were far too vague.

In 1997, mainstream schools were becoming more inclusive with a new green paper on special education. 1998 brought in the human rights act stating no child shall be denied the right to education. The government pushed forward its plans to break down the barriers to help with learning and participation for 100% of students.

The special education needs and disability act of 2001 came in and was used to repeal two previous provisos from 1996 regarding a disabled child going

into mainstream school provided; it was compatible with the parents' wishes and there was efficient education of other children.

2002 finally saw the Disability Discrimination act which gave access to education for both students and prospective students. The law also stated that you could not discriminate against a disabled person in admission arrangements.

Local authorities also had to increase accessibility in terms of curriculum and the environment. Although this act was not solely for education it applied to everyone and was definitely a step in the right direction. All schools and colleges that have used these policies have seen an increase in levels of education rise from the early 1970s up to the present date.

Before I could carry out my research relating to the organisation I am involved with, I needed to produce a PEST (Appendix 1) and SWOT (Appendix 2) analysis. Firstly looking into factors based around the industry looking into the political, economic, social and then technological issues which would affect us. Once this was complete I looked at the department in which I work, breaking the issues down into depth. Within the SWOT I looked at strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats. Within all of the topics funding policies, initiatives, weigh heavily, whether as a threat or Strength.

With these acts in place my organisation have put together documentation in response from the governing bodies to help develop a clear understanding in the way we should help commit to inclusivity in education.

The mission statement of my organisation is:

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City College is an inclusive, accessible college of further and higher education which provides high quality services to the range of diverse communities within the locality and the region which it serves.”

To this end, the college is committed to equality of regard and of opportunity for all, irrespective of age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, medical condition, religious belief, or sexual orientation. In its policies and practices the college will seek to enhance the self esteem of all those it serves and to provide a learning environment in which each individual is encouraged to fulfil her or his potential.

The commitment to equality of regard and opportunity is a fundamental policy that pervades all college activities and is endorsed by the Governing Body. All members of the college community are expected to uphold the policy and to ensure that their actions embody the commitment.

Some of the organisation’s policies for inclusion are:

The commitment to equality of regard and opportunity is supported by the following:

- Code of Practice on Learning Difficulty and Disability (students)
- Code of Practice on Gender Discrimination (students)
- City college Race Equality Policy (staff/students)
- City college equality and diversity plan

These codes are an integral part of the Equal Opportunities Policy. They ensure compliance with, respectively, the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Sex

Discrimination Act 1975, and the Race Relations Act 1976. They also embody elements of good practice advocated in the Tomlinson Report 1996, Equality, and Diversity Guidance from the LSC and the codes of practice produced by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Ofsted use a set of questions when examining Inclusion in schools and colleges. These are the questions on how a college should deal with the situation.

Do all pupils get a fair deal at school?

This relates to:

- what they get out of school, particularly their achievements;
- the opportunity to learn effectively, without interference and disruption;
- the respect and individual help they have from their teachers;
- their access to all aspects of the curriculum;
- the attention the school gives to their well-being and
- Whether they and their parents are happy with the school.

How well does the school recognise and overcome barriers to learning?

This is about:

- the school's understanding of how well different groups do in school;
- the steps taken to make sure that particular groups are not disadvantaged in school and to promote their participation and success;
- its strategies for promoting good relationships and managing behaviour;

- what the school does specifically to prevent and address racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and what it does about cases of discrimination that do occur.

Do the school's values embrace inclusion and does its practice promote it?

The clues are:

- how the values of the school are reflected in its curriculum, resources, communications, procedures and conduct;
- how people talk about and treat one another in the school;
- the leadership provided by senior staff and the consistency of staff behaviour;
- What the school intends and tries to do for ' people like me'.

Positive inclusion

To enforce this statement, the college supports positive inclusion by enrolling any students, with the required qualifications, no matter what their learning capabilities are, however this will depend on whether it is practicable for the student and as long as it does not in any way effect the learning of the others in the class. In past years, discrimination may have taken place with students that showed signs of slower learning ability, therefore this is a positive development for inclusion in today's society.

Entry to Employment, (E2E) groups are students with low entry requirements; however the potential is there, by assisting them with additional tuition, to raise their level of education, specifically in maths and English, to gain the relevant qualifications required for the future. To achieve this, the college offer a 22 week E2E course, alongside learning for a level 1

diploma in bricklaying, level 1 key skills in application of number and communication. Not all colleges offer E2E alongside this qualification.

Negative Inclusion

From the lecturers point of view this is a negative form of inclusion because the E2E qualification, is taught alongside the level 1 diploma and key skills, which is a method that other colleges do not employ due to overloading a group that originally in struggled at school when they were on the same footing as the rest of their class. At school the class would all have been working on the same subjects possibly at the same time. Here the group have come in and been told that they need to attend an extra afternoon to complete Entry to employment paperwork and adult literacy and numeracy classes. This would then be followed up with three days of Diploma work in theory and practical. Two other groups who have the entry qualifications only need to complete the diploma theory and practical content and complete key skills in the time scheduled.

There are tools which can be used to help define a disability and help governing bodies and government find strategies in which to find the needs of disabled people. These are categorised as models of disability. The two which are commonly used for education are known as the Social Model and the Medical Model.

When these models are correctly used, they will give a basic understanding of disability issues, such as services used and possibly ways of access to work.

These models can see disabled people as dependant people in the community this may segregate them from others and force discrimination. This can lead to equality of human rights and the opposite of segregation which is integration. This does not mean one is better than the other but merely that each model can be used in different situations

Firstly what passes for a disability? People who have impairment and may experience some form of exclusion as a result are disabled people. People may wear glasses or contact lenses. These may not be discriminated against where as people who are deaf and wear hearing aids sometimes are, and are discriminated against with barriers in communication.

People who are included with a disability such as:

- Physical impairments
- Deaf people, Blind people
- People with AIDS and HIV (chronic illness)
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues / behavioural problems

People who also have hidden impairments such as;

- Mental stress
- Dyslexia
- Epilepsy
- Language impairments
- Disfigured people
- Diabetes

<http://attitudes2disability.wordpress.com/category/medical-model-vs-social-model/>

Medical Model

The medical model is used by the health organisation and was devised by doctors. The medical model focuses on the source of the problem on the patient (student) and presumes that the problems will be found with the student. With a more superior method you can go a step further and look into the students' personal background and how it could affect their everyday lives. “ It is basically there to find a cure; it can occasionally fail as it says disabled people are not necessarily sick or cannot be improved by remedial treatment” (connectings for community leadership, 2007)

Social Model

The social model was design for disabled people after the medical model. This particular model has had an impact on the anti - discrimination legislation it also recognises that some people have different abilities ranging from sensory, physical , or psychological variations . This was later extended to include all disabled people including those with learning difficulties and mental health problems. This model can focus on any changes needed in society. Physical structures such as elevators, or ramps would also focus under this model.

Medical Model (Thinking)

The child is damaged

labelling

Social Model (Thinking)

Child is valued

Strengths and needs defined by self

	others
Diagnosis	Identify barriers and develop solutions
Impairment becomes focus of attention	Outcome -based programme designed
Assessment, monitoring, programmes of therapy imposed	Resources are made available to ordinary services
Segregation and alternative services	Training for parents and professionals
Ordinary needs put on hold	Relationship nurtured
Re-entry if normal enough or permanent exclusion	Diversity welcomed , child is included
Society remains unchanged	Society evolves

My second area for topic was looking at Inclusivity of women in construction

Inclusivity Fact file:

- Almost 200, 000 women work in construction.
- Women have been working in construction since the Middle Ages
- Women account for around 1% of trades people and 11. 6% of those working in design and management occupations (Jon Land, 2009)

A report From the CIOB (chartered institute of building) back in 2001 indicated Women in the UK construction industry currently accounted for fewer than ten per cent of the UK construction workforce, this reflected their under-representation in an industry that fails to attract and retain women.

The research was important because it raises the debate about the

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advancement in the subject of inclusivity, assessing the barriers faced by women and discussed means of redressing the balance to improve the inclusivity of the industry. Expanding inclusivity, which includes, attracting and hopefully keeping women in construction, is a key priority for the UK.

The construction industry in countries facing skill and labour shortages could perhaps combat some of their problems by increasing the number of women in the workforce. This would be a resourceful and positive use for inclusion.

In summary, the important issues were:

- Attracting more women to the industry by not only focusing on young entrants but also returnees to work following a career break, and those who seek a career change.
- Retention of women in the workforce
- Understanding the extent of women employed in the whole industry, what are they looking for from the industry?

For a number of years women have been moving into professional work such as law, accountancy, and medicine, all of which require high-level qualifications and are considered attractive because of the perceived high level of class status. Today, numbers of women and men are almost equal in these sectors. However, occupational areas such as engineering and the construction trades have not seen a comparable change in the make-up of the workforce.

Women's labour market participation has increased over recent years and their employment rates have risen, whereas men's participation in the labour

market has declined slightly. Girls now perform better than boys in education and in getting qualifications (Hibbett, and Meager 2003)).

With Women making up 50 per cent of the population, more than 46 per cent are currently in the labour market. More than half of the entrants in higher education in colleges are women. Yet in the construction Industry, the percentage of women involved is as little as 11%. This figure includes, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Site Organisers and Bricklayers.

Construction needs variety in it for growth and development. Demand for construction had experienced growth over the past eight years, due to the expanding world population and the necessity for accommodation and a buoyant economy. However, the recent effects of the credit crunch have seriously put the industry, and many others, into a decline. The industry could not afford a skills shortage at such a time because when the economy rallies and improves, the need for skilled workforce will be of paramount importance.

Construction and engineering learners are 90 per cent men, whilst hairdressing and beauty therapy are dominated by women who make up 91 per cent of learners.

The exceptions are in higher education, which are dominated by male students in areas such as, computer science (80 per cent), engineering and technology (85 per cent). Female-dominated subjects include education, and beauty, although most of this research was based between 2001 -2004, surveys have been carried out as recently as 2009 by the CIOB and their conclusion was that :- (Sonia Gurjao, 2001)

“ A number of factors have contributed to the industry’s skill shortages. One of the most significant reasons is the lack of new recruits joining the industry. At the end of 2007, ConstructionSkills predicted that the industry would require 88, 000 new recruits a year between 2009 and 2013; this figure has now been more than halved to 42, 000 per year. There are a number of reasons for people not wanting to join the industry; many relate to the general perception of it being predominately a career for white males, with long hours and little pay. (CIOB, 2009) It is this perception that dissuades women and ethnic minorities from joining the industry. Research has shown that many women believe the industry is a competitive and threatening environment that rejects women and hinders their progression”. This I feel is not the case, Bricklayers can take home as much as £28, 000 when fully qualified. A working day is usually between 8. 00am and 5. 30pm with most companies’ now finishing work on Friday afternoons around 3. 30pm. The hours are not dissimilar to a retail occupation . As for a career for white males, this will depend on the area of the country; in the midlands there is a larger ethnic representation. The trade has definitely built up a reputation as a dominantley male industry due to one of the main contributing factors being the percieved impression that men are lecherous to women . This is not necessarily the case, many women would not wish to enter the construction industry at trade level because of the level of bad language or the inuendos they assume most men would use. Assumptions (Appendix 3) can be very negative. Other industries however, such as factories, can be as biased and have contant use of bad language .

With equality being a very relevant point, I have worked in a florists from time to time and found women to be more open with what they say about the opposite sex and graphic . I found this more off putting than working on any site.

“ Although the industry has done more in recent years to attract women and ethnic minorities, this is still a great challenge; despite more females taking construction courses, retention rates are still comparatively low once women start working. (CIOB, 2009)”

In our organisation, over the last two years, we have taken on six females in Carpentry and Brickwork with a total of 120 students overall . This works out to a total of 5% of female students in our department. Of the 5%, one has just enrolled, one has completed the course, two are carrying on to the second year and the other two dropped out in the first year.

“ The industry needs to become more inclusive if it hopes to reduce skill shortages, and accept the wealth of knowledge and experience that women and ethnic minorities can offer.” (CIOB, 2009)

In researching for ways to develop an understanding for why women are not in construction, I realised that women are mainly isolated in the construction workplace. Unlike men, who are usually in substantially larger groups or gangs, such as Carpentry or Bricklaying. Looking further afield, many women travel to the Middle East to take up jobs in Architecture and Project Management, which is a more sociable side to the industry .

Although our government express an interest in bringing women into the construction industry little incentive seems to be brought in to help achieve it. Other countries however, are trying to change this, for example, in South Africa in 2006 six construction companies owned by women were given public works contracts as part of a government initiative at giving women a start in the construction industry each contract was worth more than a million rand (£75, 300).. (times, 2006)

Conclusion

Hibbett, A. (W. E. U., DTI), Meager, . N, (IES) (2003) “ Key indicators of women’s position in Britain:

Findings from a recent comprehensive study of women in Britain commissioned by the Women and Equality Unit”. National Statistics: Labour Market Trends 111(No. 10): 9