Section 7: Education

Disability and society, 2016

Anne Revillard

Learning objectives/key points

- Access to education for children with disabilities
- Differences between special schooling and inclusive education
- An example of policy initiative in favor of inclusive education: the 1994 UNESCO Salamanca statement
- The schooling of disabled children within the broader context of reforms of educational policies: the UK case
- Disabled children's school experiences
- Access to higher education

Context

Reminder on the sociology of eduction: growing role of schools throughout the XXth century:

- In the socialization of individuals → social integration

- In their allocation to different social positions → ambivalent role of schools in this respect: potential for mobility vs tool of social reproduction (cf Bourdieu's analysis)

Educational inequalities have been so far mainly analyzed in terms of class, gender and race → need to broaden the perspective to disability-related inequalities

Context

The sociology of education so far has shown little interest in the schooling and educational achievement of disabled children, reflecting lower social expectations regarding the latter:

"disabled young people have not been given the same educational opportunities, or been expected to achieve the same, as their nondisabled peers"(Shah, 2007, p. 427).

"As a group, disabled children are not conceptualized as future career-orientated citizens" (Shah, Travers, & Arnold, 2004, p.122)

Context

Educational inequalities have been so far mainly analyzed in terms of class, gender and race → need to broaden the perspective to disability-related inequalities:

- Access to schooling as a major issue (ex. in developing countries an estimated 1 to 5% of children with disabilities attend school (Peters, 2007))

- Role of special education in the segregation of disabled people

- Educational achievements

- Access to higher education

Outline

- Disability models and models of schooling
- What is inclusive education?
- Policies in practice: the case of the UK
- An example of inclusive education policy at the international level: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)
- Inclusive education, still a divisive issue
- Types of schooling from the students' point of view
- Disabled students in higher education

Disability models and models of schooling

- Medical/individual model → disabled children cannot adapt to mainstream schools → special education

- Social model → mainstream educational institutions must adapt to the diversity of children → inclusive education

Discussion on models of schooling

- Discuss with your neighbor the advantages and drawbacks of inclusive and special education

- Collective discussion/List

Inclusive education

1. « All students come to school with diverse needs and abilities, so no students are fundamentally different.
2. It is the responsibility of the general education system to be responsive to all students
3. A responsive general education system provides high expectations and standards, quality academic curriculum and instruction that are flexible and relevant, an accessible environment, and teachers who are well prepared to address the educational needs of all students
4. Progress in general education is a process evidenced by schools and communities working together to create citizens for an inclusive society who are educated to enjoy the full benefits, rights, and experiences of societal life »

(Peters, 2007, p.99)

Policies in practice: the UK case

- Throughout XIXth cent. development of a system of specialized schooling

- Reinforced in the context of post WW2 education policy (11+ exam)

- 1981 education act: shift towards inclusion (> education and budgetary concerns): mandates that children w/ special educational needs be schooled in mainstream schools whenever possible → decrease in the number of special schools

- Inclusion mandate reinforced by DDA (1995)

Example of inclusive education policy: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)

1994 World Conference on Special Needs in Salamanca (Spain)

92 governments and 25 international organizations

The Salamanca statement on principles, policy and practice in special needs education

- Recognizes « the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special educational needs within the regular educational system » (p.viii)

Example of inclusive education policy: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)

An illustration of the shift to the social model:

« Human differences are normal and […] learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process »(p.7)

Example of inclusive education policy: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)

Focus on abilities and child-centered pedagogy within regular schools (p.viii):

We believe and 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,

Example of inclusive education policy: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)

Inclusive education as a way to fight discriminatory attitudes (p.ix)

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.

Example of inclusive education policy: the UNESCO Salamanca statement (1994)

Special schooling as the exception (p.12)

with special needs and their peers. Assignment of children to special schools - or special classes or sections within a school on a permanent basis - should be the exception, to be recommended only in those infrequent cases where it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs or when it is required for the welfare of the child or that of other children.

Inclusive education, still a divisive issue

Many parents of disabled children still prefer special schools:

- Isolation and bullying in mainstream schools (ex. of the deaf community)

- Better peer support in special schools

- More accessible environment and more adequate accomodation

- Better trained teachers

- More favorable students-teacher ratio

(Barnes & Mercer, p.105-108)

Inclusive education, still a divisive issue

Opposition to inclusive education on the part of some teachers and schools:

- Lack of support, training, staff and proper accomodations
- Context of increased competition between the schools based on standardized exam results

Educational outcomes for disabled students:

- Even in mainstream schools, disabled kids often not given the same educational opportunities nor expected to achieve the same
- Yet they perform better in terms of educational outcomes than students in special schools

(Barnes & Mercer, p.105-108)

Types of schoolings, from the students' points of view

Mixed views of disabled students regarding the 2 types of schooling (Shah, 2007):

- Support for special school notably due to the type of services and facilities they provide, but critique of the low standard of teaching and limited curriculum

- Divide between disabled and nondisabled students in mainstream schools

Disabled students in higher education

→ Presentation from Access and Diversity

References

Barnes, C. (2007). Disability, Higher Education and the Inclusive Society. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *28*(1), 135–145.

Barnes, C., & Mercer, G. (2010). *Exploring disability*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Moore, M., & Slee, R. (2012). Disability studies, inclusive education and exclusion. In N. Watson, A. Roulstone, & C. Thomas (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Disability Studies* (pp. 225–239). New York: Routledge.

Peters, S. J. (2007). "Education for All?": A Historical Analysis of International Inclusive Education Policy and Individuals With Disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, *18*(2), 98–108.

Shah, S. (2007). Special or mainstream? The views of disabled students. *Research Papers in Education*, *22*(4), 425–442.

Shah, S., Travers, C., & Arnold, J. (2004). Disabled and successful: education in the life stories of disabled high achievers. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *4*(3), 122–132.

Winance, M., Ville, I., & Ravaud, J.-F. (2007). Disability Policies in France: Changes and Tensions between the Category-based, Universalist and Personalized Approaches. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *9*(3-4), 160–181.