

# Section 7: Education

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# Learning objectives/key points

- Access to education for children with disabilities
- Theoretical models: Special vs inclusive education
- Examples of policy blueprints for inclusive education:
  - 1994 UNESCO Salamanca statement
  - 2006 UN CRPD
- Policies in practice: the schooling of disabled children within the broader context of reforms of educational policies: the UK case
- Disabled children's school experiences
- Class, race and special education
- Access to and experience of higher education

# Context

Reminder on the sociology of education: 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

Disability-related educational 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

# 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

# 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)

# Policy blueprints for inclusive education

Examples of policy blueprints for inclusive education:

- 1994 UNESCO Salamanca statement
- 2006 UN CRPD, article 24

In pairs:

- Each person reads one of the documents, underlining elements that attest to its promotion of inclusive education and, if relevant, references to special education
- Sum up the main points to your neighbor and compare comments

# 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.

# The inclusive education mandate in the 2006 UN CRPD – article 24 on Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:
  - a. The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
  - b. The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
  - c. Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.
  
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
  - a) Persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability;
  - b) Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
  - c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements is provided;
  - d) Persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
  - e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

# The inclusive education mandate in the 2006 UN CRPD – article 24 on Education

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:
- a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
  - b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
  - c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.
4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.
5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

# From ideals/policy blueprints to policies in practice

1- Mainstream schooling and special education most often coexist, and can be jointly recognized in legislation

Example of the 2005 French reform:

- Often referred to as promoting a right to mainstream schooling
- But actually ambiguous in its formulation: children have the right to be « registered » in the local public school, while for some of them actually attending school in a specialized institution

# From ideals/policy blueprints to policies in practice

2- The actual dichotomy many disabled children are faced with is not special vs inclusive education but special vs mainstream schooling, w/ very unequal levels of accommodation and inclusiveness.

→ Need to distinguish between location (type of schooling), provided accommodation/support, and inclusiveness

	Location (type of schooling)	Individual accommodation	Universal design
Special education	Segregated	Yes in theory	Often more present
School integration/mainstream schooling (in practice)	Mainstream	Yes in theory but often uncertain	No most of the time
Inclusive education (ideal)	Mainstream	Yes if needed	Yes

# 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)

# Schooling options, still a divisive issue in the UK

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)

# Schooling options, still a divisive issue in the UK

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

- Lack of support, training, staff and proper accommodations
- 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

Presentation 7.1: Special vs mainstream education [Shah, 2007]

Shah, Sonali. 2007. "Special or Mainstream? The Views of Disabled Students." *Research Papers in Education* 22(4): 425–42.

# Class, race and special education

Race and class infuse the social construction of impairments used as a basis to channel working class/minority kids to special education

Examples:

- US - Race and class in « the social construction of mild disabilities in the American culture » (Blanchett, 2010; Sleeter, 1987) :
  - Black children more likely to be diagnosed w/ « mild mental retardation », leading to segregated schooling, vs white and upper-class children more likely to be diagnosed w/ « learning disabilities » and remain in mainstream schools/classrooms
  - When diagnosed w/ LD, black children more likely to be channeled to segregated programs

# Class, race and special education

- France – « Behavioral disorders » as a class-infused diagnosis, leading to the channeling of children from deprived background to segregated schooling (ITEP – Instituts thérapeutiques éducatifs et pédagogiques)
  - Result of the combination between class-related behaviors and a class-situated evaluation of children's behavior
  - No clear impairment involved: the diagnosis refers to a mismatch between institutional expectations and individual behavior

« [When it comes from a child belonging to a deprived social background], a behavior that does not comply to the codes and values of the school immediately is perceived as deviant and requiring particular attention – which can lead to ITEP orientation. However, a child from a higher social class committing a similar act, to be sure, would be punished, but it wouldn't question their belonging to a mainstream educational institution » (Dupont, 2016)

# Disabled students in higher education

- Increase in numbers of disabled students
  - Due to increased integration in mainstream primary and secondary education
  - But also connected to an expansion of the perimeter of the « disability » category
- A less charted territory than primary and secondary education
  - Limited centralized regulation
  - Important variation accross institutions
  - Lack of data

# Disabled students in higher education

Presentation 7.2: Disability and higher education (1) - The university experiences of students with learning disabilities [Waterfield & Whelan, 2017]

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