

BEDU202 Psycho-social Issues of Inclusive Education

ECTS Value: 4 ECTS

Overall Objectives and Outcomes

Recent years have seen extensive efforts in many countries to ensure that the right to educational opportunity is extended to all members of the community. In so doing it has also become increasingly apparent that traditional forms of schooling are no longer adequate and in line with inclusive principles. Faced with this challenge, including the presence of a wide variety of students who may experience barriers in their learning within conventional arrangements (students from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds; gender and sexual orientations; religious and faith beliefs; communication and language difficulties; and physical and psychological issues), teachers have to think about how they should respond. So what kind of practices might help teachers to 'reach out' to all members of the class? How can teachers be helped to develop more inclusive practices?

All students are entitled to a quality education, i.e. finding better ways for enabling each and every learner to be engaged in meaningful learning activities and make progress. In order to achieve all this, educators need an openness to student diversity, an attitude of appreciation for diversity, an assumption that it is normal to be different and to provide a differentiated curriculum and learning experience. Students are diverse and engage with the curriculum at diverse points and in diverse ways; hence effective teachers are first of all: committed towards equity, social justice, and democracy; prepared to move away from the medical-integrative model rooted in 'deficit-thinking' ideologies; and willing to implement inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogies and strategies in schools.

Hence educators are the key protagonists in the development of inclusive forms of education. Their beliefs, attitudes and actions are what create the contexts in which students are required to learn. Therefore, the ultimate objective of this course is to help teachers feel supported as well as challenged in relation to their responsibility to keep exploring more effective ways of facilitating the learning of all students. In so doing this course promotes the idea that difficulties experienced by students result from the ways in which schools are currently organised, and from the forms of curricula and provided teaching. To guarantee high quality education for all learners, schools need to be transformed and pedagogy needs to be improved in ways that lead educators to respond positively to student diversity and to see individual difference not as a list of endless problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for experimentation in order to develop more effective processes and practices for equity, respect for diversity and inclusion. In order to achieve the illustrated aims the following topics will be covered:

- i. Diversity as the Norm: Exploring the Bell-Shaped Concept;
- ii. Defining 'Deficit-Thinking' & Understanding the deficit framework;
- iii. Understanding the Principles of Inclusive Education;
- iv. Designing Inclusion: Inclusion as a Plan of Action for all Schools and Classrooms;
- v. Key Issues in Responding to Student Diversity: Using Differentiated Teaching;
- vi. Defining: Differentiation, Modification and Adaption: Major Differences;
- vii. Preparing Inclusive and Responsive Learning and Teaching Situations;
- viii. Implementing and Evaluating Own Practice on Responding to Diversity.

By the end of this module, the learner will be able to:

Competences

- a. systematically understand concepts related to 'deficit-thinking'; diversity; inclusion and inclusive education; differentiation, modification and adaptation;
- b. demonstrate critical awareness of inclusive education issues in schools and classrooms;
- c. create responsive and supportive teaching and learning environments;
- d. develop differentiated lessons, activities and assessment that meet all learners' needs and abilities;
- e. identify and strengthen inclusive actions and pedagogies.

Knowledge

- a. critically define 'deficit-thinking', its framework and six components;
- b. critically define inclusion and inclusive education as well as understand the concepts of diversity, equity, social justice, democratic education and responsive teaching;
- c. critically define differentiation, modification and adaptation and identify when best to adopt such strategies;
- d. identify the needs of all learners to respond effectively to their diverse abilities, talents and aspirations;
- e. critically analyse inclusive assessment practices, processes and strategies.

Skills

- a. recognize diversity as the norm of our society and schooling, particularly with regard to the need to detect psycho-scientific assessments and understand the effects of socio-cultural and economic issues in education;
- b. observe the important influences of language and culture on children's learning, and the risk of social and educational exclusion of children coming from minority language and cultural backgrounds;
- c. reflect on gender differences and the importance and implications of gender equity in education;
- d. identify the high risks for children with impairment to be excluded from learning because of attitudinal and accessibility barriers;
- e. support in changing school cultures, policies and practices towards a child-centred pedagogy that embraces the needs and strengths of all students, including those with impairment, to enable the active participation of all students;
- f. propose inclusive education as a plan of action, requiring commitment and skills for bringing about the necessary change for schools to respond and to celebrate student diversity;
- g. propose responsive and inclusive teaching pedagogies and assessments to meet the needs of all learners.

Assessment Methods

This module will be assessed through: Reflection(s) and Project Proposal

Suggested Readings

Core Reading List:

1. Banks, J. A. and Banks, C. A. M. (2010). *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives (4th Ed.)*. New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons.
2. Villa, R. And Thousand, J. (2009). *Creating and Inclusive School*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
3. Booth and Ainscow (2002). *Index for Inclusion*. MA: Allyn and Bacon.
4. Wrigley, T. (2011). *Schools of Hope*. London: Falmer.
5. Spasovski, O. (2010). *Principles of the Inclusive Education and the Role of Teachers and in School Professional Staff*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
6. Sabatello, M. And Schulze, M. (2013). *Human Rights and Disability Issues*. University of Pennsylvania.
7. Goodman, R., Jinks D., and Woods, A. (2012). *Understanding social action, promoting human rights*. Oxford University Press.
8. European Agency for Inclusive and Special Education. (2013). *Education for All: Report on Inclusion and Special Education in Malta*. Ministry for Education and Employment, Floriana, Malta.
9. Wayne A, Bigelow, B., and Karp, S. (2007). *Rethinking our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice'. Volume I (2nd Ed.)*. Rethinking Schools Ltd.
10. 'Culturally Diverse Classrooms' Education section – The Times of Malta, 23rd May, 2008.

Supplementary Reading List:

1. Ainscow, M (1999). *Understanding the Development of Inclusive Schools*, Falmer Press, London.
2. Ainscow, M. , Booth, T., and Dyson, A. (2006). *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusive Education*. Routledge, Abingdon.
3. Carroll-Lind, J. and Rees, K. (2009). 'School for All: Children's Right to an Inclusive Education in New Zealand' in *Proceedings of the Making Inclusive Education Happen: Ideas for Sustainable Change*, 28–30 September 2009, Te Papa, Wellington, http://www.imaginebetter.co.nz/downloads/IE_Conference/PR/29c_Carroll-LindPR.pdf
4. UNESCO(2000). The Dakar Framework for Action. *Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*, World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001211/121147e.pdf>
5. UNESCO (2001a). Open File on Inclusive Education, UNESCO, Paris.
6. UNESCO, (2001b). *Inclusive Schools and Community Support Programmes*. Phase 2, UNESCO, Paris
7. UNESCO, (2001c). *Including the Excluded – Meeting Diversity in Education: Example Uganda*, UNESCO, Paris.
8. UNESCO, (2003). 'Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education: A Challenge and a Vision', *Conceptual Paper*, UNESCO, Paris, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001347/134785e.pdf>
9. UNESCO, (2008a). *Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future, Final Report, International Conference on Education 48th session*, Geneva, 2009, UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Geneva.
10. UNESCO, (2009a). *Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*, UNESCO, Paris, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0017/001778/177849e.pdf>
11. UNESCO, (2009c). *Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environments*, Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All, Bangkok, http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/032revised/brochure_embracing.pdf

12. UNESCO, (2011b). EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011. *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001907/190743e.pdf>
13. UNESCO, 'World Declaration of Education for All' (1990), Jomtien, Thailand
http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/JOMTIE_E.PDF
14. WHO (2009). *Mainstreaming Disability in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Policies, Processes and Mechanisms: Development for All*, Report of the Expert Group Meeting, 14–16 April, Geneva, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1470>