

Reflection on Guardian Interviews

Competency #27 Teacher will be able to defend why segregated classrooms are not the best learning environment for students with exceptionalities; Artifact: 2 Guardian Interviews

In analyzing the interviews both of the students had a positive introduction to being in an inclusive classroom, where they felt a sense of belonging. This changed for the second student once things got more challenging for them and other students matured. Peer interactions were good for student 1, while student 2 was struggling with friendships and expressed loneliness. A problem that seems to arise in the classroom is often around the teacher responsibilities in helping students with the exceptionalities experience full inclusion of a classroom community. Both of the students want to feel like there is equity in their environments. The students want to be social, make friends and feel like they are a normal part of society. When teachers were feeling overwhelmed the students were segregated from the classroom, they did not feel supported and the guardians felt that their needs were not being met. When these students were segregated from peers, loneliness and lack of motivation was a result. Both of these interviews showed that differentiation is important for the learners to be successful, but this needs to be done without segregating the students from the entire classroom. Students lost motivation for learning when they were not accepted into an inclusive learning environment that offered the appropriate supports for them to thrive. An example of this was when student #1 felt like there was no point in trying when their spelling test answers were not accepted correct because of improper sentence case. This separated the learner, by not accepting differentiation. He felt as though the teacher brought down his self-esteem according to the guardian. It was thought that student #1 was being sent home and isolated from the classroom when the teacher wasn't able to manage him. This was viewed in a way of punishment or as an excuse for including the child. In my opinion sending a child home places them further back in their learning opportunities. This behaviour demonstrates segregation in the classroom happening, it shows that splitting students up based on an exceptionality does not make the student feel welcomed and inhibits their opportunity to learn. During both of the interviews the parents were opposed to segregated classrooms. They both stated that this would cause the students to not feel normal. As I reflect, I think about how this relates to (3) the social disadvantage experience by disabled people is caused by the physical, institutional and attitudinal (together, the "social"0) environment which fails to meet the needs of people who do not match the social expatiations of "normalcy" (Hoskins, 2008, p. 7, as cited in Stevens, 2017). Something that I learned from these interviews is that it is necessary to educate all students on differences in children and teach about what exceptionalities might look like. This sets students up to be compassionate in order to help them be more understanding. Both parents felt that their children were excluded from social interactions due to their exceptionalities. As teachers, we need to take on the responsibility of making a change on how persons with exceptionalities are viewed by others and what is supposed to be an inclusive classroom is not a segregated classroom in disguise. We as teachers need to establish more equality. Even though a student is in the same class as everyone else, if the other students are not accepting them, then that is still considered a segregated classroom. Students feel stress from these environments then stress plays on negative factors in how well a person is able to learn.

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References:

Stevens, N., DR. (2017). *Literature review: The social and political journey for people with disabilities in Canada* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Calgary.