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School Psychologists' Inclusive Practices around the World: A vision to other realities and possibilities

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Workshop Plan

1. Introduction: What do we understand by inclusive education?
2. Why should psychologists be concerned about social justice and inclusion?
3. Impact of inclusion on psychologists' role in schools
4. New roles for school psychologists for inclusion

Inclusion – a national agenda for Portugal

Portugal has long been working towards the inclusion of everyone in schools and society.

This conference is dedicated to inclusive education.

However, the way inclusion is understood and the importance it is given varies among different educators and also psychologists.

Inclusive education??



What do you understand by inclusive education?

Social Justice - USA

The National Association of School Psychologists in the USA has been promoting another version of inclusion as 'Social Justice'.

A study found that this was mainly understood by NASP members as implying 'ensuring the protection of educational rights and opportunities, and promoting non-discriminatory practice' (Shriberg 2013, p. 4).

And the emphasis is on action: 'True social justice involves every one of us bringing our considered and lived wisdom to bear on inquiry and action that supports the well-being of each and all' (Clare, 2013, p.60).

Social Justice – USA NASP

"Social justice is both a process and a goal that requires action.

School psychologists work to ensure the protection of the educational rights, opportunities, and well-being of all children, especially those whose voices have been muted, identities obscured, or needs ignored. Social justice requires promoting non-discriminatory practices and the empowerment of families and communities.

School psychologists enact social justice through culturally-responsive professional practice and advocacy to create schools, communities, and systems that ensure equity and fairness for all children." (NASP, 2017)

The new law

‘From special needs to inclusive education’

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive education position paper

The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers (European Agency, 2015, p. 1).

Social Justice – Fraser

Fraser's (2005) tri-partite conceptualisation of social justice in terms of

- (re)distribution of resources,
- recognition of and equal valuing of different groups, and
- participation through equal representation of different groups

Within the field of education, this suggests the need to examine

- (1) the fairness of resource allocation and outcomes,
- (2) the acknowledgement of and responsiveness to student diversity, and
- (3) students' involvement in decision-making and democratic processes within school and society.

ISPA Mission Statement

10. Promote structures that prevent and protect all children from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, ability, sexual orientation, disability, or socio-economic status; and advocate for the inclusion and participation of all children in education and society.

Inclusive education changes the role of school psychologists

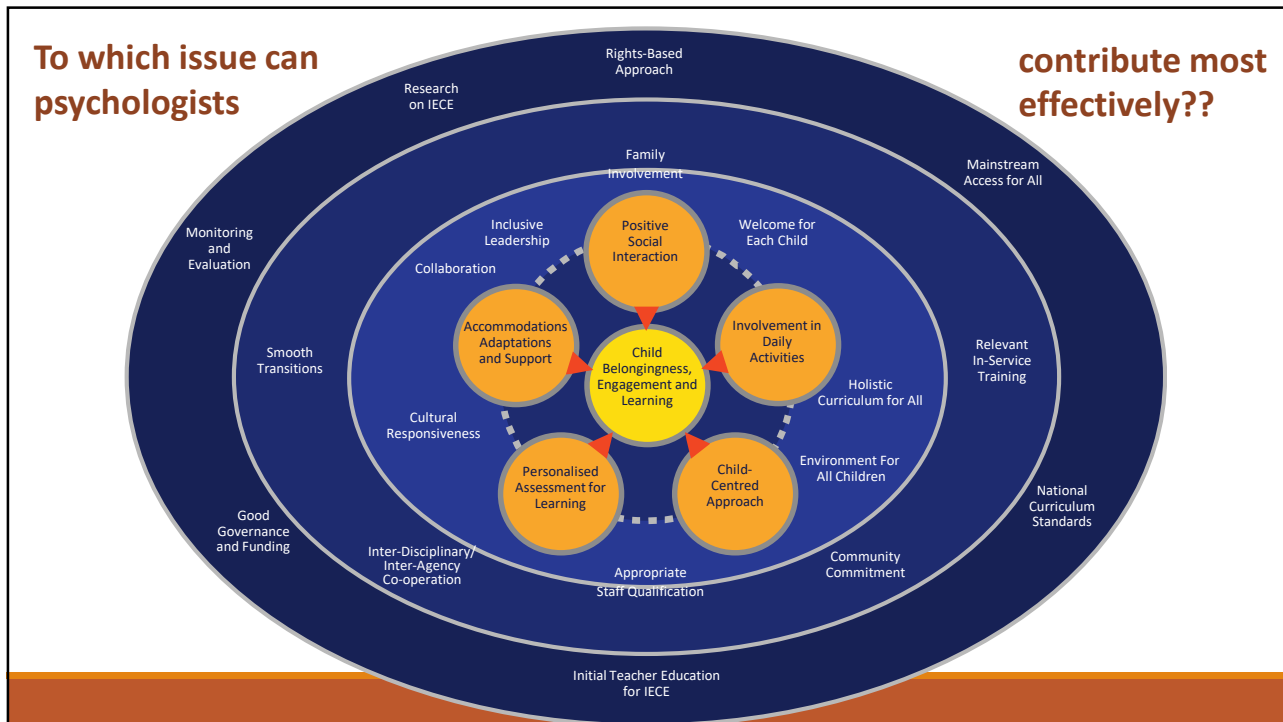


Psychologist's role in inclusive education

Have you been involved in promoting social justice and inclusion? How?

What role can psychologists play in inclusive education?





TRADITIONAL ROLE REVIEWED

School psychologists will continue to provide a deeper understanding for families and schools of the challenges for development and learning faced by individual children.

However:

- They also need to become more expert in developing strategies for including children with a variety of challenges in the regular activities of the classroom and school.
- Their consultation role for systems change takes on more importance.

Change is a challenge

Although practitioners appear to reach beyond the traditional role of “tester,” it seems they struggle to move away from direct remedial intervention functions toward more ecological and prevention-oriented services. ...

... it is important to underline that results point to inter-individual differences in how practitioners perform their job. (Medez, 2014)

1. SPs SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF WELCOMING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The role of consultation for adults working with students is the most relevant SPs’ support for inclusive education.

- Psychologists are in a position to provide leadership as agents of prosocial change, advocacy, and social justice, thereby promoting societal understanding, affirmation, and appreciation of multiculturalism against the damaging effects of individual, institutional, and societal racism, prejudice, and all forms of oppression based on stereotyping and discrimination. (APA, 2002, p. 15)

Preventive work becomes more important

“We must convince Congress that preventing school wide bullying, school drop out, or teenage parenthood is as important as preventing the flu and that our nation has a responsibility for promoting the holistic well-being of its people through an expansion of compensated mental health services, including preventive mental health services.”
(Kiselica, 2004)

2. UNDERSTANDING THE STRENGTHS AND NEEDS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT

The social model of disability gives an even more inclusive focus by moving away from identifying the needs in students or adults themselves and suggesting instead the need for changes in the social system. When applied to schools, this has been termed the ‘organisational paradigm’:

- It involves moving away from explanations of educational failure that concentrate on the characteristics of individual children and their families, towards an analysis of the barriers to participation and learning experienced by students within school systems
- In this way, those students who do not respond to existing arrangements come to be regarded as ‘hidden voices’ who, under certain conditions, can encourage the improvement of schools.
(Ainscow, 2014, p. 171)

3. HOW TO ORGANISE LEARNING SO THAT ALL STUDENTS CAN BE ACTIVELY ENGAGED AND MAKE PROGRESS

They can use their deeper knowledge of learning processes and instructional psychology, together with skills in observation and listening to student aspirations and difficulties, to make teachers more aware of what is going on in the classroom.

Psychologists can help teachers get to grips with the many suggestions coming from the research on differentiated teaching (e.g. Tomlinson, 2014) and Universal Design for Learning (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2013).

Reference

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