



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

RETHINKING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THROUGH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE TRANSFORMATION THEORY



Reaching out in Education

Faculty of Education

Presenter: Dr Nicky Pylman





Faculty of Education

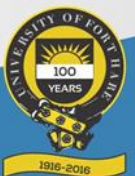


University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

People are not disturbed by things, but by the view they take of these things (Epictetus)

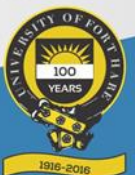
Although there is widespread support for inclusion in South Africa at a philosophical level, there are some concerns that policies of inclusion are difficult to implement due to teachers' beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and lack of adequate preparation to work in inclusive classrooms.

Despite reporting positive views of inclusive education as an idea, educators identified the practical implementation of inclusion to be problematic for their practice (Macfarlane & Wolfson, 2013)





- Mukhopadhyay (2014) noted that overall teachers had a negative attitude towards inclusion of students with exceptionalities in their classrooms.
- Berry (2011) & Mukhupadhya (2014) concede that the number of learners with exceptionalities attending mainstream schools continue to increase due to integrated and inclusive ministry and school policies – thus classrooms will become more increasingly diverse, challenging educators to re-evaluate their perceptions and ideals and adjust their pedagogy.





- According to Somma (2015) a significant body of research indicates that globally, teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion of learners with exceptionalities are critical to the successful creation of inclusive classrooms.
- The main barriers to create inclusive classrooms as identified by teachers include not having appropriate training in special education, classroom management and teachers' perceptions (Bennett, 2009).





- Teachers' general beliefs of disability, (whether positive or negative) influence their attitudes and perceptions about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in regular classrooms (Somma, 2015).
- According to Rouse (2010) there are persistent beliefs that when children find learning difficult, it is because there is something *wrong* with them. Thus, the 'classic' special education view assumes that it is not possible to include children with learning difficulties in mainstream settings, because their needs are different.



- Forlin (2010) notes that beliefs influence teachers' attitudes to inclusive education that in turn influence their intentions and *behaviours in the classroom*.
- Teachers' attitudes and beliefs directly affect their *roles and teacher identities*, and subsequent behaviour with learners which have a great influence on their pedagogy, classroom climate and learner outcomes.

- Nel, Nel & Tiale (2015) state that despite the fact that the practice of inclusive education has recently been widely embraced as an ideal model for education, the acceptance of inclusion education practices has not translated into *reality* in most mainstream schools.



Faculty of Education

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

- This presentation uses the lense of Dasco & Sheinberg's (2005) theory of transformation.
- According to these authors all transformation is change, however, not all change is transformation, as transformation means to change in form, appearance or structure, which first occurs within the *individual* and then the organisation.



- Challenging beliefs, assumptions, habits. patterns and paradigms are at the heart of transformation.
- Transformation occurs when leaders, policy makers and educational authorities create a vision for transformation and a system that continually question and challenge beliefs, assumptions, patterns, habits and mind sets.



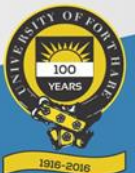
Faculty of Education

1. CHANGING BELIEFS, ATTITUDES & ASSUMPTIONS IN RELATION TO INCLUSION



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

- Effective transformation strategies in relation to inclusive education should address teachers' existing beliefs about inclusion, because these affect their instruction in the inclusive classroom.
- Changed mind sets and beliefs might enable teachers and all other role players to rethink the meaning of education for all children, instead of seeing inclusion as an “add on” or an additional work load.
- Changing educators attitudes and beliefs with regard to inclusion can be challenging, especially when these beliefs have been embedded in one's belief system.
- Teachers are often not aware of the assumptions, or educational beliefs they hold (Carrington, 1999).



2. IT STARTS WITH A VISION

A vision for inclusive education should include an ever-evolving picture which allay fears of change, of loss, of the unknown, of making mistakes, and of failure in order to ensure that ALL learners of any age are provided with meaningful high quality educational opportunities.



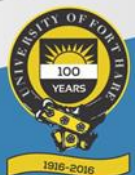
- Therefore it follows that a vision for inclusion does not mean:
 - “dumping” learners with barriers to learning in general education classrooms *without careful planning and adequate support.*
 - Isolating learners with disabilities socially, academically and physically within general education classrooms
 - Jeopardising the achievement of general education learners through slower instruction or less challenging curricula (McLeskey & Walton, no date).





3.ADDRESSING TEACHER CONCERNS IN RELATION TO INCLUSION

- MacLeskey & Walton (no date) highlight pertinent concerns of teachers in relation to inclusion that need to be addressed as part of the process to transform their beliefs and attitudes, which are as follows:
 - Will I be given the opportunity to develop expertise needed to be an effective inclusive education teacher?



Will I be provided with the resources necessary to develop a success inclusive program?

- Will I be given time to plan successful inclusive program?
- What will my role be in the inclusive classroom?
- Will learners with disabilities have a negative
- impact on the general education classroom?



4. TRANSFORMING INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION

- According to Sharma et al.(2012) school boards, administrators and teachers are recognising that creating truly inclusive schools requires changes in traditional and common practices.
- Bennett (2009) cites the lack of appropriate training as a major barrier to creating inclusive classrooms.



- In order for teachers to meet the diverse needs of learners, they require adequate knowledge and skills through training (Berry, 2011).
- Teachers who had experience and training with learners with exceptionalities held more positive attitudes compared to those who were not trained.
- Teachers with training on inclusion held more positive views than teachers with more experience, but without training.

- Teachers who had training and direct experience with learners with exceptionalities seem to be most accepting and thus the most inclusive teachers, even when they have less teaching experience(Mukhopadhyay,2014)



- Pearson (2009) states that teacher education is a context in which changes in attitudes, beliefs and values occur.
- Forlin (2009) note that if the negative attitudes of pre-service teachers are not addressed during initial teacher education. they may continue to hamper the progress of inclusive education efforts in schools.



- Cook (2007) believes that teaching practice plays a key role in shaping future teaching behaviour, and provides an opportunity to address the research-to-practice gap.
- Teacher education programmes need to consider practical placements in schools and classrooms where inclusion has been embraced as philosophy and in practice (European Agency, 2015).

The following activities or processes play a key part in the development of inclusive practice:

- Initial teacher education programmes should link courses and field experiences within a conceptual framework.
- Organisation and content of ITE to include school practice and evidence-based pedagogy (European Agency, 2015)



Faculty of Education



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Confusing the internal world of our mind, over which we have control, with the external over which we can only influence, but not control, causes most suffering (Epictetus)

Summary:

Inclusion is a challenge for everyone, and if we are to have inclusive schools, which promote equal opportunities and participation, concerted efforts are required in terms of transforming our discriminatory attitudes, mind sets, beliefs, assumptions and behaviours toward inclusion.

THANK YOU – ENKOSI – DANKIE

