
Purpose Of Education In Today's World

Education cannot be said to be for only one thing. Numerous factors contribute to the purpose of education, but the goal is always to achieve and gain knowledge through this idea of education. When looking at teaching, education is there to ensure that children learn and achieve to their full potential by eliminating factors that could be considered hindering or detrimental to the path of their futures. This is where education for social justice and education for wellbeing can be considered the purpose of education also. This is because a child who is being taken care of and encouraged in school is more likely to achieve than one who is worrying about other aspects of life such as in the home. Taking this stance, it can be inferred that education is for inclusion as it helps to shape children and integrate them into society without judgment or any limitations.

When thinking of inclusive education, it is hard to elaborate without firstly looking to the UNESCO definition which defines inclusive education as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures, and communities, and reducing exclusion from education and from within education” (Acedo, n.d.). Inclusion is a large part of education and is aimed at helping, guiding, and encouraging all children through education regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. For this to be true it needs to be known that inclusion has different levels ranging from individual or school-based, to international level, meaning that no child is left discriminated by any factor of their life. Inclusive education highlights the idea that children should not adapt to what they are learning, but rather a child’s learnings should be adapted to them to help them achieve to their full potential: “It is about changing the system to fit the student, not changing the student to fit the system” (Stubbs, 2008). One major factor which inhibits inclusive education is ability grouping. Although this is one of the most dominating ideas for teaching in primary schools, ability grouping can lead to pupils learning from set teachers who “only know pupils in a subject-specific context” (MARKS, 2014), rather than a classroom teacher who is more likely to know each child’s individual ability in a variety of topics. Teaching children in ability groups can often lead to the streaming of classes as children get split into certain groups and are often kept in those groups for each subject. Combining this issue with the problems of introducing set teachers shows how, to have an inclusive environment for all children, there must be levels of integration in all aspects of learning, regardless of their ability. This is because children can often learn a lot from their peers and can develop techniques that help them to achieve. In finding techniques that appeal to them, pupils can learn the best methods for their own progression as “a child also needs to know and come to terms with his or her own strengths and limitations” (Dean, 1992). Inclusive education should also eliminate any disparities between the pupils, however, ability grouping, such as previously spoken about, can lead to some pupils being less motivated to do their work and can also create a bigger “achievement gap between high and low ability pupils” (McGuillicuddy and Devine, 2018). However, despite some aspects of inclusive education being questioned, the idea that education is for inclusion greatly expresses the importance of inclusion within the primary school as it encourages shared learning experiences, not only for the pupils but for the teacher and parents too. This is because inclusion is about everybody being involved in education as a way of helping students to achieve their full potential.

Education for social justice is also very important. Social justice within education helps to eliminate any disparities of children who may grow up in more disadvantaged backgrounds or those living in poverty. The idea aims to help children feel less isolated or excluded within schools because of these disparities. We are aware that, in school, pupils “have rich and diverse life experiences, which are constructed and mediated by their peers and the adults in their setting” (GRAY and MACBLAIN, 2018), meaning that every child’s experience in school will be different from another’s. For children who face a form of social injustice such as coming from a background of poverty or ethnic minority, it is important that these experiences they have are not influenced by their differences and instead they are integrated into their class as equals to their peers. Understanding the full extent of education promoting social justice in the classroom, allows practitioners to gain knowledge on each of their pupils’ backgrounds and do everything they can to make the children feel included within the class. They should actively encourage all members of the class to treat each other with dignity and respect and should do so by leading by example. Unfortunately, schooling can often leave children feeling isolated or alienated if they do not come from the same backgrounds as their peers. We must understand that due to anxiety caused by their social class or identity “it is more difficult for them to concentrate on the curriculum” (Cremin and Burnett, 2018) as feelings of worry and nervous thoughts can lead their minds to be focussed on things other than the topic they are learning. This can be detrimental to their overall learning and subsequently, referring back to education for inclusion, cause them to potentially be placed in a lower ability group if this is how they are learning. Furthermore, it can cause some children to question the point of their education, especially if their feelings of anxiety are greater than their desire to achieve or learn. This can further lead to “social and academic difficulties” (Collins, Woolfson, and Durkin, 2013), especially if a child is suffering from increasing anxiety. On the other hand, education is for social justice as it helps the pupils to feel as though they are being treated individually and not as one class. This is because understanding each child’s differences outside the classroom, it can allow for them to feel more understood inside the classroom. This mentality would help children know that they will not be discriminated against based on their social background, thus allowing them to put their minds at ease and potentially place more focus on their schoolwork instead.

Another purpose of education can be for well-being. A child’s wellbeing is a prominent factor that needs to be closely monitored by the teacher as part of their job. A child who presents any physical or psychological issue which needs to be addressed should be watched with great vigilance by their teacher. This is because, if an issue goes unknown to the teacher and something happens to the child, there could be great repercussions for both teacher and pupil. Furthermore, education for wellbeing within the primary school is important because of Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC). GIRFEC is a child-focused agenda for the understanding of welfare and tackles any issues or child needs early. It “supports families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people” (Swinney and Todd, 2019), meaning that all children can receive the same amount of care from their teachers as they should be getting at home. Policies such as GIRFEC allow for potential child welfare issues to be raised and quickly in the best interest of the child. Furthermore, it is important to understand that a child’s health consists of more than just physical wellbeing but is instead “a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (Who. int, 2019). Mindfulness can help promote the wellbeing of pupils in schools through the process of mindfulness. It allows children to consciously focus on being openly accepting to learning “in the present moment, and as non-reactively, as non-judgementally and as open-heartedly as possible” (Kabat-Zin, 2015). This mentality can help

encourage children to want to learn as they become more aware that there is no judgment from their teachers or peers when wanting to learn. Furthermore, setting the right mentality for children is important in schooling otherwise they are left either bored or uninterested in what they are doing which can lead to more disruption to their own and others' learning within the classroom.

Overall, it can be said that education is for several reasons rather than purely one thing. Promoting inclusion, social justice, and wellbeing each allow education to encourage children to achieve in a safe environment, without judgment. This is key to a child's development as without the support of their teachers and their peers, children can be left isolated or anxious during school. The necessity for an inclusive environment means all children can learn at the same rate and they do not have to face any inequities. Promoting social justice again relates to inclusion as it prevents discrimination within the school while encouraging mindfulness and wellbeing helps children to learn with an open mind and a willingness to achieve.

eduzaurus.com