



MODULE CODE: ECPT6004

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT: One

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Assignment

Learning Support Report

Part 1: Regulatory and Legal Requirements for Inclusive Practice in Post-16 Education

Teachers are the backbone of post-16 education in the UK. This crucial stage of education requires teachers to engage critically with the legal, social, and institutional frameworks that are fundamental to achieving inclusive learning.

The UK is a leading country with a legal and ethical charter that obliges educational institutions to create environments based on equality, diversity, and inclusion. However, inclusive practice goes beyond simply complying with legislation; it also involves teachers developing a deep understanding of the potential impacts of inequality on learners, which necessitates the implementation of effective strategies to reduce barriers to participation.

The Equality Act 2010 provides a crucial legislative foundation for inclusive practices. It serves as a shield to protect individuals from the devastating effects of discrimination based on race, disability, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. Therefore, a closer examination of educational contexts reveals that the Act requires institutions to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that students with disabilities or special needs are not subjected to any form of deprivation (Disability Rights UK, 2012). Although the legislation establishes a strong legal basis for consolidating the principle of equality, some voices criticise this approach, assuming that politics alone cannot guarantee the integration process. Warwick-Booth (2019) suggests that entrenched structural inequalities in educational institutions may continue to harm certain groups despite legal protections. Therefore, educators must move beyond mere compliance and adopt inclusive practices that ensure proactive and effective implementation.

International frameworks affirm these principles. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that education is a fundamental human right, stressing the need for inclusive systems that enable these groups to participate effectively (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

Degener (2017) asserts that the agreement represents a qualitative leap and a shift in the concept from the medical model of disability, which focuses on individual incapacity, to a human rights model, which includes social responsibility as a key factor in removing barriers.

Frameworks with a theoretical basis, such as the social model of disability, offer a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by students with disabilities. As stated by Barnes, Mercer and Shakespeare (2010), disability is not limited to physical or cognitive factors, but is a product of the interaction between environmental and institutional barriers. For example, certain teaching methods, rigid assessment structures, or negative attitudes may significantly limit expected student participation.

Swain and French (2000) expand on this proposition with the disability affirmation model, which casts doubt on existing disability-based concepts and emphasises the importance of acknowledging disability identities in a positive way.

Nevertheless, the social model, despite its clear influence on inclusion policies, has been criticised for failing to fully capture the lived experiences of disability itself.

Retief and Letsos (2018) emphasise that while the model clearly highlights structural barriers, it may underestimate the practical challenges individuals face due to their disabilities. This

critique underscores the importance of adopting a balanced perspective that considers both social barriers and individual support needs when developing inclusive educational practices.

The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Crenshaw (1989), is a crucial theoretical framework for understanding inequality. It posits that individuals may experience different forms of discrimination based on multiple aspects of their identity, such as race, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status. Collins (2019) proposes that examining inequality through a single category can obscure the complex realities of marginalised groups. Within post-16 education, Intersectionality is of particular importance because learners may face other types of barriers related to poverty, race, disability, or gender identity.

Studies have shown that socioeconomic inequality is a significant negative factor that severely limits effective educational participation. Bourdieu and Passeron (2013) assert that educational systems may contribute to the reproduction of social hierarchies by granting privileges to students with capital and from cultural backgrounds that align with the expectations of educational institutions. Consequently, students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face difficulties navigating many academic systems, both in terms of accessing resources and balancing financial demands with academic commitments. Evidence from the Commission on Social Measures (2019) confirms that poverty can significantly impact students' ability to fully participate in the educational process. Furthermore, financial hardship may force them to work alongside their studies to supplement their income.

Equivalently, racial inequality negatively impacts learners' educational experiences. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (2020) reports that racial minorities may face structural barriers, including stereotyping, discrimination, and limited representation. Fenton (2010) asserts that race clearly shapes social interactions and power dynamics within institutions, potentially leading to exclusion, marginalisation, and unequal opportunities.

Pedagogical theorists such as Freire (1996) propose that dialogue, empowerment, and the development of critical thinking in learners create a positive environment for learning. Inclusive classrooms encourage teachers to question existing power structures and foster environments that value diverse perspectives.

From a practical standpoint, inclusive teaching requires the application of strategies that align with and respond to diverse learning needs. For instance, school differentiation allows for the adaptation of teaching methods, resources, and assessments to support different learning styles. Farrell (2006) asserts that effective inclusive practice requires teachers to anticipate potential challenges and design a learning environment that accommodates diversity from the early stage.

Institutional support structures have a crucial role in terms of enabling inclusion. This is achieved through several services such as the support that teams provide to students with disabilities, counselling services, financial aid programs, and support for students facing learning difficulties. UCAS (2022) emphasises that students who receive structured support have a greater chance of continuing their education and achieving positive outcomes.

Overall, inclusive education in post-16 settings requires an approach that integrates legislation and theoretical frameworks with practical strategies. While legislation such as the Equality Act 2010 provides an important legal framework, true inclusion occurs when educators are able to critically examine structural inequalities and implement an approach that ensures teaching practices address potential challenges and support all learners' needs.

Part 2: Support Statements

Megan

Megan reported experiencing anxiety and the possibility of dyslexia, which could affect her participation and engagement in her coursework. Anxiety can undoubtedly impact a student's self-confidence, willingness to participate in discussions, and ability to perform well in assessments, particularly when tasks involve public speaking or collaborative activities. Fernando (2010) notes that mental health issues can significantly affect how individuals cope with educational environments and social interactions.

The challenges Megan shared regarding concentration and information processing may indicate dyslexia. Dyslexia is often associated with difficulties in reading, writing, and language processing, which can impact academic performance if the learner does not receive appropriate support (Sprenger-Charolles et al., 2016). The British Dyslexia Association (2018) states that early diagnosis and targeted support are essential to enable students with dyslexia to progress in their education.

Legally, Megan's needs fall under the protection of the Equality Act 2010, which requires educational institutions to make reasonable accommodations. However, the effectiveness of these accommodations depends largely on teachers' ability to implement inclusive practices in their daily teaching, and not solely on the legal obligation to provide support.

In addition, supporting Megan practically includes academic adjustments and psychosocial support. For instance, providing lecture materials in advance can give extra time to absorb the information. Furthermore, assistive digital technologies, such as text-to-speech software or note-taking tools, could support the learning process.

The psychological dimension of Megan's experience is crucial and cannot be overlooked. Freire (1996) suggests that education should propel learners forward and foster their self-confidence through dialogue and collaboration. A supportive learning environment can encourage participation without coercion, significantly contributing to Megan's gradual development of self-confidence.

Nevertheless, there are limitations to purely classroom-based support. Megan might benefit from access to specialist services, such as counselling or learning support teams, which conduct formal assessments and provide structured interventions.

By unifying institutional support with holistic teaching strategies, Megan's learning barriers can be minimised, enabling her to make progress and fully participate in her program.

Efa

Efa's case vividly illustrates the profound impact of discrimination and social exclusion on students' educational experiences. Her accounts detail the effects of the abusive comments and

social isolation she endured, demonstrating beyond any doubt that she experienced racial discrimination, a serious issue that can negatively affect her academic performance and psychological well-being.

Research from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2020) emphasises that racial discrimination can contribute to hostile learning environments that isolate learners and undermine students' sense of belonging. Correspondingly, Fenton (2010) suggests that ethnicity can be a factor influencing social interactions within institutions, often leading to marginalisation or stereotyping.

Efa's experience can also be analysed through the lens of intersectionality. Crenshaw (1989) asserts that individuals may experience discrimination in diverse and complex ways when multiple aspects of their identity intersect. Collins (2019) adds that intersectional analysis is crucial for understanding how power systems function within different institutions, particularly educational ones.

From a legal perspective, discriminatory behaviour violates the Equality Act 2010, which requires all institutions to prevent all forms of harassment and promote equality. However, legislation alone is insufficient as prejudice cannot be eradicated by relying solely on it. Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2010) suggest that misunderstandings stemming from different cultures and unconscious biases can negatively impact communication between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

With particular emphasis on, the teacher can accurately describe Efa's situation and clearly explain how to address her concerns, providing both immediate support and long-term intervention.

In the early stages, it is essential to provide Eva with a safe environment to discuss her past experiences and reassure her that all her concerns will be addressed promptly and taken seriously. Furthermore, institutional procedures for reporting various instances of discrimination must be followed to ensure accountability and legal protection.

Within the classroom context, teachers can foster inclusive learning environments by supporting positive behaviours, encouraging respectful dialogue, and promptly addressing any discriminatory behaviour that may arise toward a student. Freire (1996) highlights the need for education to encourage various forms of critical thinking about social inequalities, helping students recognise and challenge discriminatory situations.

However, it is important to recognise that addressing discrimination does not end there. It requires institutional commitment, and relying solely on individual teachers is insufficient to confront and mitigate it. Equality training, diversity policies, and inclusive curricula are all essential for creating sustainable change across all levels of educational institutions.

Iwan

Iwan's case is a clear example of how socioeconomic inequality can create significant barriers to educational participation. Being the first member of his family to complete post-compulsory education may indicate a lack of financial resources to achieve even a minimum level of academic success.

Bourdieu and Passeron (2013) suggest that education systems can, in one way or another, reproduce social inequality, since students from marginalised backgrounds may lack the cultural capital valued by academic institutions. For instance, these learners may be less familiar with academic expectations or have fewer financial resources to support their studies.

Financial difficulties can also significantly impact students' well-being and, consequently, their academic performance. Evidence from the Social Metrics Commission (2019) indicates that students from marginalised backgrounds or those experiencing poverty often face increased pressure and may frequently prioritise work to compensate financially, which can overshadow academic commitments and lead to academic setbacks.

Addressing financial inequality in education is not a one-sided endeavour but must encompass various aspects. From a policy perspective, there should be clear institutional and governmental interventions to mitigate this phenomenon. Blakemore and Griggs (2007) emphasise that social policies play a crucial role in promoting equal opportunity by providing financial support and ensuring access to education for all students from diverse backgrounds.

In relation to the teacher's role, the first step in addressing Iwan's situation is to discuss the student's circumstances in a supportive and confidential manner. Understanding the specific challenges the student faces is crucial for identifying appropriate forms of support and prioritising them accordingly.

In several instances, directing students to student support services is crucial. Many educational institutions offer services specifically for these students, such as financial aid funds, scholarships, and financial counselling, which help alleviate the financial burden on learners. Primarily, flexible learning strategies, such as recorded lectures or supplemental tutoring, can help students manage their academic workload alongside their studies, achieving a balance where neither overshadows the other.

However, it must be recognised that support cannot be limited to educational institutions capable of providing it on their own, and that addressing broader structural inequalities within classrooms alone is difficult. Therefore, inclusive educational practices must also include advocating for new policies that mitigate socioeconomic barriers to education, and civil society organisations should collaborate with government agencies to develop and implement these policies to maximise their impact.

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