

Inclusion in an International Context

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THE WORD *inclusion* in an educational context is itself somewhat of a paradox. It is frequently confounded by our concepts of earlier processes such as mainstreaming and integration. Although authors may disagree on the exact definition of each term and the distinctions among them, the following explanations reflect this writer's understanding of the consensus among most definitions:

- *Mainstreaming* was essentially a term that originated in the United States under legal challenges for the rights of minority groups and was regulated by the 1975 Public Law 94-142 and its reauthorization in 1997 and 2004. Mainstreaming was concerned with the placement of children with disabilities in a regular school setting. The term was influential and was adopted with various interpretations by other countries, many of which do not have the constitutional rights underpinning the original U.S. impetus for the mainstreaming movement.
- *Integration* implies that disabled people need to be integrated into mainstream society, but they, rather than society or a school system, are required to undergo more change. Definitions frequently consider the level or degree of academic, social, or personal integration that an individual may achieve and the circumstances that are required. Processes of identification, assessment, ascertainment, and reviews of the integration of children with a disability are typically found in associated education policy and practice.
- In contrast, *inclusion* takes as its starting point the fact that a just state of affairs is one in which people with a disability or difference are included in society and, in particular, in education. The required policy responses are broad and include a comprehensive focus on conditions for accepting individuals and groups and supporting the participation of children with a disability or difference in schools and their communities (Foreman, 2005).

SOME THEORY AND A FRAMEWORK

Inclusion is a term and a process that is relative in its interpretations and applications. The relativities involve the various historical, cultural, and pedagogical traditions; social structures; medical and technical resources availability; and the political, legal, and policy frameworks and economic priorities that a country embraces or within which an education system or school operates (Foster et al., 2003; Hyde, Ohna, & Hjulstad, 2006).

Inclusion may be seen as both a process of access, with associated considerations of the conditions for participation of students, and as a process of change in terms of the develop-

ment of policy, practices, and attitudes. It is a concept that is deeply rooted in the philosophical and pedagogical traditions that we choose to express. The educational systems that we develop or elaborate may be characterized, more or less, by a cycle of differentiation and uniformity (Vislie, 2003; Wagner, 1994).

When they are most differentiated, education systems offer high degrees of specialization of services to individuals and to groups. Curriculum responsibility is devolved to local school or regional levels, and in some circumstances, also high degrees of privatization and choice. Reforms of differentiated service systems often involve some increased degree of centralization of legislation, policy, funding, or evaluation to establish central control and to ensure that available resources are distributed as equitably as possible and that desired outcomes are achieved.

When they are most uniform, education systems are characterized by central control of legislation policy, funding, guidelines for practice, central curriculum policy and content, and maintenance of certain pedagogic traditions. Reforms to more uniform systems usually involve attempts to decentralize some elements to allow for local variation in implementation and specialization (Vislie, 2003).

In practice, the process is always dynamic, with national and local systems of education moving between these two extremes of differentiation and uniformity, depending on changing political, social, cultural, or economic factors and influences. No single, effective definition of inclusion is therefore possible because each system may view inclusion differently. Differentiation allows the needs of each student to be considered or taken into account (e.g., students with a specific learning need). Uniformity allows for the rights, participation, and equity of all students. Both can, therefore, be at some level inclusive or exclusive in their policy and practice as well as in following their controls and pedagogical traditions. There would seem to be no utopian "school for all" possible because in each form of system there will always be some aspects of exclusion, for groups or individuals, wherever there is inclusion. Within the cycle between uniformity and differentiation, the individuals or groups included or excluded can change as the rules, structures, and attitudes change.

Within this broad framework, it is possible to describe or locate various countries and education authorities with respect to their policies, positions, and practices. By their histories, traditions, economic priorities, legal provisions, as well as social and cultural policies, we can see where they currently place themselves and where their values and their professional and social tensions may lie in the providing of education services and in the reform of those services.

Mitchell (2005) suggests that there are three conclusions that can be reached about inclusive education: (a) that inclusive education is seen by most as creating a single system designed to serve the needs of all students; (b) that inclusive education is based on both sociopolitical models and psycho-medical models; and (c) although many countries appear highly committed to inclusive education, their practice often falls short of their rhetoric and policies. In the remainder of this chapter, we will examine the broader applications and interpretations of inclusive education for students in a number of countries and then attempt to draw some conclusions that may assist policymakers and practitioners to reflect on their current provisions and consider approaches toward reform in deaf education.

SOME CONVENTIONS

Several international conventions and agreements contain guidelines that may provide us with structural contexts, or even imperatives, depending on how influenced we are by their proclamations. In particular, we should consider the perspectives of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), the Salamanca Statement (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1994), the World Education Forum (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2000), and most recently, the United Nations Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons With Disabilities that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in New York on December 13, 2006. That convention agreed that there should be the following:

- No exclusion from the general education system on the basis of disability;
- Access for disabled students to inclusive education in their local communities;
- Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements; and
- Required support within the general education system to facilitate effective education, including effective individualized support measures (United Nations, 2006).

This perspective seems clear enough, and it could have a major influence on the ways in which we provide education for deaf students. So what are the challenges to the implementation of this perspective? One could take issue with the term *disability* in any consideration of deaf people, deaf children in particular. Using the cyclical model described above, a predominant interpretation in this convention is toward uniformity through mainstream placement of deaf students in local schools with accommodations or adjustments to their needs. This interpretation is usually associated with policies that stress access, participation, and outcomes. Because access by itself is no longer a sufficient condition for evidencing inclusion, participation in social, educational, and community contexts becomes the objective. Even though it is agreed that inclusion is a process and not any single set of outcomes, some government education departments, as they attempt to mirror corporate structures in their operation, will try to measure outcomes in terms of student achievements in curricular learning, social learning, and personal development.

These terms and the policy objectives or “performance indicators” that usually accompany them are seen by many professionals working for deaf children and by some deaf groups as denying the linguistic rights of deaf children and of deaf people as a minority group. They challenge the disability perspective inherent in such conventions and policies. Critics (for example, Brennan, 2003; Padden & Humphries, 1988) argue that the psycho-medical model of deafness as disability actually restricts the access, participation, and outcomes that deaf children may receive. Failure to have effective national recognition of sign languages and the policies and practices that reflect such recognition is seen as a central criticism of such uniform approaches (Vonen, 2007).

Some stakeholders, however, especially many of the 95% of hearing parents of deaf children, government and social economists, and those associated with medical and technological progress, see that an approach to deafness wherein deaf people are “different” denies their preferred reality and their perspective of deafness as being an impairment that can be “habilitated,” or at least one whose effect can be reduced. These stakeholders point to cur-

rent high rates of early detection and diagnosis of hearing loss (now down to a few days after birth in many countries), high rates of early cochlear implantation, and successful auditory-oral outcomes as being portents of a different and, in their terms, a more inclusive future for deaf children and their families. However, McDonald (2006) cautions that “people’s perceptions about the capacity of deaf babies to grow into happy, life-embracing deaf adults are shaped as much by all that they don’t know as by the little that they do know” (p. 1).

Strong human value systems are inherent in these positions, as are apparent incompatibilities within these contrasting perspectives. Each country has a history of approaches toward the recognition of the rights and needs of people with a disability. This history typically follows a pattern that begins with early social, health, and educational responses involving charitable systems and moves toward more publicly funded government provisions. More resource-rich countries with longer democratic traditions have generally moved along this path more rapidly than poorer countries. Associated with this pattern has been the development of legislation, public policy, school systems, and community expectations. The balance between differentiation of needs or provisions for a particular group or individual and attempts at more uniform systems that champion equal access for all is an outcome of the political and social traditions of the countries involved and their response to international agreements and covenants. The following pages explore how a number of countries provide education for their deaf students.

The United Kingdom

In more recent times in the United Kingdom, this process toward more government involvement has resulted in a transition from the vestiges of the Warnock Report (Warnock, 1978) and the 1988 Education Reform Act and their processes of “statementing” the support needed by individuals with a special education need toward the path of full inclusion. Under the Blair government’s New Labor initiatives, only a small minority of students continued to be educated in special schools. The Index of Inclusion developed by Booth and Ainscow (2002) and the Inclusion Charter (Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education, 2002) were influential in implementing this transition. This situation is not to suggest that the system in the United Kingdom is completely transformed or has resolved all the complexities but, rather, that the British government has placed itself at the forefront of international developments toward full inclusion through the implementation of such a uniform policy. This process has not pleased all those associated with deaf education in the United Kingdom, especially those individuals who had unhappy experiences in mainstream schools and those who express a view consistent with the politics of difference and of recognition (Taylor, 1994). Expressions of the politics of difference are found in the writings of Ladd (2003) and Kyle (2005), and there is support for the government’s direction found among some parent organizations, some teacher associations, and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. The policies of the British Deaf Association were unclear on this issue at the time of writing, but the organization has an active campaign directed at achieving bilingual education for all Deaf children in the United Kingdom.

In 2003, the British government officially recognized British Sign Language, an outcome that was significantly influenced by the work of the late Mary Brennan. She had for many years espoused a case for difference and differentiation based on the rights and needs of deaf

children for linguistic access to British Sign Language and for the development of a Deaf identity (Brennan, 1999). It is this issue of identity that demonstrates a tension between government moves toward full inclusion and those who would maintain separate programs for deaf students or bilingual education programs. Such tension may be considered as a useful outcome and can result in a range of differentiated options being available for parents and deaf people.

Australia

Australia is a nation of six federated states and two territories, each of which is responsible for its education system, curriculum, and practice. Australia also has some private and independent schools for deaf children (see Power, this volume). These were originally developed by charitable "missions" in each state, Catholic education authorities, and, more recently, by parent and other organizations to create oral education alternatives when public schools adopted communication philosophies involving signing.

The state systems have had official policies of placing deaf students in regular classes since the 1940s. However, more recently, there has been evidence in most states of a change toward policies of inclusion with considerations of the accommodations that local schools should make to include students with a disability, a learning difficulty, or a learning difference (these terms are used in various state policies, not always distinctively). The Australian government has no set national curriculum and does not provide specific directions to schools about the nature of education services for students with a hearing loss. Each state has therefore developed its own set of policies and practices within national education curriculum guidelines and has agreed common goals of schooling. Legislation is of a generic nature and is built around principles of social justice, including access, participation, and equity of outcome. In 1992, the national government passed a Disability Discrimination Act, and each state has separate anti-discrimination legislation. These laws are designed to be largely educative and preventive in focus, but necessarily are protective of the rights of people with a disability or cultural difference against forms of discrimination. Australia is required to comply with the United Nations International Convention of the Rights of the Child and has significant national and state policies in the area of "multiculturalism." The National Language Policy (Lo Bianco, 1987) includes the recognition of Australian Sign Language (Auslan) as a community language and recognizes the status of the Deaf community (Hyde & Power, 1992).

In a study involving deaf students and their teachers in all Australian states, Power and Hyde (2002) and Hyde and Power (2004) reported that a significant majority (83%) of deaf students in Australia attend regular schools and are placed in regular classes with auditory-oral conditions of communication. In attempting to measure the integration of these students in their regular classes, they found that more than two thirds of the students were considered to be performing at an academically "competitive" level (Mirenda, 1998) when compared with their hearing peers, yet only one third of the deaf students were rated at the same level in their social participation and development of personal independence.

The transition from policy to the practice of inclusion among Australian states remains questionable, particularly because there is no clear research evidence with respect to the efficacy of the outcomes of stated inclusion policies for the students. This lack of evidence particularly applies to the research findings with respect to deaf students' social and personal

development in regular schools. Those measures of students' independence and participation in social and academic activities in schools that are available are usually determined from the perspectives of the schools and the teachers and make assumptions about the factors that are considered to be most relevant to the students themselves, an issue demanding intensive research (Hyde & Power, 2004).

Norway

European perspectives vary, but in education of deaf students, Scandinavian perspectives have had international influence in maintaining a focus on sign language use and on schools for the deaf. The case of Norway is illustrative. Norway's current ideology of inclusive education stems back to the 1960s and is best understood in the broader historical and social changes to its welfare state (Flem & Keller, 2000; Vislie, 1995). A reorganization of special education began late in the 1960s and was based on the principles of equality, integration, normalization, participation, and decentralization. New laws established the ideology of "integration" and what was called "adjusted" education. In the 1975 Integration Act, provisions relating to special schools and specific regulations for the administration of special education were eliminated (Flem & Keller, 2000). Since 1975, local municipalities have been responsible for the education of all students and for upholding their right to be educated in their local schools. The Act of Education of 1998, Section 1-2, emphasizes "adjusted" education as a legal right for all students (Kirke-, Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet [The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs], 1998). The national curriculum for compulsory education states that compulsory schooling is based on the principle of one school for all. "Compulsory schooling shall provide equitable and suitably adjusted education for everyone in a coordinated system of schooling based on the same curriculum" (Kirke-, Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet [The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs], 1998, p. 56).

The national discussion of integration and inclusion focuses on the concept of "the student's own environment." In an unusual policy decision, two apparently opposite interpretations were incorporated, one emphasizing the deaf student's "own environment" as being the local municipality school and the neighborhood as "home," and the other emphasizing the student's "own environment" as a place where there was access to and participation with other deaf students and adults using Norwegian Sign Language (NSL).

Students who had acquired NSL as their first language were given the right to receive their education through sign language. The National Curriculum introduced new syllabi for students educated according to Section 2-6: NSL, Norwegian for deaf pupils, English for deaf pupils, and Drama and Rhythmics for deaf pupils (Kirke-, Utdannings- og Forskningsdepartementet [The Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs], 1998).

The Norwegian government enacted other initiatives to enhance the status and the competence of NSL use in schools and in families with deaf children. Some universities and university colleges developed programs to meet the regular teachers' needs for competence in NSL, and a similar program was established for hearing parents with deaf children. Parents are entitled to 40 weeks of training in NSL through the first 16 years of their child's life. Although the legislation gives all students in Norway the right to attend a school in their neighborhood, it also gives deaf students a right to education through the medium of NSL. The

student's level of hearing loss, whether moderate, severe, or profound, does not have any effect on the legal right to education under Section 2-6 in the Act of Education. However, deaf students do not have a legal right to education within a school for the deaf. Students following the national syllabi for the deaf therefore have to alternate between two different schools: the local municipality school and a school at a resource center for deaf students where they spend time each year.

In 2001–02, approximately one third of deaf students attended their local municipality school while the remaining two thirds went to special schools or classes for deaf students, either within a regular municipality school or at a resource center. When a student is educated according to the legislative provisions for the deaf, the school receives additional teacher resources to accommodate the need for communication in NSL. These resources can be used to provide two teachers for a classroom or to lower the class teacher-to-pupil ratio with a smaller class size. These decisions are made at regional and school levels according to their traditions, values, and objectives.

Two recent studies have examined the outcomes of these developments. First, Hyde, Ohna and Hjulstad (2006) reported on learning and communication interactions in three classroom structures: (a) two teachers, one with competence in NSL; (b) one teacher with an NSL interpreter; and (c) a single teacher who was competent in both spoken Norwegian and NSL. A key finding of the study was that, in two of the class-teacher structures examined, there was evidence of parallel discourses. Analyses of the interactive patterns and of language and modality use indicated that the deaf student and his or her signing teacher or interpreter communicated independently of what the rest of the class was doing. This pattern resulted in the deaf student's exclusion from some of the communication events in the classroom.

Hjulstad and Kristoffersen (2007) are conducting a 5-year study to examine the communication interactions of 24 deaf children ages 3 to 11 years, who are fitted with a cochlear implant and are being educated in both rural and urban areas in Norway. The educational placements of the students are mainly in local schools, but some are in schools or classes for the deaf. Most have access to bilingual education. Hjulstad and Kristoffersen report a very high level of heterogeneity among the classrooms, the communication environments and resources, and the linguistic proficiencies of the students. Importantly, even though both languages (Norwegian and NSL) were found to be in use in the communication contexts observed, teachers often reflected a lack of understanding of the objectives and processes of bilingual education, particularly where sign language use was seen as a consequence of "cochlear implant failure." These authors concluded by pointing to the great diversity among the communication environments, local resources, teacher competencies, and student outcomes in the classrooms studied. Hjulstad and Kristoffersen proposed that there is little evaluation of outcomes and that, at present, there is no set of general principles or guidelines informing schools and classrooms about facilitating a quality education for pupils with a cochlear implant, in either monolingual or bilingual programs.

Norway is an interesting and seemingly complex case. The education system for deaf students remains both centralized and uniform in its national legislation and policies, but quite differentiated in terms of the interpretation of these characteristics at local levels, with elements of both of these dimensions evident in the findings of two studies cited.

Canada

The evolution toward inclusive education in Canada and the United States has a long history. Both countries have had major influences on policies and practices in other countries. In Canada, government legislation has evolved on a province-by-province basis around the national Federal Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Many aspects of Canadian legislation have been influenced by U.S. developments. However, historically, the principles of “normalization” espoused by Wolfensberger (1972) were most influential in Canada and around the world because he considered that the circumstances for disabled people should be as close as possible to the regular circumstances of society.

Current Canadian legislation and policy reflects a tension between (a) international covenants and national imperatives and (b) the legislation and the practices of the provinces. This tension has resulted in a number of court challenges, particularly to the interpretation of inclusion as *placement* (Mitchell, 2005). These challenges have been brought by advocacy groups and have the capacity to redefine the interpretation of inclusion in that country. The Canadian Association of the Deaf seems to have many policy positions, but not one specifically on inclusion of deaf students. The closest is a statement that “the centralized schools for the Deaf must be kept open as an alternative for the education and socialization of Deaf children” and that the regular schools where deaf children are educated should have access to their sign language (Canadian Association of the Deaf, 2007).

Another influential and enduring development from Canada is that it is the home of Auditory-Verbal International (AVI). This organization has continued to affirm a set of principles of auditory-verbal education established more than 30 years ago by Pollack (1970), and two of their principles are particularly germane to the debate about inclusion of deaf students in local schools. Principle 3 is to “guide and coach parents to help their child use hearing as the primary sensory modality in developing spoken language without the use of sign language or emphasis on lipreading.”¹ Principle 10 is to “promote education in regular classrooms with typical hearing peers and with appropriate support services from early childhood onwards.” Together, these principles firmly establish that normalization remains an objective and that the place of deaf students is in age-appropriate classes with hearing students. There is an obvious tension between these objectives of AVI and those of some deaf associations and school authorities in Canada. Some in Canada were also early advocates of bilingual approaches to education for deaf students as a way of presenting new models of inclusion (e.g., Ewoldt, 1996), although not without sustained and reasonable criticism of their own and others’ assumptions and misassumptions about the application of Cummins’s (1981) interdependence theory to bimodal bilingual education contexts (Knoors, 2007; Mayer & Wells, 1996).

Thus, Canada appears to be a country with some national legislation but provincial application and a diversity of programs structures for deaf students. Some criticism of interpretations of inclusion are still associated with placement.

1. Interestingly, this principled restriction of speechreading does not reflect the views of Alexander Graham Bell, founding father of the Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the planned merger partner of AVI.

The United States

The United States has a long history of inclusion, which stems back to debates between Edward Miner Gallaudet and Alexander Graham Bell at the end of the 19th century, about the educational placements possible for deaf students under their respective doctrines about communication (Bell, 1898/2005; Osgood, 2005). In many ways, that debate and their largely separate philosophies of communication and education still shows its influence today.²

The influence of national legislation has also been particularly great, as have been court cases and technological developments in amplification and in cochlear implantation. Legal challenges to U.S. education policies for people with disabilities began in the 1950s when, in a racial segregation case, the U.S. Supreme Court established that separate education was inherently unequal. The Supreme Court affirmed two principles that were to influence education for deaf students: that exclusion from public education was unacceptable and that it was inherently unequal.

What is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted by Congress in 1975 and called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. This law mandated a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities. Schools must prepare an Individualized Education Program that details a child's current level of performance, the services that will be provided, the extent to which the student can participate in general education, and schedules of annual review. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended and reauthorized as IDEA in 1997 and then again as the IDEA Improvement Act in 2004. These amended laws attempt to clarify the meaning of an "appropriate" education and link this concept to student outcomes.

There are tensions evident between the potential provided by this legislative process and the positions of Deaf associations, Deaf communities and the institutions that serve them. The position established by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), for example, endorses the imperatives of the IDEA but states,

that direct and uninhibited communication access to all facets of a school's programming is essential for a deaf or hard of hearing child to realize his or her full human potential.

The inclusion doctrine is rooted in ideology and is frequently a blatant violation of IDEA as it disregards the language and educational developmental needs of the deaf and hard of hearing children. (National Association of the Deaf, 2008)

Successful inclusion programs must assist all students—deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing—to reach their potential in educational and social development. The students need active and regular interaction with one another to attain effective membership in school and classroom communities (Antia, Stinson, & Gaustad, 2002). Deaf students may experience negative attitudes from hearing peers in mainstream settings, even when they make sound academic progress. Hung and Paul (2006) found that the presence of deaf students in the same school with their hearing peers does not make a significant difference in changing the hearing stu-

2. It is of interest to note, however, that A. G. Bell affirmed strong support for the legitimate linguistic status of signed languages in a series of letters to the journal *The Educator* in 1898 (Bell Family Papers, U.S. Library of Congress) in which he also posited that deaf students so educated could reach similar levels of academic achievement to those of students educated orally. He differed from Thomas Gallaudet in that he believed that deaf children educated orally could more readily take their place in a hearing community.

dents' attitudes. However, providing meaningful forms of interaction, developing close relationships or friendships, and breaking down communication barriers all contribute to the creation of positive attitudes that can lead to the successful inclusion of deaf students.

Although the United States has a long history of providing education to deaf students, there is considerable differentiation within its history and current provisions. These differentiations show a continued presence of independent or private-school traditions, particularly those with an auditory-oral focus, and a continued commitment to state schools for the deaf. The presence of Gallaudet University, the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, and other college programs are further evidence of forms of differentiation. The powerful influences of medical, genetic, and other technologies is also evident in the changing demography of deafness and new balances among the relative influence of stakeholders, especially parents. Changing patterns of the incidence of deafness in the United States (a significant decline in the number of children born profoundly deaf compared with those with lesser levels of hearing loss) and the changing ethnic origins of deaf people (more than 21% having an Hispanic heritage) are further evidence of the pressures for change and differentiation of services (Foster & Kinuthia, 2003; Moores, personal communication, May 4, 2004). However, continued pressure for uniformity is also found in national testing of the achievements of all students and in the ranking of schools, consequences of the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2002. Unlike Australia, this form of national benchmark testing, with its intended political regulation, includes special schools and programs for deaf (and other "disabled" students) in its procedures and reporting functions.

Asia and South Asia

Asian and South Asian nations present a variety of approaches and challenges to inclusion. Even though most are signatories to the Salamanca Agreement (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1994) and subsequent United Nations conventions and the rights of individuals are usually enshrined in their constitutions, many of these countries have difficulty in deploying sufficient resources to support the realization of the potential of their disabled citizens. India is a case in point.

India is the world's largest democracy and the second most populous country. It is divided into 29 states and 6 union territories. State governments are responsible for the administration of their respective states while the central government is the highest political power in the country (Sharma & Deppeler, 2005). Although India has made impressive gains in economic development in the last few decades, more than 260 million people live below the poverty line.

India was a signatory to the United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Jomtein Convention of 1990, and the UNESCO Salamanca Statement of 1994, which advocates education for all. As a result, the central government passed the Delhi Declaration on Education for All policy in 1994 (Singal, 2005), followed by The Persons With Disability (Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act in 1995. Chapter 5 of this act states that the government will make provision for every child with a disability to have access to free education in an appropriate environment until the age of 18 years (Alur, 2006). The Indian eighth Five Year Plan 1991–1996 significantly increased the budget for disabled

children for the purpose of promoting integrated education for children with a disability (Government of India, 1993).

In March 2005, the Minister for Human Resource Development restated the government's "zero reject" viewpoint for children with special needs, saying "It should and will be our objective to make mainstream education not just available but accessible, affordable, and appropriate for students with disabilities" (Alur, 2006, p. 15). However, development of education for individuals with disabilities in India, and for deaf children in particular, remains a substantial challenge for the provincial governments, who struggle with the many crises in health, unemployment, housing, and education associated with their large populations. As a consequence, services for deaf children and adults are often extremely differentiated and frequently are offered by nongovernmental organizations, charitable associations, and international aid projects, with support from governments to the extent that it is available within tight budgets (Parasnis, DeCaro, & Raman, 1996).

This pattern of (a) uniform national objectives, often reflecting international agreements and covenants, and (b) national philosophies expressing strong human values is common in many South Asian and Asian nations. The Salamanca Statement of 1994 and the United Nations Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons With Disabilities of 2006 have been instrumental in leading national governments toward uniform approaches to inclusion of deaf students that also reflect their national values and current capacities. The differentiated range of government schools and programs available to deaf students and their families in many Western countries may not be an objective of some governments for some time, if at all.

A SCHOOL FOR ALL?

The framework of uniformity and differentiation established at the beginning of this chapter and the examples discussed suggest that, as far as deaf children are concerned, a "school for all" is not a definable construct. In any system, there will always be a degree of exclusion for some groups or individuals, even where inclusion is an avowed goal and policy. Because it was most often in deaf schools and programs that the features of Deaf culture were established and practiced for many Deaf people, the policies of inclusion and especially the "school for all" concept may appear most threatening or destructive of Deaf culture and community. Even if a school system and its local schools meet the principles of inclusion in supporting the access, participation, and outcomes for a deaf child, the acculturation of that child into a Deaf community may be limited at best if left until the postschool years.

Some countries have created programs to bring deaf students together from their local schools; these include "deaf weekends," Internet and video-streaming connections, and even mandatory periods to be spent in a deaf school or program each year. There are also blocks of time that parents can spend, or are required to spend, in deaf centers learning a sign language. Although not all of us would support the views of Tijsseling (2006), who suggests that the genetic relationship between a deaf child and his or her hearing parents is no more important than the natural relationship between a deaf child to a Deaf community, forms of contact are available to most schools to establish associations between deaf children who may be socially and culturally remote in inclusive education settings and the Deaf communities in those regions.

This contact remains a special challenge for nations or school programs that follow the United Nations Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons With Disabilities of 2006 or the Salamanca Agreement of 1994. Alternatively, some countries interpret these conventions to mean that a deaf school or program is of itself an inclusive experience and that enrollment in a local school is a potentially excluding experience, if one changes (a) the assumptions behind inclusion—from going to one's local school to going to a deaf school—and (b) assumptions that reflect the values of Deafness and its linguistic, social, and cultural dimensions and differentiations.

These features of acculturation do not develop spontaneously unless there are sustained opportunities for deaf students and Deaf adults to come together, in the same way as there need to be structured, positive, and shared contexts for deaf and hearing students to come together in local schools. Many deaf children from hearing families may even need to be taught their national sign language, and having no access to it may be very excluding if the local school cannot provide it. Hence, enrollment in a local school could be a potentially excluding environment if it cannot provide an inclusive "Deaf" experience.

Although some countries develop a range of education options for deaf children (in reality, options for their parents to consider), this approach entails a significant financial and personnel resource base from the country involved. In addition, extensive efforts are necessary to ensure that all the options and their consequences are understood by and accessible to parents. Not all nations are able to fund such a range of options from within their contested national budgets.

HETEROGENEITY AND THE NEED TO BE DIFFERENT

On the issue of deaf students having group characteristics that may be associated with inclusion, a number of studies have shown that different or, at least more differentiated, models of inclusion in practice are needed for deaf students (Hyde et al., 2006; Powers, 2002; Stinson & Kluwin, 2003). These models could better reflect the great heterogeneity among deaf students who are currently in regular classes and could more comprehensively encompass the needs of those students who could benefit psychosocially, communicatively, and culturally from the use of a sign language in regular classes. These possibilities do not necessarily suggest a form of "exclusion" but, rather, a structure of inclusion that respects the retention of certain individual characteristics. Knoors (2007) correctly suggests that there is no "best model" or one type of school suitable for all deaf students. Some students may thrive in local schools whereas others do well in schools for the deaf or in bilingual programs. He also suggests that we could be more flexible about what we consider to be bilingual conditions because "10% sign language and 90% spoken language is also bilingual" (pp. 245, 250).

It would seem that where countries have developed or adopted uniform approaches to legislation and policy with respect to education and inclusion of all students, sound arguments for retaining a sufficient degree of differentiation among programs for deaf students exist. A range of well-advised and comprehensively presented program options for parents would seem to be in best accordance with the evidence and experience that we have available to us. This observation is not to suggest that we do not need more research evidence; indeed, the opposite is true. We urgently need evidence of inclusion from the perspectives of the students themselves, both deaf and hearing.

A practice that seems to have become associated with inclusion more recently is the use of sign language interpreters to provide access for deaf students in local schools. Although at a policy level such access may be seen to be achieved if interpreting is provided, it is of concern that there is very little research evidence that this arrangement provides either equitable access to or participation in classroom communication with hearing peers and teachers in academic and social learning events (Hyde et al., 2006; Marschark et al., 2006). Indeed, it may be necessary for many of these deaf students to learn or be taught a sign language for use in regular class because one cannot assume that they have existing proficiency (Knoors, 2007). This approach, when adopted as a uniform response by school systems to families seeking local school placement for their deaf child, may not produce the inclusive experience that is assumed. Again, research evidence on this issue of policy and practice is urgently needed.

POLICY TO PRACTICE

In the literature and in practice in many countries, interpretations of inclusion within the contexts of place and process are typically confounded. Even when inclusion is strongly supported by national or state policy, or even legislation, as in many of the countries mentioned here, practices or outcomes in schools can remain substantially unchanged or demonstrate significant delays in their implementation. As Sowell (1995) suggested, policy issues can become ideological debates that present conflicting visions or the “vision of the anointed” (p. 241) that can prevail over others in determining policy, particularly visions that espouse “full” inclusion on only moral and rights principles. In consequence, we need to consider whether any particular approach to inclusion truly embraces diversity and differences, or merely tries to minimize them (Detterman & Thompson, 1997).

This chapter is not intended to be another exhaustive review of the international literature about inclusion of deaf students. It is an attempt to establish a framework for understanding the processes of inclusion and to see how different nations and education systems may position themselves within the framework by their policies and practices. Although the perspectives of African and Latin American countries are not described in the chapter, the framework discussed may well be applied to considerations of their situations.

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