

ABSTRACT

Inclusive Education: An investigation into the inclusion of students with severe to profound hearing impairments at three general education secondary schools in the educational district of Victoria, South Trinidad.

Joan Lawrence

The purpose of this multi-site, phenomenological, qualitative case study investigation is two-fold. It seeks to unearth and describe the experiences of major stakeholders: students with severe to profound hearing impairments, their parents and teachers, regarding the inclusion of the students at their regular secondary schools. This study also seeks to discover whether barriers as identified in the Social Model of Disability, the framework for this study, are embedded in their experiences.

The model indicates that persons with disabilities encounter environmental, attitudinal and organizational barriers, and was used as a guide to investigate the experiences of the major stakeholders.

The literature review informs several open-ended questions which reveal the participants' experiences.

This research project is of great significance as it adds to the sparse literature that already exists globally on inclusive education for students with hearing impairments. Furthermore, this investigation is significant to Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region, as up to the time of writing no studies related to the inclusion of students with severe to profound hearing impairments in secondary schools were located locally or regionally.

The investigation reveals the majority of stakeholders had negative experiences regarding the inclusion of the students under study. Though few stakeholders had positive experiences, the inclusion of students with severe to profound hearing impairments in secondary schools is generally not consistent with the ideals of inclusive education.

Key words: Joan Lawrence; inclusive education; severe hearing impairment; profound hearing impairment, Social Model of Disability