



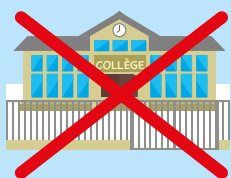
Catherine Reverdy

## THE ORIGINS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

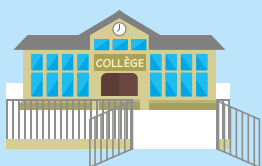
### The foundational texts of inclusive education

- ➡ **1994:** *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*, adopted under the aegis of UNESCO
- ➡ **2006:** *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*: explicit commitment by the signatory states to ensure the “right to education without discrimination”
- ➡ **2009:** *UNESCO’s Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education*

### Developed countries have had three periods of different approaches to students with disabilities:



**Segregation** of students  
until the 1970s



**Integration** of students  
between the 1970s and  
the 1990s



**Inclusive education**  
since the 2000s

In France, inclusive education is mainly associated with the idea of providing schooling for children and young people with disabilities. Internationally, the idea is above all to avoid the exclusion of students who have special educational needs, whatever they may be, by closely supporting them with their needs.

To understand how inclusive education is different depending on the context, here are a few historical and conceptual reference points, in addition to issue no. 127 of *Dossier de veille de l'IFÉ*, which focuses on inclusive education.

## THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDING TEXTS

In line with the World Declaration on Education for All in 1990, the Salamanca Statement, adopted under the aegis of UNESCO in 1994, laid the foundations of a comprehensive strategy for education: all students must be able to learn together through teaching methods that take into account their specific needs.

As subsequent texts and new standards on disability modified social representations, the signatory states committed to a real policy of inclusion with a requirement to be effective. In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities laid the foundations of the “right to education without discrimination”, including access to inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education. Signed in 2009, the Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education were a real step towards inclusive education even if the definition of this term remains vague because it blends political, philosophical and educational aspects that are specific to each country. It is seen as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion within and from education” (UNESCO, 2009).

In this context, inclusive education can be regarded as a process of re-configuring the school structure so that it fully includes all children. As regards disabilities, a social model adopted in the 1970s holds forms of social organisation partly responsible for producing disabling situations (hence the French expression *personne en situation de handicap*, which insists on the social, rather than medical, aspect). Therefore, unlike integration policies that are based on students’ adapting to the school system, inclusive education calls for institutions to be accountable and adaptable themselves.

## History of French laws on disability and adaptation (Chauvière, 2018)

### THE IDEA OF REHABILITATION (associated with the idea of unsuitability):

- **The 1909 Law:** creation of special schools and classes, and of the so-called Certificate of Aptitude for Teaching Retarded Children (CAEA)
- **1963:** creation of the so-called Certificate of Aptitude for Teaching Deficient and Unfit Children and Adolescents (CAEI)

### THE IDEA OF INTEGRATION (associated with the idea of disability):

- **A 1975 law (no. 75-534)** established, in particular, the provision of schooling and compulsory education for all students
- **1987:** creation of the Certificate of Aptitude for Special Education, Adaptation and Integration in Schools (CAPSAIS)
- **A 1989 framework law (no. 89-486)** on education reaffirmed the principle of compulsory education for children with disabilities and the priority on their integration in schools
- **A 1990 law (no. 90-602)** protects people against discrimination on the grounds of their state of health or disability

### THE IDEA OF INCLUSION (associated with the idea of disability):

- **2004:** creation of the Certificate of Professional Aptitude for Special Assistance and the Adapted Teaching and Schooling of Pupils with Disabilities (Capa-SH) for primary education and, for secondary education, of the Supplementary Certificate for the Adapted Teaching and Schooling of Students with Disabilities (2 CA-SH)
- **A 2005 law (no. 2005-102)** on the equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities affirms "the right of all students with disabilities to have access to education"
- **A 2013 law (no. 2013-595)** to reform schools recognises that "all children share the capacity to learn and to progress" and provides for "inclusive education for all students, without any distinction"
- **2017:** creation of the Certificate of Professional Aptitude for Inclusive Educational Practices (CAPPEI)

## A FRENCH EDUCATION SYSTEM BUILT ON SEPARATE STREAMS

As in many countries, France opted for specialised education at the beginning of the 20th century for all children who did not fit into the school mainstream: those who were deemed "abnormal", "retarded" and "unfit". At that time, the rise of child psychology and the medicalisation of approaches to disability prompted political leaders to separate children who were unable to keep up in school. For children presenting intellectual deficiencies ("feeble-minded" at the time) labelled mild or medium by psychologists, a separate education stream, called "specialised", was created in 1909. These special classes were given by primary school teachers who were holders of the so-called Certificate of Aptitude for Teaching Retarded Children (CAEA). Children with severe intellectual deficiencies were under the direct responsibility of psychologists in hospitals. Later, specialised institutions, still under the administrative supervision of the Ministry of Health, were established, in particular by parents' associations. At the same time, special education was developed with the goal of social and professional integration. Today, some education units in hospitals and specialised structures have been externalised into schools, as is the case with the Education Units in Nursery Schools for Children with Autism (UEMA).

*A field experiencing (major) strain: such is the recent history of education for children and adolescents with disabilities. There is extensive experience in elementary education, led by trained inspectors, with a culture of specialisation, separation, and a recent trend towards integration. A thirty-year desire to refuse the 'uneducability' of children with Down's syndrome, autism, and rare or incapacitating illnesses. More recently, efforts to provide education in secondary schools, but with limits for mental disabilities*  
(Lerch, 2009)

## TOWARDS FRENCH-STYLE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The 2005 law brought major advances in comparison with the 1975 law; it was the first law to put forward an overall social policy for people with disabilities. In particular, it introduced contact teachers; Departmental Houses for People with Disabilities, bringing previously disparate entities under the same roof; and the right to compensation. This law, whose financial means seemed derisory to some associations when compared with the magnitude of the issues and the number of people with disabilities and out-of-school youth, is still based on the ideas of help and assistance. The aim is still an older form of integration which posits that separating the most fragile students will enable them to be better educated and protected.

The 2013 law (no. 2013-595) to reform schools introduced the term "inclusive education" for the first time. More than simply the schooling of students with disabilities, which falls under integration, this approach ensures access to quality education for all students: access to the best ways of learning depending on their specific difficulties, within the context of their academic path and not as their disability presupposes that they should behave.

# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: DIFFERENT APPROACHES DEPENDING ON THE COUNTRY

Emerging at the end of the 1970s in Great Britain, the concept of special educational needs includes the specific needs not only of students with disabilities, but also of students with learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysphasia, etc.). From this perspective, a disability is seen as a difference necessitating educational responses to special needs and no longer only as a deficiency or incapacity. The 2005 law defines disability as “any limitation on activity or any restriction on participation in society experienced by a person in his or her environment because of a substantial, long-lasting and/or definitive impairment of one or more physical, sensorial, mental, cognitive or psychological functions; multiple disabilities; or an incapacitating medical condition”. Depending on the country, the concept of special educational needs may also cover other needs of students, such as short- or long-term learning difficulties or socio-economic and/or cultural disadvantages, which means that anywhere from 3% to 25% of students may be placed in this category. As a result, it is particularly difficult to adapt education systems to all such needs.

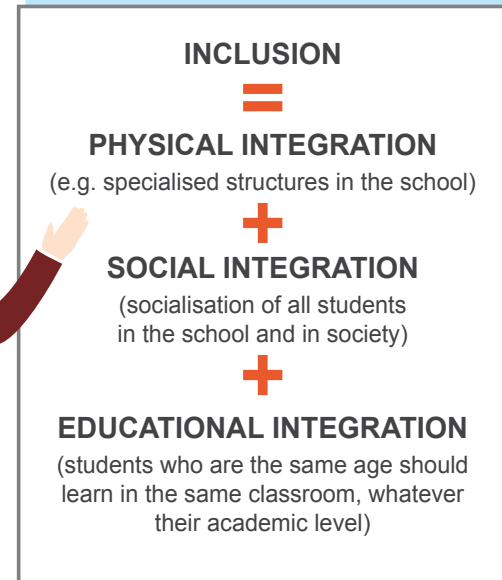
## A DELICATE BALANCING ACT BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE GROUP

Changing educational structures in order to provide different pedagogical responses to students' different needs must take into account the education systems as they are. The traditional grouping together of students with disabilities (“disability sector”) and students with serious learning difficulties or social problems (“adaptation sector”), which hardly seems, *prima facie*, defensible and which still causes confusion today, is part of the very structure of the French school system. For example, special needs education teachers in lower secondary schools may actually be primary special education teachers, certified secondary school teachers or certified vocational education teachers. These types of teachers are covered by three different inspectorates: National Education Inspectors for Special Education (IEN-ASH) in the case of primary school teachers and, in the case of secondary school teachers, subject-based Regional Education Inspectors (IA-IPR) and National Education Inspectors for Vocational Education (IEN-ET).

An emphasis on individual aspects that takes into account special educational needs can go against the very idea of inclusive education and introduce a new category that is broader, but just as stigmatising as that of disability. The challenge lies in finding a balance between the education system's response to all students' needs (accepted in theory) and the risk of just focusing on students' needs (which arises in practice). Combining socio-medical and socio-educational approaches, which entails a mutual understanding of professional processes and cooperation among different stakeholders, currently seems to be the best path for moving towards the achievement of this balance.

*The debate [on inclusive education] is characterised by an extensive spectrum of positions which lie on a continuum, from views defining inclusion as a radical social and educational project, to positions expressing a commitment to inclusion ‘as far as possible’*  
(Terzi, 2014)

## Definition of integration-based inclusion (Thomazet, 2008)



## Two professional dilemmas described by Norwich (2014)

1 The dilemma of difference: difference as enabling (ensuring additional resources to improve provision) or as stigmatising (avoiding the devaluation of students). This dilemma underlies the question of categorising students, placing them in special classes or schools, and differentiating the curriculum to meet their needs better.

2 The second dilemma concerns the tension between participation by all children in society and protection of some of them.



# HERE ARE SOME REFERENCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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## ÉDUBREF, FEBRUARY 2019:

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