Creating more inclusive learning environments in education: what does the evidence show?

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Brussels , Hearing on Intercultural dialogue and education for mutual understanding Sept 15, 2015

What do we mean by inclusive?

- Schools and classrooms where students from diverse backgrounds have equal access to learning
- Curriculum that represents and reflects the backgrounds of the students
- Methods that promote equal participation and mutual understanding
- Education that promotes a sense of belonging
- Education that promotes respect for diversity
- Education that allows all students to develop their full potential

What do we mean by evidence?

- What 'works' in multiple contexts, what has an impact?

- Why does it work? What is needed for it to work?

- The example of Holocaust Education

- Conclusion: evidence needed but not always available and often weak

What is less effective or counterproductive?

- Lecturing about being a better human being or about human rights; teacher as a sage on the stage
- A monocultural and nationalistic curriculum
- Ad hoc, temporary interventions when problems occur
- Forcible assimilation and acculturation of students
- Dumbing down the information for minority students
- The school as an island
- Focus on three 'R's; focus on test scores (PISA- sensitive)
- Simply mixing students from different backgrounds to promote 'tolerance'
- Pure focus on attitude change
- Zero tolerance programmes (new evidence)

What does the evidence show is more effective?

- Focus on developing intercultural competences among students and teachers
- More training (and experience) of teachers relating to dealing with diverse classrooms
- Seeing mother tongue as asset not deficit; explicitly recognising languages, cultures and beliefs of students
- Project based learning (also new media); cooperative learning
- Recruitment of more diverse teacher body (though mixed evidence)
- Mixing students but according to 'contact theory'
- History education that connects, not divides and is more inclusive
- A strong school ethos that respects human rights and diversity (presently appr. 30% of EU schools)
- Engagement and buy in of all education stakeholders
- Peer education, peer mediation
- Whole school approach
- Community Schools, Service Learning

Personal commitments in the face of refugee crisis and opportunity

- More specific recruitment of refugee youth in ongoing projects at Anne Frank House; focus on empowerment and leadership
- Two special issues of journal Intercultural Education in 2016: Educating about refugee issues and Education for refugees with an intercultural lens

Thank you!

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