

LABELLING IN THE CONTEXT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Introduction

This topic aims to introduce learners to the concept of labelling in the context of inclusive education and its advantages and disadvantages. It is intended to supplement knowledge on the topic of individual differences.

Audience

The intended audience of this course is students and instructors in higher education.

Length of topic

This resource has been designed to be covered in one (1) hour.

Topics outcomes

While engaging with this topic, learners will:

- Conceptualise the term labelling
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of labelling.
-

Technology Requirements

- A computer or tablet with internet access
- Audio/visual equipment for videos or case study discussions especially for audience with disabilities.

Conceptualisation of Labelling

It is a process of identifying disabled children based on the nature of their disabilities. It is also a process of identifying and categorising students with unique learning needs that differ significantly from the norm. These learners may include those with disabilities, giftedness, or other special educational requirements such as behavioural problems, communication disorders, sensory or organ impairment, and intellectual disabilities.

Purposes of Labelling

1. Identification and support. Labelling helps educators and parents recognize a student's unique needs and provide appropriate interventions, accommodations, or enrichment.
2. Access to resources. Labels often serve as a criterion for accessing specialised educational services, funding, or programs.
3. Advocacy. Labelling enables families and educators to advocate effectively for a learner's needs in school or community settings.

Advantages of Labelling

- It helps learners' needs to be known. Labelling enables teachers to help students by offering specific, well-suited, often individual, support
- It facilitates funding procedures. Labels identify the type of support required (e.g., assistive technologies for visually impaired students or speech therapy for children with language delays). This allows funders to allocate resources to well-defined needs.
- It facilitates communication among policymakers and implementers. Labels create a shared language, enabling policymakers and

implementers to understand and communicate specific needs without ambiguity. Specific labels (e.g., autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, or ADHD) help identify the type of support required and guide targeted interventions.

- It enables the specific groups to promote particular programs. Labels help identify the unique challenges and abilities of different disability groups. This allows organisations to create targeted programs that address such needs, ensuring resources are appropriately allocated.
- It helps school teachers design appropriate services for labelled students, such as teaching methods, and assessment approaches.
- It may make normal students tolerant of disabilities. Clear labelling accompanied by education about various disabilities helps non-disabled students understand their peers' challenges. This understanding reduces misconceptions, fear, or bias, encouraging a more supportive and inclusive mindset.

Disadvantages of Labelling

- Labels shape teachers' expectations. Teachers believe that students' capacity is directly related to his/her achievement. The description of a child as having special potential can change the teacher's behaviour toward the child and thereby have a positive impact on the child's academic performance.
- Labels send a message that the learning problem is with the student discarding the truth that teaching and learning are two-way traffic.
- Label influence restrictions within the educational system. Apart from labels influencing a person's personal life, it can also impact their

professional development. Schools sometimes find reasons to deny certain children, according to their label.

- Labels may lead to stigmatisation. With the knowledge that not all cultures accept and support inclusion, labels are likely to influence cultural stigma. Labelling creates a permanent undesirable identity which causes the person to undergo the consequences of not being able to 'fit the standards.
- Labels do not specify the uniqueness and status of disability, as they tend to differ from one person to another, such as severe, moderate or mild.
- Lowering self-esteem. Labelling someone can cause the original personality and character traits to be suppressed. Individuals define their sense of self by processing what others tell them about who they are, what they are good at, and how they behave.

Assessment of Labelling in the Context of Special Education

Assessment options to address Outcome 1

1. What is the definition of labelling in psychology of exceptionalities?
2. How does labelling differ from categorization or classification?
3. In what ways does labelling affect our understanding and perception of individuals?
4. How does cultural or societal context influence the meaning and interpretation of labels?
5. What are the purposes of labelling?
6. How does labelling help identify the specific supports, services, and accommodations a student requires?

Assessment options to address Outcome 2

1. How does labelling affect people's behaviour and identity?
2. How does labelling assist educators, parents, and professionals in understanding a student's unique challenges?
3. How might a label affect a student's self-esteem and sense of identity?
4. How can labels support individuals by providing identity or a sense of belonging?
5. How can labelling lead to stereotypes or reinforce biases?
6. What are the psychological impacts of being labelled, especially in negative ways?
7. How can we reduce the harmful effects of labelling?
8. How do societal attitudes toward disabilities impact the perception and acceptance of labels?
9. In what ways can labelling restrict personal growth, creativity, or freedom of expression?
10. How does labelling contribute to stigmatisation in areas such as mental health or social identity?
11. Can labelling foster understanding and acceptance in diverse societies?
12. How can labelling be presented in a way that minimises stigma support?

References

1. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10648-023-09716-6>
2. <https://pressbooks.pub/inclusiveperspectives/chapter/labelling/>