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Conventional Theories that Also Apply for the Inclusion of Deaf Learners

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Abstract

This paper shows the influence of Bruner's cognitive theory and Bourdieu's field theory on inclusion of deaf learners. Bruner's cognitive development theory gives an idea that the deaf child benefits from learning that is shared by others. The deaf child also tries to process thoughts in order to find out the meaning of everything that he observes. The teacher therefore can serve as a facilitator to allow the deaf child construct his own meaning of what his environment provides. Bourdieu's field theory expresses the point that the deaf learner is part of the social reality as he indeed continuously relates with others. The people surrounding the deaf learner can influence his upbringing and potentialities. Social network shall be continuously built to support the growing membership of the deaf community. The theories of Bruner and Bourdieu provide a reservoir of knowledge leading to the greater understanding towards deaf as learners. Hence, the advocacy for deaf learners in an inclusive environment deserves everybody's consideration for promotion. The connection of theories and concepts in this paper can be used as a framework for inclusion of deaf learners.

Introduction

A cognitive theory and social relations theory can be combined as reference for enabling a deaf learner reach his maximum full potential. The brief discussion of these theories provided in the paper serves as a possible anchor for the inclusion of deaf learner. Relevant issues were also presented to cite the unique needs and support of deaf children in inclusion.

Cognitive Development Theory of Jerome Bruner

The modes of representation are the ways in which information or knowledge are stored and encoded in memory. There is an inactive mode, an iconic mode and a symbolic mode (Bruner, 1966). Enactive starts from the moment the child was born to about one and a half years old and he encodes the information by action-based and storing in his memory. It is like muscle memory so the child

remembers to make an action for a particular object. When the object is no longer present, the child would do the action once again. It is on this manner that the child learns every part of his experience.

The iconic mode of representation is when he reaches about two to six years old. The information is visually represented in the form of images and this explains why an experience is learned. The diagrams or illustrations could be of help to accompany the content of the experience. Most learners prefer to look at illustrations in order to follow procedures even the more complex ones. Visualization skills would then facilitate the child's potential for learning.

The symbolic representation takes place usually beyond six years of the child's age. The skill of the child becomes wider with his capacity to hold information in the form of a code or in a more creative manner using language. As words and symbols like numbers are introduced to the child, he progresses to the level of storing more information accompanied by his ability to verbalize it using language. Through language facility, his reading ability shall be developed with ease. The emphasis is given on the strong foundation of child's ability on the inactive mode when information is stored primarily in the form of motor responses. It is when a child learns through his motor competencies and therefore drives him to experiment with and learn to manipulate objects.

After birth, the child learns his first language, which is also called maternal language. It occurs naturally during childhood (Razalli, Anal, Mamat & Hashim, 2018). The deaf child learns the concept through observation of an object or an action, hence, repeated exposure could be considered an experience that is huge. When information is stored primarily in the form of visual images, in iconic mode, the deaf child too encounters shapes, colors, sizes, and movements. It is a reference for future identification and understanding during next encounter with his environment. The iconic mode should also be given utmost support to enable him adjust with tasks full of complexities. Bruner made this description since the child started responding with his environment until he continuously learns one material to another. However, the same experience exists among adults whenever they are confronted with new orientations. Whether for a child or adult, learning capabilities can be enhanced with appropriate and organized instructions.

In relation to learning characteristic under symbolic mode, it becomes more challenging experience because when letters and numbers form with meaning and requires higher thinking capacity, not all the words for example have sign counterpart. This is especially true in the context of using Filipino Sign Language. It should be taken to note that a well-developed symbolic mode is dependent on the learner's experience during the enactive and iconic modes.

Hence, when a deaf has little knowledge of sign language, the idea of formal education that is being done in conventional manner aggravates his unpleasant situation. Classes are facilitated by teachers who mostly are hearing and their training including their usual practice is to prepare and deliver lessons for hearing students. Then it becomes more complicated when deaf children get integrated in the class because even teachers suffer from doing exhaustive preparations. Signs and words have different implications for a deaf learner. These teachers may also fail to fully adjust because they lack knowledge of the culture of deaf children. At this point it becomes imperative to look at another theory which may provide an idea on how to adjust towards better understanding of a deaf as a learning individual.

Field Theory of Pierre Bourdieu

Bourdieu (2013) emphasizes his view that reality is a social concept. One's existence is dependent on social existence that is, when he relates with others. To relate with others is a reality and he defines himself and the world around him by charting the differences between observed facts or events.

In understanding how humans behave there is a need to understand in what kind of power relations they take part. He provides a working definition of this notion of the field. A field, according to Bourdieu, is a field of forces within which the agents occupy positions that statistically determine the positions they will take with respect to the field. The taking of these positions can be achieved by either conservation or transformation of the structure of relations of forces that is constitutive of the field. To define the field, a basketball court will be used as a representation of this field. There will be players on the court and they are called agents who are occupying positions. Each position is assigned with disposition or potential courses of action for the player. If a player for instance tries to drive and score for a basket, a player from the competing team has to defend in order not to allow the attempt for scoring.

Several factors determine these positions that the agents occupy in the field. A structuring structure or "habitus" was introduced by Bourdieu. Accordingly, it organizes practices and the perception of practices for all agents. The dispositions along personal history preferences of a person, placed in the context of the surrounding reality from a structure, that to exert an extent predetermine the person's education, upbringing, social action, potential courses of action, and even his past choices partly determine and form part of this structure, the agent's behavior in the field. Along this line, the role of the deaf learner as a member of a community deserves to be defined. Other than assertions of what and who he is, the deaf learner has to be empowered to introduce anything he can do and productively share to the community where he lives in.

Discussing again the representation of basketball, the behavior of a player is as if structured by the quality of his rubber shoes and jersey, his strength conditioning and training preparation, including the will to win the game. In the theory of fields, Bourdieu introduced "Doxa" as the second structuring principle. The doxa is defined as the totality of implied presuppositions which would organize action within the field. For clearer understanding, these are the rules of the game. Similar to habitus, the potential courses of action for the agents in that field are limited because of the presence of these rules. More likely, the set of rules will be shared by the agents in the same field to such extent as they agree that the game is worth playing. The basketball players, for instance, agreed to follow the rule that players should dribble the ball while walking or running. But in Bourdieu's version of the field, not at all times agents do not agree on the rules of the game. He further provides the measure of rules that positions occupied by the agents aimed at either transforming or conserving the structure of relations of forces in the field. Agents who try to change the rules of the game for their own benefit would take the positions aimed at transforming the power relations. Along this line and ensuring the dominance of these codes in the social universe, agents try to make these positions to be superior (Maton, 2018). Using the basketball representation, it implies that one player would consciously attempt to walk or run without dribbling the ball. The players who will not agree with this would assert to conserve the status quo of the rule and a struggle will follow. As players make use of their power or capital in the struggle the rules that favour most of the players will be imposed.

Thus, there is a need to reformat the old views attached to a deaf learner. The unwritten rule saying that he should be confined only to a house deserves a second look. He can relate with other people despite his limitation for oral communication. There are other ways by which he can express himself. After all, a deaf learner especially who knows sign language can convey the message of what he thinks or feels. Probably in a classroom where a sign language interpreter can be assigned, even perhaps combined with conventional learners, the deaf can absorb the lesson and relate with his classmates and teacher.

In a way, Pierre Bourdieu's perspective of social capital is that provides access to resources and better in social relationships. Social capital enables people to mobilize these integrated resources to facilitate action. There are three concepts that need to be discussed in Social capital theory. The first concept is resource which can be considered as anything that allows a person to get something done. It has no single identity because it can be an influential person, technology, any measuring device and the like. Imagine that a child needs a costume from an indigenous group. He has to wear it for the first time in the school's annual cultural festival. He does not know any indigenous costume but fortunately, his friend whose aunt is a tailor in the neighborhood does. More likely, he would opt to ask the idea of his friend concerning the indigenous costume that he needs.

Another instance is when he needs a tent to be used for a mountaineering event. In just one snap of fingers, he realizes that his teacher last year was a hiking enthusiast. He thought that his teacher would easily lend a tent once requested. Assume further, that this time he has two prepaid tickets to view a movie via wide screen. No one in the family could join him so he posted on his facebook account that he is giving out extra movie ticket to any of his peers who could join him watch the movie. The responses for the child's needs from the instances earlier stated can be determined by the resources in his network.

The second concept is structure of the network. A person's social network is composed of people as well as their relationships. The size of the network depends first and foremost upon himself, his orientation of liking and his capability to build one. The quality, deviation, and amount of resources he can potentially receive can be determined by both the size and type of acquaintances and friends that he has. One's connection to another person can be achieved by virtue of the manner, frequency, and intensity of others' introductions.

The third concept is the nature of the relationship between the person and others in his network. The value of the potential access to resources included in someone's social network he can actually realize can be determined by the quality of relationships. He may be friends with some members in his network. He probably exhibits respect for others or he finds others undeserving to be in his network. Trust and trustworthiness are important in relationships as well as norms, obligations, expectations, or feelings of closeness. It is not automatic that relationships in one's network can always fulfil a promise of connections. Because of the emergence of social capital, people build social networks imbued with an idea that there is hardly anything at present that cannot be linked, liked or shared.

Hence, the provision of various resources could be something that is silent as far as the deaf learner is concerned. A lot of times, he is not enjoying what a conventional learner used to enjoy. Because a deaf obviously cannot easily verbalize his thoughts, he finds difficulty building various networks. In fact even deaf people themselves are composed of different groups and besides, they

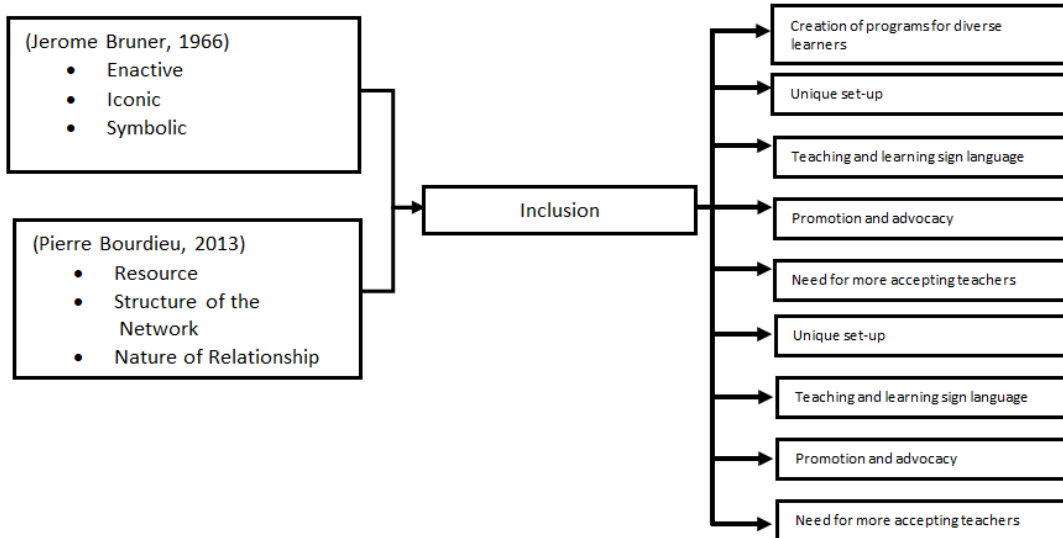
are using different sign languages. If only his connection is not limited which is greatly controlled by people surrounding him, then he could have a better life which he can also call part of social reality. One way of increasing the size of his network is thru inclusion. It is the combination of the deaf and the hearing in an environment.

Inclusive Environment

The crucial role of technology in pedagogy has been confirmed by various studies. To remove educational barriers, based on this approach, the effective learning methods have been developed. The employment of PowerPoint (a type of interactive media) presentations in classroom direction has expanded around the world recently. The effects on the students' learning and demeanors of this method have not been determined (Jamali & Izadpanah, 2017). To generate data from which to evaluate these interventions and design and implement appropriate interventions, it should provide guidelines for teachers (Brown & Byrnes, 2014). The knowledge and understanding on practices about inclusive education is vital in order for it to be implemented successfully. The multi-faceted roles of educationists in special education field include such as resource teachers, consultants, special education teachers, diagnostic teachers and administrators. They have to collaborate with psychologists, occupational therapists, nurses and many others in order to administer a program well (Ahmad & May, 2018).

Situations where children with special educational needs cannot benefit from their education and belong to a class might be caused by the lack of adequate additional help and attention (Lundqvist, Allodi & Siljehag, 2013). To ensure access for students living with a disability, some teaching personnel are still unaware of the inherent requirements for universities to make reasonable adjustments (Hearn, Short & Healy, 2014). Students must go through a process of disclosing, realizing, accepting, and documenting their impairment, which means entitlement to reasonable accommodation depends on students' request (Langorgen & Magnus, 2018).

Hence, there is an alternative approach by which deaf children can learn inside the classroom in a natural setting. In order that deaf learners' current situation would not turn to a more inferior quality of life the presence of technology can be utilized as interventions. Visual presentations using PowerPoint can always contain signs which can be recognized by deaf learners. However, these signs composed of pictures, symbols, including numbers or letters can be referred to some helping professionals in the school in order to say that the PowerPoint material is adequate for deaf learners. The collaboration among professionals as well as deaf students themselves shall constitute as stakeholders and therefore take part in the process of planning, designing, implementing and evaluating the program.



continuously relates with others. The people surrounding the deaf learner can influence his upbringing and potentialities. Social network shall be continuously built to support the growing membership of the deaf community. The theories of Bruner and Bourdieu provide a reservoir of knowledge leading to the greater understanding towards deaf as learners. Hence, the advocacy for deaf learners in an inclusive environment deserves everybody’s consideration for promotion.

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