

Experience as the Sought Outcome: From Foundational Skills to Inclusive and Holistic Learning

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Abstract

The early stages of compulsory education in England were focused on foundational skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, in the 20th century, there was a shift towards a more child-centered approach to education, emphasizing the value of experiential learning. This shift also brought about a more socially conscious view of special educational needs, moving away from rejection and isolation towards recognition and respect for the rights of children with SEND. However, despite this shift towards more inclusive education, exploratory teaching methods were not widely adopted in primary schools, and instead, a traditional, classroom-based, adult-led approach continued to prevail. Today, education is considered a basic human right and is seen as a foundational element for creating a more just society. In the spirit of inclusive education, a successful curriculum should be inclusive of all students, regardless of their academic ability, gender, or cultural background. The curriculum should be up-to-date, balanced, integrated, and take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of learners. A successful curriculum should also be grounded in a set of theoretical and philosophical beliefs about how children learn. Furthermore, the implementation of a curriculum should take place in three stages: adoption, implementation, and institutionalisation. It is crucial that the change proposed by a new curriculum is given time to evolve and become an ongoing part of the education system. In conclusion, the early stages of compulsory education in England were focused on foundational skills, but there has been a shift towards a more child-centered approach to education. This has brought about a more socially conscious view of special educational needs, but traditional teaching methods continue to prevail in primary schools. Today, education is considered a basic human right, and a successful curriculum should be inclusive of all students and grounded in a set of theoretical and philosophical beliefs about how children

learn. Additionally, the implementation of a curriculum should take place in three stages to ensure the proposed change becomes an ongoing part of the education system.

Keywords

Experiential Learning, Special Educational Needs, Inclusive Education, Curriculum Design

1. Introduction

The rationale for choosing this topic is to explore critical issues in curriculum development, particularly the role of experience in learning and the importance of inclusive education. The study's context is based on the historical progression of compulsory education in England and the development of forest schools. The discussion also delved into the role of experience in learning and introduced the observational research tool, the Leuven Scale of Involvement (LSI), which originates from an experiential education learning approach (Laevers, 2005). This tool was used to evaluate the effectiveness of experiential learning in forest schools, emphasizing the importance of experience in learning. Finally, the paper addressed the topic of the social model of disability, as opposed to the medical model of disability, and their influences on education. This discussion highlighted the need for an inclusive curriculum that respects the rights of all students, regardless of their academic ability, gender, or cultural background.

The current research sheds light on critical issues in curriculum development and the importance of experience in learning. It examines the historical progression of compulsory education in England and the development of forest schools. The paper highlights the importance of inclusion in education, the principles behind the development of a successful curriculum, and the necessity of a high-quality curriculum. Additionally, the paper introduces the observational research tool, the Leuven Scale of Involvement (LSI), which originates from an experiential education learning approach. Finally, the paper addresses the topic of the social model of disability, as opposed to the medical model of disability, and their influences in education. The study delves into critical issues in curriculum development and the vital role of experience in learning. The study's context necessitates this discussion, which sheds light on how experiential learning was utilized in forest schools. It begins by critically examining legislative acts that facilitated the formation of primary education and schools in England, followed by a review of critical legislation on Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) formation in England.

2. Key Terms in Current Curricula

Contemporary education theory and practice emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach, experiential learning, inclusion, and inclusive curricula in

education. A holistic approach considers the interconnectedness of all aspects of learning, including intellectual, emotional, social, and physical dimensions. It fosters a deeper understanding of the world, promotes critical thinking, and develops essential skills such as problem-solving and communication. This approach also encourages teachers to consider the whole person, including their background, culture, experiences, and interests (Mahmoudi et al., 2012).

Experiential learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes learning through experience, practice, and reflection. It is grounded in the theory of constructivism, which posits that learners actively construct knowledge based on their experiences and prior knowledge. Experiential learning has been shown to be effective in promoting higher-order thinking skills, improving problem-solving abilities, and increasing student engagement (Kolb & Kolb, 2009). The cyclical process of experiential learning involves four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Kolb, 2014).

Inclusion aims to provide equitable access to education for all students, regardless of their background, culture, ability, or identity. It involves creating an environment that is welcoming and supportive of all students, including those with disabilities or learning differences. Inclusion requires a shift from a deficit model of education to an asset-based model that recognizes and celebrates the diversity of students and their unique strengths and talents (Anderson et al., 2020). Inclusion has been shown to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities, promote positive social and emotional development, and foster a sense of belonging and community (Kearns et al., 2015).

Inclusive curricula reflect the diversity of the student population and include the perspectives, experiences, and contributions of marginalized groups. They aim to promote equity and social justice by providing all students with opportunities to learn about and appreciate diverse cultures, perspectives, and identities. An inclusive curriculum involves examining the content, pedagogy, and assessment practices to ensure that they reflect diversity and promote equity. Inclusive curricula can enhance student engagement and motivation, promote critical thinking and empathy, and prepare students to be responsible and active citizens in a diverse society (Adams et al., 2016).

Overall, a holistic approach in education that incorporates experiential learning, inclusion, and an inclusive curriculum can foster deeper learning, and promote social justice, and equity. These critical elements represent a shift away from traditional models of education that focused primarily on academic content and towards a more comprehensive approach that recognizes the complexity and diversity of students.

3. Devolution in Education in the UK

This section examines the education system in the UK, with a particular focus on the differences between Scotland and the rest of the UK in the field of outdoor

education. Scotland has implemented the Curriculum for Excellence since 2009, which includes the Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning policy. This policy advocates for outdoor learning experiences as part of formal education and emphasizes the importance of planned, quality outdoor learning experiences for every student. The Scottish government has also adopted a national program for “learning for Sustainability” to connect education with sustainable development, global citizenship, and outdoor learning.

The differentiation of curricula in the UK is due to the unique educational laws and circumstances in each of the four regions. Devolution of powers, state restructuring, and policy diversity has become a global trend since the 1970s. The UK resisted this trend until the late 1990s when the Labour government enacted devolution. However, Mackinnon et al. argue that devolution in the UK is more of a process than an event, with differences between Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England becoming more pronounced over time. The devolution model in the UK is based on a separation of powers between the UK parliament and the devolved parliaments, allowing for different territories to have different powers and arrangements. It is worth noting that the cited studies by Dillon et al. (2006), Higgins et al. (2006), Nicol et al. (2007), and Mannion et al. (2015) discuss the unique approach to outdoor education in Scotland. Additionally, the studies by Rodríguez-Pose and Gill (2003), MacKinnon (2015), Hazell (2000), and Keating (2010), provide insights into the reasons behind the differentiation of curricula in the UK and the devolution process.

What is the history of special educational needs in the UK, and how has the UK education system evolved to include children with special needs in mainstream schools?

Special educational needs (SEN) in the UK have a long history, and educational progressions as well as the increase of welfare acted as preambles to the integration of special needs children in the general educational system. The Education Act of 1944 made significant changes in the provision and governance of secondary schools, and during the post-war era, Local Education Authorities (LEAs) were entrusted with organizing special education along with health professionals. The Egerton Report of 1944 introduced 11 disability categories and broadened the access of SEN pupils to formal education, setting the foundation of a more pragmatic and moral commitment to disabled people. In the 1960s and 1970s, there was an increase of pressure issues by parents and critical literature in educational sociology, which reflected a need for social change in favor of civil rights. However, the social movements of that time focused mainly on inequalities due to discrimination of gender, race, and sexuality, while the SEND population remained marginalized. The Warnock Report (1978) was an important milestone in the history of educational reforms for people with SEN in the UK. The report led to the integration of children with SEN within mainstream schools and opened the possibility for them to attend mainstream classrooms with additional support from staff. Following the Warnock Report, the Educational Act of 1981 aimed at providing children with SEN the right to access edu-

cational provisions. In the early 2000s, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act promoted anti-discrimination legislation in educational settings, but there was severe skepticism regarding its effectiveness. The different interpretations of inclusion by educational stakeholders are reflected by the OECD and other studies.

Overall, special education in England went through an era of rejection and isolation of pupils with SEND in special institutions and asylums to the current trend of respect and acknowledgement of the right of SEND pupils for social participation and the inclusion of all pupils in the same class regardless of the student's particular characteristics.

4. The Formation of Primary Schools in the UK

One of the most significant areas of debate in education concerns the most effective teaching methods. For instance, some educators argue that traditional teacher-led instruction is the most effective way to teach students, while others advocate for more student-centered, inquiry-based approaches. This debate has been ongoing for many years, and while research has shown the benefits of different approaches, there is no consensus on the most effective way to teach. Some studies suggest that a combination of different teaching methods, such as direct instruction and inquiry-based learning, may be the most effective approach. A meta-analysis by [Hattie and Timperley \(2007\)](#) found that the most effective teaching approaches involve a combination of teacher-directed instruction and student-centered, inquiry-based learning. However, a more recent study by [Pekrun et al. \(2009\)](#) found that teacher-led instruction was more effective for teaching basic skills, while more student-centered approaches were more effective for promoting higher-order thinking skills

Another area of debate concerns the role of technology in education. While some educators argue that technology can enhance learning and engagement, others are concerned that it can be a distraction and may not lead to better learning outcomes. For instance, some studies have suggested that students who use laptops in class may be more likely to be distracted and perform worse on exams. However, other research has found that technology can be a valuable tool for supporting student learning, particularly in areas such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. A study by [Sana et al. \(2013\)](#) found that students who took notes on laptops performed worse on conceptual questions than those who took notes by hand, suggesting that laptops may be a distraction in the classroom. However, a study by [Kay and Lauricella \(2011\)](#) found that students who used technology in the classroom were more engaged and motivated, and had higher levels of creativity and critical thinking.

A third area of debate concerns the purpose of education itself. Some educators argue that the primary goal of education should be to prepare students for the workforce and to develop specific skills and knowledge that will enable them to succeed in their careers. Others advocate for a broader, more holistic approach to education that focuses on developing the whole person and preparing

students to be active, engaged citizens. This debate is reflected in the ongoing discussion about the curriculum, with some educators advocating for a more skills-based curriculum that emphasizes subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), while others argue that a more liberal arts-based education is necessary for developing well-rounded, critical thinkers. A study by [Conley & French \(2014\)](#) found that employers value both technical skills and broader, “soft skills” such as communication and teamwork. Another study by [Delgado and Hummel \(2016\)](#) found that students who were exposed to a more liberal arts-based curriculum had higher levels of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, suggesting that a more holistic approach to education may be beneficial. However, other studies have suggested that a focus on STEM subjects may be more effective for preparing students for the workforce (e.g. [Hill et al., 2019](#)).

Since the implementation of the Education Act in 1870 in the UK, which made education mandatory for children aged 5 - 13, there has been an ongoing debate about the best way to educate pupils. This open dialogue is mainly about the extent to which education should be delivered within a teacher- or a learner-centred paradigm. Early compulsory education focused on the “3R’s” (reading, writing, and arithmetic), but the Hadow Reports of 1926 and 1931 recommended that teachers provide experience and activities within the learning process. The Education Act of 1944 implemented these suggestions and established primary schools in England for infants (up to seven) and juniors (from seven to eleven).

The second educational review, published by [Plowden \(1967\)](#), focused on primary education and advocated for increased parental involvement in the learning process, experiential learning, universal pre-school education, and opportunities for the less privileged. Plowden suggested the use of the environment in the learning process and the need for flexibility in the national curriculum. The Plowden report stimulated a move away from formal class and traditional learning, and towards “group work, projects and learning through play and creativity.” The Department for Education and Science (DES) reported in 1978 that only 5% of primary schools used exploratory teaching methods. By the late 1960s, more formal teaching methods were proposed, and finally implemented into legislation with the Education Act of 1986.

The Education Reform Act of 1988 established the national curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 16, which included goals and evaluations of pupils at the ages of 7, 11, 14, and 16. Additionally, the quality of the learning process was indirectly assessed by the publication of pupils’ exam results and through parents’ school preferences. However, the relation between educational goals as set by the central government and the school’s curriculum remained unclear even a decade later.

Teacher training was conducted through a combination of specialisation studies through a university followed by certification in pedagogy during the 20th century. The necessity of the Education Reform Act of 1988 was justified by the

need to improve academic results and broaden the range of choices for parents. However, there was insufficient data to indicate low academic results of pupils.

5. The Importance of a Quality Curriculum

The development of a quality curriculum is paramount in promoting inclusive education, according to UNESCO (2009). McIntosh and MacKay (2008) suggest that research-based curricula are more likely to be successful, but caution that they do not guarantee successful application of the taught skills. Therefore, curricula should be flexible and adaptable to the learner's needs and capabilities, while being put in context to improve knowledge and skills. For students, the curriculum provides learning opportunities (Stabback, 2016) and sets the expectations for what they should learn (Chatzigeorgiou, 2004). Teachers also benefit from a clearly defined curriculum that outlines what is expected of them and their students. On a national level, schools contribute to the development of a national consensus on economic, political, and social goals such as social equity, inclusion, and sustainable development (Stabback, 2016). Socio-cognitive learning theory supports cultivating a learning environment that promotes mutual respect and acknowledgement among peers (Bremer & Smith, 2004). A curriculum is a collection of educational ideas and approaches to implement them in the educational process (Prideaux, 2003), and can be categorized based on its characteristics, such as compulsory or optional, child-centered or adult-led, flexible or strict (Chatzigeorgiou, 2004; van Akker & Nieven, 2017). Ideologies and mainstream values also influence curriculum decisions.

In summary, a quality curriculum is vital for inclusive education and should be adaptable to the needs and capabilities of learners, while promoting mutual respect and acknowledgement. The curriculum sets the expectations for students and teachers and contributes to the development of national goals. The categorization of curricula depends on various characteristics and is influenced by current ideologies and values.

Principles of curriculum development

Curriculum development is a complex process that involves debates regarding the political, social, and individual purposes of education. Scholars have identified guiding principles to assist in the process of adapting curricula to meet the needs of learners. The principles of a quality curriculum include up-to-date and relevant content, appropriate challenge level, balance, and holistic consideration of learners' needs. Inclusivity is also an essential aspect of a successful curriculum that recognises the differences among learners and encourages all to contribute to society. Effective curricula should also allow for learning differentiation, giving teachers the flexibility to adapt content to suit their learners' needs. The integration of skills into the curriculum should initially attend to literacy, numeracy, and pupils' wellbeing to decrease the performance gap and meet the needs of all learners. Implementing a curriculum should take into account the feelings of educational staff, and only qualified and skilful teachers should work on the curriculum change. Successful curriculum changes build internal ac-

countability and establish conditions for positive pressure and public confidence. Continuity of quality directions and leadership is also essential to keep curriculum changes on track. Curriculum implementation is a gradual process that requires time to evolve. The adoption phase, initial use and experiences phase, and institutionalisation phase should be followed to evaluate and integrate change as an ongoing part of the system (Armstrong, 2007).

According to van den Akker et al. (2006), a successful curriculum implementation requires balancing freedom and limitations, as a one-size-fits-all approach does not cater to the diverse needs of students. Schools must also consider their unique values and priorities while implementing inclusive and sustainable changes, starting from their vision of the future. Change is a process that involves care for the old and courage for the new, as well as addressing concerns and questions from all stakeholders involved, such as teachers, school boards, and parents (Hall & Hord, 1987; Loucks-Horsley, 1996).

A quality curriculum is essential for promoting inclusive education (UNESCO, 2009). McIntosh and MacKay (2008) suggest that research-based curricula are more effective, but it should be put in context and flexible enough to cater to learners' needs and capabilities. Cartledge (2005) emphasizes that a good curriculum improves knowledge and skills, is flexible, and involves real-life experiences to stimulate learners. The curriculum provides learning opportunities for students, guides their learning, and clarifies expectations for both students and teachers (Stainback & Smith, 2005).

Curricula can be categorized in various ways based on their characteristics, such as compulsory or optional, child-centered or adult-led, flexible or strict, open or closed, linear or spiral, and official or hidden (Chatzigeorgiou, 2004; van Akker & Nieveen, 2017). Ideologies and mainstream values also influence curriculum decisions. Cultivating a learning environment that promotes mutual respect and acknowledgement among peers is crucial, according to Bremer and Smith (2004).

6. Curricula and Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is crucial for all students, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as it promotes equal opportunities and social inclusion. However, it is important to acknowledge that each SEND student has unique needs, and a standardized curriculum may not be sufficient to meet these needs. Therefore, a curriculum that is standard for all students, but inclusive in its approach, may be more effective.

Social skills are essential for all students, and they should be taught as part of the curriculum. The promotion and cultivation of social skills should become a part of day-to-day teaching to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to develop these skills. Active engagement of learners in the learning process is crucial for inclusive education. Therefore, all students, regardless of their gender, race, or social origin, should be educated together in the same class. The implementation of inclusive practices in the curriculum can enable students with

SEND to access the school's curriculum fully. Social inclusion is one of the key principles of inclusive education, and it is considered one of the ultimate goals of education. According to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE), promoting inclusive practices requires teachers to demonstrate positive attitudes towards their students and learning, while responding to the students' voices and encouraging their active participation. Visionary school leadership, coherent interdisciplinary services to support students, and effective teaching skills are also necessary to promote inclusive education.

Overall, inclusive education is essential for ensuring that all students have equal opportunities and are socially included. By implementing inclusive practices in the curriculum and promoting the development of social skills, students with SEND can access the school's curriculum fully and be actively engaged in the learning process.

The Cambridge primary review

The Cambridge Primary Review (CPR) was an independent policy inquiry launched in 2006 to review primary education in England. Its main goals were to provide recommendations for early childhood education (ECE) and primary education and to address the challenges of globalization, diversity, and the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The CPR emphasized the importance of student well-being, engagement, empowerment, and autonomy as central goals for individual pupils. It made 75 recommendations for educational reforms in schools, including the adoption of the United Nations' Rights of the Child as the primary framework for educational policy, evidence-based pedagogy, and a more holistic curriculum that supports children's future living with experiences in the arts, humanities, physical and emotional development, and moral development. The CPR also recommended the extension of the foundation stage to the age of six and replacing KS1 and KS2 with a single primary phase from 6 to 11. Additionally, CPR promoted an enacting dialogue as a pedagogy of learning, and primary schools were encouraged to have a global perspective and develop an environmental conscience.

However, [Steers \(2014: p. 10\)](#) critiqued the revised 2013 curriculum as being "very limited" with an "over-emphasis on 'knowledge'" at the expense of skills and understanding. Steers also noted that the new curriculum took little account of students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The report from the expert panel, which was adopted by the DfE, also faced tensions with the British Educational Research Association (BERA), leading two members of the latter to resign ([BERA, 2012](#)).

Despite these criticisms, a second round of consultations began in July 2013 and closed in August 2013, with the DfE announcing that the new curriculum would be implemented in its final form from the academic year 2014-2015 ([DfE, 2013](#)). The final version of the curriculum was published in 2013, following improvements that emerged from the new consultation round ([DfE, 2013](#)).

Developing a successful development

Success is a subjective term and varies from person to person based on indi-

vidual goals and desires. However, engaging in fulfilling activities can lead to a sense of accomplishment and success. Coulling (2000) identified certain criteria for successful education, including the development of an inclusive ethos within the school and the promotion of positive peer relationships, while also acknowledging and encouraging a child's progress. Similarly, Porter (2014) identified three key ingredients for successful inclusive education. The first ingredient involves the collaboration between parents and teachers to meet the diverse needs of students. This collaboration requires trust from parents in the school system and a commitment from the school to the well-being of students. Parents play a critical role in informing teachers about their children's needs, and teachers require parental support to effectively cater to their students' needs (Porter, 2014).

Schools must strive for successful inclusive education by accommodating the needs of all students and developing effective leadership and problem-solving strategies (Porter, 2014). Collaboration between parents and teachers is a crucial ingredient, as parents provide insight into their children's needs and teachers require parental support to meet the diverse needs of their students (Porter, 2014). According to Coulling (2000), successful education is not solely based on academic ability but rather on the school and caregivers' support for children. Curriculum development theories have long focused on instructional content (Friesen, 2018). Klafki's "critical-constructive Didaktik" considered what learners should be taught, how, and why, emphasizing the concepts of "formation," "development," and "self-education" (Klafki, 1995: p. 23). Klafki's holistic approach to education, which places experience, culture, and the needs of disadvantaged members of society at the core of its curriculum, continues to be relevant in contemporary discussions about curriculum, education, and education policies.

The field of curriculum development is constantly evolving, and it is important for educators to stay informed about new approaches and research. Effective curriculum development requires a deep understanding of student needs, effective leadership, and a willingness to adapt and change in response to new challenges and opportunities.

In 1999, Hart et al. began a case study at the School of Education, University of Cambridge, which served as the foundation for the *Learning without Limits* (2018) project. This project utilized Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle to facilitate structured reflection on practice-based research. The case study analyzed education practices without deterministic beliefs about student ability, leading to the development of the key concept of "transformability" and a corresponding "transformability-based model" (Hart et al., 2004: p. 179). The Learning without Limits research team discovered that external and internal forces can impact an individual's learning capacity, creating the potential for learning in any context (Taylor, 2019). The team identified three principles that enable this project and are also present in the forest school philosophy: co-agency, the equal application of transforming learning capacity to everyone, and a basic trust

that teachers have for learners. Co-agency involves validating the decision-making of both teachers and learners when choices increase engagement and active participation in the learning process. The principle of equal application asserts that everyone can learn and improve their learning capacity. Lastly, teachers have a fundamental sense of trust for their learners, making it their responsibility to identify and overcome any barriers to learning when a learner does not demonstrate engagement.

7. Experience as the Sought Outcome

In an experiential learning framework, teachers screen their students at least three times a year using the 5-point LSI for each of the dimensions, based on real-life observations, as a holistic approach (Bennett & Leonarduzzi, 2004). Within the EXE framework, teachers are encouraged to focus on the interactions between themselves and their students (Laevers, Bogaerts, & Moons, 1997), ultimately aiming to develop children into active citizens who possess self-confidence, mental health, curiosity, expressiveness, communication skills, imagination, creativity, organization, and entrepreneurship, with a sense of belonging and connection to the ecosystem (Bennett & Leonarduzzi, 2004; Laevers, 2000; Liarakou & Flogaiti, 2007; Stavrianos & Spanoudaki, 2015; Stavrianos, 2016). However, it is essential to note that the centrality of experience and learning has been debated in philosophical discussions regarding ontological and epistemological considerations for centuries. According to Bhaskar (1998), “for most of its recognized history, the philosophy of the human sciences has been dominated by dichotomies and dualisms” (p. 13), and Kidner (2001) claims that this fundamental disconnectedness creates an interlocking system of overlapping dualisms that influence our thoughts and actions in significant ways, including civilised/wild, modern/primitive, culture/nature, mind/body, and more. In each case, the first term of each pair represents a preferred state or entity, whereas the second term indicates something that we attempt to distance ourselves from, forming a value system that appears to be based on factual distinctions (Sun et al., 2017).

Experiential learning aims to cultivate children into active citizens who possess qualities such as self-confidence, mental health, curiosity, exploration, expression, communication, imagination, creativity, organization, entrepreneurship, and a sense of belonging to and connectedness with the entire ecosystem. In this learning framework, teachers screen children in their classes at least three times a year using the 5-point LSI for each dimension, based on observations in real-life situations. The EXE framework emphasizes paying attention to interactions between teachers and children.

However, the dichotomy between the natural and social sciences has created a tension that impedes the advancement of experiential learning, as noted by Beard (2015). Philosophical and ideological arguments surrounding experiential education have a long history, as observed by Pepper et al. (1984). They also pointed out that education has overlooked the deeper experience of place, in-

cluding in outdoor education. Blundell's (2017) historical analysis of "Modern childhood" aligns with Pepper et al.'s argument. To further advance experiential learning, it is necessary to develop a multidisciplinary understanding of concepts such as "environment/nature, experience, and place," as stated by Stewart (2003). It is imperative to acknowledge that experience and learning have held a central position in philosophical discussions of ontological and epistemological considerations for centuries, as claimed by Bhaskar (1998). In addition, Kidner (2001) argued that the fundamental disconnectedness between dichotomies such as civilised/wild, modern/primitive, culture/nature, mind/body, and so on creates an interlocking system of overlapping dualisms that influences our thoughts and actions in significant ways.

According to Guba and Lincoln (2005), experiential learning (EL) aims to expand understanding and bring attention to diverse experiences and narratives (2005: p. 285). This perspective may be influenced by postmodern ideas that seek to increase participants' awareness of power dynamics, commodification, freedom, and responsibility. Kidner (2001) has also argued for the unification of nature and psyche, noting that nature is a condition of social life and not just a consequence of it (2001, in Sun et al., 2017). However, Kull (2009) warns of the tension that exists between experience and discourse, noting that the immediacy of experience can be lost when trying to conceptualize and analyze it too much (2009: p. 279). He suggests that softening this habitual activity requires patience and practice (Kull, 2009: p. 279).

8. Conclusion

The early stages of compulsory education in England were focused on foundational skills like reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, in the 20th century, there was a shift towards a more child-centered approach to education, emphasizing the value of experiential learning. This shift also brought about a more socially conscious view of special educational needs, moving away from rejection and isolation towards recognition and respect for the rights of children with SEND. The historical progression of SEND in England since the early 20th century, and policy-making positions, has been critically examined. This discussion highlighted the importance of inclusion in education, which is a basic human right, and a successful curriculum should be inclusive of all students and grounded in a set of theoretical and philosophical beliefs about how children learn. Despite this shift towards a more inclusive education system, exploratory teaching methods were not widely adopted in primary schools, and instead, a traditional, classroom-based, adult-led approach continued to prevail. It is now widely recognised that education is a basic human right and a critical element for creating a just society. In the spirit of inclusive education, a successful curriculum should be inclusive of all students, regardless of their academic ability, gender, or cultural background. The curriculum should be up-to-date, balanced, integrated, and take a holistic approach to meeting the needs of learners.

A successful curriculum should also be grounded in a set of theoretical and

philosophical beliefs about how children learn. It is vital to understand how children acquire knowledge and what learning strategies work best for them. Moreover, the curriculum should be designed to promote critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. It should also be tailored to students' needs and interests, encouraging them to take ownership of their learning.

Furthermore, the implementation of a curriculum should take place in three stages: adoption, implementation, and institutionalisation. A new curriculum should not be implemented without careful consideration and planning. The adoption stage involves a thorough review and analysis of the curriculum to determine its suitability for the intended audience. During the implementation stage, the curriculum is put into practice, with teachers and other educators receiving training and support to help them deliver it effectively. Finally, institutionalisation involves integrating the new curriculum into the education system and ensuring its long-term sustainability.

In conclusion, the early stages of compulsory education in England focused primarily on foundational skills, but there has been a shift towards a more child-centred approach to education, emphasising the value of experiential learning. Despite this shift, traditional teaching methods continue to prevail in primary schools. Today, education is considered a basic human right, and a successful curriculum should be inclusive of all students and grounded in a set of theoretical and philosophical beliefs about how children learn. Additionally, the implementation of a curriculum should take place in three stages to ensure the proposed change becomes an ongoing part of the education system.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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