

Facilitating Curriculum Access for Pupils with Vision Impairments: An Analysis of the Role of Specialist Teachers in England and Turkey

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Abstract : In parallel with increasing inclusive practice for pupils with vision impairments, the role of specialist teachers who have specialized in the area of vision impairment has dramatically changed in recent years. This study, therefore, aims to provide a holistic perspective towards the distinctive role of specialist teachers of pupils with vision impairments in different educational settings (including mainstream settings, special school settings, etc.) in Turkey and England. Within the scope of the study, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with 17 specialist teachers in Turkey and 14 specialist teachers in England in order to reveal the perception of specialist teachers regarding their roles in different educational settings as well as their perception towards their pre-service training. As this study is a part of an ongoing PhD research, the qualitative data through semi-structured interviews will be analyzed through using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory as a theoretical framework in order to provide a holistic view regarding the role of specialist teachers particularly in facilitating curriculum access for pupils with vision impairments in England and Turkey. However, the initial findings broadly illustrate that specialist teachers who work in special school settings have different understanding regarding their roles compared to specialist teachers who work in mainstream settings in relation to promoting independence for pupils with vision impairments. The initial findings also imply that specialist teachers in England and Turkey have different perception about their roles in relation to providing specialist advice and guidance for families of pupils. With the completion of the analysis of the study, it is hoped that the findings will provide an insight into the role of specialist teachers in order to provide implication for programmes which prepare specialist teachers of pupils with vision impairments.

Keywords : curriculum access, pupils with vision impairments, specialist teachers, special education

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