

Critical Review of the article: Is it RIP for the IEP? The future of individual education plans in an era of accountability

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Introduction

In this insightful article, Jennifer Duke (2014) examines the role of Individual Education Plans, aka IEPs, within the Australian educational context while occasionally bringing out references to show its difference compared to the IEPs of the USA. The author attempts to address the accountability of the IEPs in the context mentioned above while providing prompts to teachers to question their usage in the current educational scenario.

Duke (2014) mentions that the IEPs are methods adopted from the USA for addressing the needs of students with disabilities worldwide and are not included in the Australian policy context; therefore, they are less formalized.

Further, she emphasizes that the Australian education system has turned towards a standards-based education system for the pupils. As a result of this, the IEP process and its outcome have been questioned and doubted by several schools. Duke states there is a shift towards curriculum adjustments of the education over IEPs. She then extends her discussion to a story involving Violet, a school leader, to discuss the validity and use of IEP.

The article emphasizes the shift in focus from a specialized and individualized approach to a more inclusive, curriculum-based strategy, moving towards a broader trend of inclusivity and questioning the highlighted deficits as seen on the IEP.

This critical review expects to amalgamate the key points of this article along with discussions focusing on its scope, soundness, and writing style while examining the relevance and contribution to the field of education, especially in the content of IEPs.

Scope and Blindspots

The author explains that the IEPs are extensively utilized in the USA and that their accountability to ensure individualized planning for students with disabilities is higher in comparison to the Australian context, even though they are modeled after those in the USA. While the USA considers it a statutory practice in human rights legislation, there is no such formalization of the IEP process in the Australian context, raising concerns over its relevance in the era of standards-based education. Moreover, the IEPs are being reevaluated and, in some cases, entirely abandoned by certain schools. In order to address this, Violet's story is brought out to represent a broader trend toward inclusive education, challenging the traditional focus of IEPs.

Even though Duke's (2014) article thoroughly examines the Australian context's IEPs, it may need to explore their application and effectiveness in the global context. Therefore, it would be ideal if this international perspective could be addressed to a certain degree to understand the adaptability and practice of IEPs in diverse educational settings.

Soundness of Methodology and Analysis

The methodology utilized by Duke (2014) is primarily narrative and analytical concerning the Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) Violet, thus providing a solid foundation for her arguments. Violet's story is the case study which adds dimension to her discourse. The story reveals to the reader that there are issues related to the validity and effectiveness of the IEPs through the surveys and interviews conducted by Violet with teachers, teacher aides, principals, and students with disabilities to gather data and understanding on the topic. Through this, she has realized the need for more alignment between the goals and the actual needs of the students concerning IEP and the teachers' and students' unfamiliarity with the process. The methodology enabled the speaker and the reader to realize that IEP is mostly a compliance document in the Australian context rather than a

fundamental enabler of student development, which it is supposed to be. Finally, Violet could gather evidence to support her decision to replace the IEPs with a curriculum-based model rather than the deficits of students addressed in it.

However, the article could have been strengthened with broader empirical studies or a quantitative approach in a global arena to support the claims made by the researcher through Violet's story. These findings may be limited to application effectiveness in the studied Australian context, but the results may vary in other educational contexts. Further, Violet's hypothesis might have caused a subjective bias in the findings, thus causing the reader to be convinced by her thoughts.

Relevance and contribution to the field in terms of its impact

The relevance of the analysis to the field of IEP and its role is undeniable as multiple shifts take place in the field of inclusive education in the field of education and in the standard curricula. According to Mitchell (2015), inclusive education has become a global concept with various components such as vision, curriculum, evaluation, teaching, acceptance, access, support, resources, and leadership. This may show that such shifts are possible even with today's widely accepted IEPs. It could challenge educators and policymakers to reconsider the practical application of the IEPs in education, particularly in the Australian context. It highlights the involvement of the educators, policymakers, and, mainly, the students when designing the IEPs. Furthermore, this research article leaves room for future discussions on developing or adjusting more integrated and effective educational strategies for students with disabilities with the growth in inclusive education.

Writing Style Assessment

Duke's (2014) article is well-structured and contains coherently progressed ideas to create a logical flow, enhancing readability and comprehensibility. She has written in such a manner, maintaining her academic quality while being accessible to a reader who does not

understand the complex jargon associated with the topic. This approach is depicted in the discussion where she showcases the evolving role of the Australian schools' IEPs. There, she uses accepted and understanding terms such as "standards-based education" and "curriculum adjustments" to describe shifts in educational strategies (Duke, 2014). Similarly, she elaborates on any abbreviation she uses to make the reader stay close to the article and its discussion topic. Moreover, the narrative style of Violet's story is engaging for all the readers, including academics, novices to the field, educators, and policymakers. Hence, this article becomes an example of inclusive language and can be presented as a valuable resource to a diverse audience interested in educational policy and practice.

Conclusion

In summation, Duke's (2014) article provides diverse readers with a critical examination of IEPs in Australian education while suggesting reevaluating the use of IEPs regarding Violet's narration. Even though certain blindspots may exist in terms of empirical evidence from a global context, it does not fail the reader by providing relevant knowledge on the field of IEPs while opening up discussions for further research in educational policy and practice regarding inclusivity.

References

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