

Special Education and School Reform: A Comparative Analysis of the United States and Britain

Special education is a field of education that provides specialized instruction and support to students with disabilities. The goal of special education is to help students with disabilities reach their full potential and participate meaningfully in society. In the United States, special education is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which was first enacted in 1975. IDEA requires that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that is tailored to their individual needs. In Britain, special education is governed by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SEND), which was enacted in 2001. SEND requires that all students with special educational needs have access to a suitable education that meets their individual needs.

School reform is a broad term that refers to efforts to improve the quality of education for all students. School reform efforts can include changes to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school governance. In the United States, school reform has been a major focus of federal policy since the 1980s. In Britain, school reform has been a major focus of government policy since the 1990s.

Special Education and School Reform in the United States and Britain

by Jon Petruschke

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The purpose of this article is to provide a comparative analysis of special education and school reform in the United States and Britain. The article will discuss the historical development of special education in both countries, the current state of special education provision, and the challenges and opportunities facing special education reform. The article will conclude by arguing that there is much to be learned from each other's experiences and that collaboration between the two countries can help to improve the lives of students with disabilities.

Historical Development of Special Education in the United States and Britain

The history of special education in the United States and Britain is long and complex. In both countries, the origins of special education can be traced back to the 19th century, when reformers began to advocate for the education of students with disabilities. In the United States, the first special education school was established in 1817 in Hartford, Connecticut. In Britain, the first special education school was established in 1846 in London.

In the early 20th century, special education began to develop more rapidly in both the United States and Britain. In the United States, the passage of

the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 provided federal funding for vocational education, which included training for students with disabilities. In Britain, the passage of the Education Act in 1944 made it mandatory for local education authorities to provide special education services to students with disabilities.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the civil rights movement in the United States led to increased pressure for the education of students with disabilities. In 1975, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed, which guaranteed a free and appropriate public education to all students with disabilities. In Britain, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SEND) was passed in 2001, which replaced the Education Act of 1944 and provided a more comprehensive framework for the education of students with disabilities.

Current State of Special Education Provision in the United States and Britain

Today, special education is an essential part of the education system in both the United States and Britain. In the United States, approximately 14% of all students receive special education services. In Britain, approximately 13% of all students receive special education services.

The provision of special education services varies widely from state to state in the United States and from local education authority to local education authority in Britain. In general, special education services are provided in a variety of settings, including regular classrooms, special education classrooms, and separate schools.

The most common types of disabilities that students with special educational needs have are learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, speech and language impairments, and physical disabilities.

The goal of special education is to help students with disabilities reach their full potential and participate meaningfully in society. This is done through the provision of individualized instruction and support that meets each student's unique needs.

Challenges and Opportunities Facing Special Education Reform in the United States and Britain

Special education reform is a complex and challenging issue. There are a number of challenges that both the United States and Britain face in reforming their special education systems. These challenges include:

- Ensuring that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education
- Providing high-quality special education services that meet the individual needs of each student
- Addressing the needs of students with disabilities in a way that is inclusive and equitable
- Finding ways to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities

Despite these challenges, there are also a number of opportunities for special education reform in both the United States and Britain. These opportunities include:

- The development of new and innovative special education programs and services
- The use of technology to improve the delivery of special education services
- The collaboration between special education and general education teachers
- The involvement of parents and families in special education decision-making

Special education is an essential part of the education system in both the United States and Britain. The goal of special education is to help students with disabilities reach their full potential and participate meaningfully in society. However, there are a number of challenges that both countries face in reforming their special education systems. These challenges include ensuring that all students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education, providing high-quality special education services that meet the individual needs of each student, addressing the needs of students with disabilities in a way that is inclusive and equitable, and finding ways to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities.

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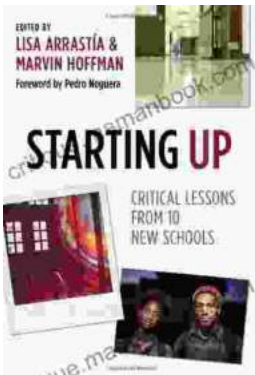
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