

NOISE AND TEACHER AND STUDENT STRESS: A FLAWED INCLUSIVE APPROACH IN INAPPROPRIATE FACILITIES?

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Abstract

This research has identified that the physical environment has an impact on teacher stress levels and student learning. This qualitative and quantitative study investigated the impact that excessive noise in the teaching and learning environment has on special education teacher stress levels. The study was conducted in a high school where school students with Asperger's Syndrome were included. The main concerns identified were the impact that noise had on students' behaviour and subsequent teacher stress levels. Using the Travers and Cooper (1996) *Stress in the Teacher Profession Questionnaire* [1], developed in the UK and based on Cooper's model of occupational concerns, teachers indicated that the facilities were a major contributor to their stress as well as to inappropriate student behaviour. In consultation with key stakeholders, an assessment was conducted of some of the teaching and learning environments was undertaken. The assessment included provision of a scope of works for refurbishments (limited to \$40,000). Subsequent to building modification works, a post modification assessment (at nine months after the alterations) using the same instrument, showed significant changes in teacher stress levels as well as significant changes in student behaviour.

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