

Creating Inclusive Environment in Educational Institution

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Abstract

The journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit all children. "Inclusion" does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child. As such, effective models of inclusive education not only benefit students with disabilities, but also create an environment in which every student, including those who do not have disabilities, has the opportunity to flourish. (Inclusive education is largely based on an attitude towards educating students with special needs. Essentially, it does not differentiate between students who are typically developing and students who are not. It is about educating all students, alongside same-age peers and peers with varying abilities, in a general education classroom. Inclusive education is reliant on student access to curriculum. Schools must create opportunities using activities, space and materials so that all students can learn. Schools need to provide a welcoming experience for all students, not just those who struggle, so that effective classroom strategies can be successfully employed. Putting your students' emotional needs first is important because without feeling safe and understood, no instructional strategy will be effective.

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Introduction

Inclusive Learning Environment

Assessing Student Learning. Inclusive teaching strategies refer to any number of teaching approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. These strategies contribute to an overall inclusive learning environment, in which students feel equally valued.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes. Research shows that when a child with disabilities attends classes alongside peers who do not have disabilities, good things happen.

Inclusive Classroom

An inclusive classroom is a general education classroom in which students with and without disabilities learn together. It is essentially the opposite of a special education classroom, where students with disabilities learn with only other students with disabilities.

Concept of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education means that all students, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses, become a natural part of the mainstream school community (Peters, Johnstone, & Ferguson, 2005). when a child with special needs is brought to the main stream school and the school makes necessary adaptations according to the needs of a particular child. Before discussing about inclusive education its important to know the concept of special education because special education gives a base to the inclusive education.

Inclusive Education and Characteristics

- Ø All students have a right to education in their locality.
- Ø Inclusive education is a human right issue.
- Ø Inclusion involves restructuring the culture, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to diversity of students in their locality.
- Ø Inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.
- Ø Inclusion in education involves the processes of increasing the participation of students in and reducing their exclusion from, the clusters, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Ø Inclusion is concerned with learning for all.
- Ø Inclusive education functionally means disabled and non-disabled children

and young people learning together in regular schools of the local community with appropriate network of support.

Aims of Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education aims to reform school environment rather than characteristics of children. It focuses not only on academic literacy but also on emotional and functional literacy for all children. It also aims at inculcating better educational practices in general school system which address the needs of all children. The main aims of Inclusive Education are :

- Ø To make teachers to be well informed with latest trends, techniques, methods, approaches to teach for all kinds of children.
- Ø To promote wider social acceptance, peace, co-operation and social value of equality.
- Ø To make teachers participate in decision making process and receive in-service education from time to time.
- Ø To act as catalyst to incorporate the goals of inclusion into national plans of action and regional policies.
- Ø To promote the full participation of persons with and without disabilities in the development of programmes, policies and guidelines related to the education at local, national and global level.
- Ø To stimulate research and studies related to quality teacher education, curriculum and pedagogy, aids and appropriate materials and school organization including adequate accessible facilities.
- Ø To develop teacher's professional skills through collaborative consultation and team teaching.
- Ø To help students and teachers becoming better member of community by creating new vision for communities and for schools.

10 Items That Can Make Your Classroom More Inclusive

Inclusive education is largely based on an attitude towards educating students with special needs. Essentially, it does not differentiate between students who are typically developing and students who are not. It is about educating all students, alongside same-age peers and peers with varying abilities, in a general education classroom.

Inclusive education is reliant on student access to curriculum. Schools must create opportunities using activities, space and materials so that all students can learn.

A Large Table

There is no piece of furniture more important in an inclusive classroom than a table large enough for small groups of students. Having a table allows the teacher to bring students together and provide them with various types of instructional programming that meet the needs of the group. In addition, students can meet at the table to work together on projects, have discussions or use as an alternate work space. The table is usually placed in a prominent area of the room, and facilitates many opportunities for students to be members of a group.

Technology

Technology is vital to the 21st century classroom. Not only does it allow students to keep up with our changing world, it provides accessibility to the curriculum for learners with special needs. Whether it be a computer, iPad, audio/visual equipment or assistive devices, technology can play various roles in the inclusive classroom. It can offer educational software, provide an accessible curriculum to children with special needs and help differentiate lessons. Highly engaging, technology appeals to most groups of students and supports inclusion in numerous ways.

Manipulatives

Inclusive classrooms provide curriculum for different types of learners. For some learners, they prefer a “hands-on” approach to help them understand lessons. Manipulatives can support this process by allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge, develop new levels of understanding and explore deeper concepts. Manipulatives can be easily grouped, placed into plastic containers and put on shelves around the room. Useful for all ages, manipulatives are an easy way to make a classroom more inclusive.

Visual Aides

Visual aides are, undoubtedly, very important items in the inclusive classroom. They attract student interest, explain an idea or help a student understand a lesson. Visual aides come in many forms and there should be a variety available in a classroom to facilitate inclusion.

Some examples include: schedules, posters, number lines, charts, diagrams, graphic organizers and different types of paper such as lined, plain or graph. A visual aide can also be a SMART Board, television or iPad. Inclusive classrooms always have numerous types of visual aides handy to help deliver, accommodate or modify a lesson.

Positive Behavior Management System

A positive behavior management system can support and maintain a safe,

optimal learning environment. It allows the teacher to highlight and reinforce the strengths of individual learners. In addition, it provides students with cues to good behavior.

Supporting student behavior, maintaining a calm learning environment and providing predictable routines assist in giving all learners optimal learning conditions. For a detailed description of a positive behavior management system used in inclusive classrooms.

High-Interest Leveled Books

Inclusive classrooms recognize that students learn in different ways in different rates. Not only do teachers want to provide lessons that address the varying abilities, but also provide classroom materials that all students can use. As well as textbooks, an inclusive classroom should also provide books that can be read for enjoyment. Offering books (or audio books) that are age-appropriate, interesting and can be read by readers at different levels are an important way of making a classroom more inclusive.

Job Chart

A Job Chart serves several purposes in a classroom. First, it helps keep the classroom running smoothly. Second, it enlists the help of the students and makes the workload lighter. Finally, and most importantly, it allows all students to contribute to the successful operation of the classroom. Class jobs are usually rotated weekly, with students participating in the best way they can for the betterment of the group. Often overlooked, yet very effective, a class job chart can include every student in the classroom in numerous ways.

Popsicle Sticks

Teachers need to have a method of choosing students for classroom-based activities in a fair manner. There are many strategies for this, but one simple and easy way that ensures all children in the classroom have an opportunity to be included is called Popsicle Sticks. This method involves putting each child's name on a popsicle stick (found at craft stores) and placing all the sticks in a jar. Whenever the teacher requires students to make teams, complete a task, or answer a question, a popsicle stick is randomly chosen from the jar. This strategy ensures that every child in the classroom has a chance of being asked to complete the task and done so in an unbiased manner.

Student Information Binder

Because an inclusive class welcomes learners of all abilities, it is extremely important that teachers track the strengths and needs of each student. Important

data such as assessments, observations, IEPs and notes can be kept together in one place. The teacher can use this information to ensure that all students are included and participating in the classroom program. A teacher can easily combine information into a Student Information Binder which will support the implementation of an inclusive curriculum.

Games

Games such as card games, board games and classroom games are often used by teachers to reinforce a new concept. However, they also play a large role in teaching students social skills and team work. Because game choices are endless, they provide many different ways in which a student can participate. Most importantly, games can allow students to relax in the learning environment, enjoy one another's company and form relationships.

Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children

The journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit all children. "Inclusion" does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child. As such, effective models of inclusive education not only benefit students with disabilities, but also create an environment in which every student, including those who do not have disabilities, has the opportunity to flourish. (Here are some ways in which inclusive educational practices build a school's capacity to educate all learners effectively.

Differentiated instruction increases student engagement.

One of the most important principles of inclusive education is that no two learners are alike, and so inclusive schools place great importance on creating opportunities for students to learn and be assessed in a variety of ways. Teachers in inclusive schools therefore must consider a wide range of learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.) in designing instruction. Certainly this enhances the way in which educators provide supports and accommodations for students with disabilities, but it also diversifies the educational experience of all students.

Academic supports help each student access the full curriculum.

In this age of accountability and high-stakes testing, it is important for educators to ensure that every student is addressing the appropriate standards and objectives across the curriculum. As such, inclusive schools provide academic supports (flexible pacing and grouping, reading and literacy specialists, tutoring, etc.)

that create a supportive environment for all learners. It is immediately clear how these supports help students with disabilities and English Language Learners, but inclusive schools can also better challenge and engage gifted and talented learners by building a more responsive learning environment.

Behavioral supports help maintain a positive learning environment for everyone.

Another important factor in effective inclusive education is the implementation of consistent behavioral supports throughout the learning environment. This consistency is essential for the success of students with emotional or behavioral disabilities in the general education environment, but school-wide behavioral supports also help to establish high expectations throughout the school community as a whole.

Respect for diversity creates a welcoming environment for all.

Inclusive education for students with disabilities can only be successful when those students feel that they are truly a part of the school community. This requires open and honest discussion about difference, and an institutional respect for people of all backgrounds and abilities. In inclusive schools, the establishment of such a climate benefits everyone by fostering an environment where students and their families are valued for who they are.

Inclusive practices make effective use of a school's resources.

In the past, special education often involved the segregation of students with disabilities for the purpose of specialized instruction. Not only does that model of special education in a separate setting deprive students with disabilities of interaction with their peers and full access to the curriculum, it can also involve duplicate systems and resources that are costly for schools to maintain. Inclusive education can make more efficient use of a school's resources by maximizing the availability of staff and materials for all students

3 Ways to Create Inclusive Learning Environment

Schools need to provide a welcoming experience for all students, not just those who struggle, so that effective classroom strategies can be successfully employed. Here are three tactics to consider when creating an inclusive learning environment:

- 1. Differentiating:** We know that everyone learns differently, so move past the "one-size-fits-all" approach to instruction and assessment. Try allowing students to engage with information in a variety of formats, such as websites, videos, and podcasts. Books, magazines, and periodicals provide rich nontech ways for students to progress through materials as well. Provide small group

or individual, direct instruction so you can tailor content delivery more accurately for specific learners' needs. Assessment choices represent an opportunity for students to showcase their understanding in various ways. Examples include portfolios, presentations, and oral exams. When we customize students' experiences in our classroom, we can build upon their strengths and help to develop and improve their understanding of topics with which they are struggling.

2. Healthy Grading: Stop taking off points for behaviors like lateness, unpreparedness, or talking out of turn. While these and other behaviors are important to manage, they shouldn't be used to mask or reflect students' understanding of a topic. Instead, focus on what the students *do* know and let that show in your grade book. The components of an enlightened grading philosophy include

1. Regular formative assessments in which quality, descriptive feedback is generated and personalized for each student.
2. Opportunities for reiteration that are embedded within tests and quizzes..

3. Relationships: The most effective way to build an inclusive learning environment comes from forming meaningful connections with your students. Simple, time-honored techniques such as not raising your voice and saying their names correctly are great ways to start building relationships. By taking some extra time and effort to view each pupil as an individual and truly believing that each student can succeed, you'll become partners in success.

Putting your students' emotional needs first is important because without feeling safe and understood, no instructional strategy will be effective. By building relationships in the classroom, students will feel comfortable enough to come out and tell us what is on their minds without having to wait for an opportunity from you to do so. Students want to feel valued and like they are a part of a larger school community. By forming a bond between you and your students and providing a sound educational framework for success, real learning will occur.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is largely based on an attitude towards educating students with special needs. Essentially, it does not differentiate between students who are typically developing and students who are not. It is about educating all students, alongside same-age peers and peers with varying abilities, in a general education classroom. Inclusive education is reliant on student access to curriculum. Schools

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