



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES

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Abstract

Inclusive classrooms are better suited to meet the needs of students with disabilities. "Inclusive education is a system that permits students with disabilities to be educated in neighborhood schools in age-appropriate regular classroom settings with non-disabled peers" (OECD, 1997 p55). Inclusive education benefits the student in three separate areas. Special education students have been proven to show drastic increases in academic skills, social skills, and psychological ability. The main reason for this is that children learn an enormous amount from each other that they can not learn from the adults in their everyday lives (Galís, Linscott & Tanner, 1996). School teams spend precious time creating the foundations of inclusive programs for students with disabilities. Careful thought goes into scheduling co-taught classes, creating balanced classroom rosters, training co-teaching partners, developing collaborative relationships, and providing appropriate supports for students with disabilities (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000).



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Introduction:

Education is the fundamental right of each child irrespective of his/ her caste, religion or special need. All students, irrespective of their sex, race, color, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability. I.....have the right to have equal opportunity in education (Klironomos et al., 2006) and to be considered as being an integral part of the learning community. However Teacher Education in this 21st Century still demand inclusive practices as many children are not getting opportunity to get quality education due to their social, physical and intellectual disabilities which is becoming an obstacle to achieve the main goal of universalizing education Teacher need to develop required competencies to teach such children effectively and understood concepts, strategies as well as tools that can be utilized to attain the goals of inclusion of children with special needs. The consequence is that regular and special education as separate systems disappear and are replaced by a single system that includes a wide range of pupils. In such way an 'inclusive' system for all pupils including the children with special needs where all study together. Inclusive education is a new approach

towards educating the children with disability and learning difficulties with that of normal ones within the same roof. It implies all learners – with or without disabilities being able to learn together through access to common pre-school provisions, schools and community educational setting with an appropriate network of support services. This is possible only in flexible education system that assimilates the needs of diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs. The urgency to address the needs of learners who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion through responsive educational opportunities was also pointed out in the Dakar World Education Forum in April 2000:

“The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All ... must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs...” (Expanded commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, para 19)

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:

Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement. Inclusion is about making sure that each and every student feels welcome and that their unique needs and learning styles are attended to and valued.

According to UNESCO, inclusive education hinges on three things:

- The physical presence of students within the mainstream schooling system;
- Their full and active participation within school life;
- Their achievement of the highest standard that they are capable of with the development of new skills.

Inclusive education has been defined as “all students being educated where they would be educated if they did not have a disability (i.e., in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood school) with necessary supports provided to students, educators, and families so that all can be successful” (Dukes & Lamar-Dukes, 2006, p. 4).

UNESCO's action in the field of inclusive education has been set explicitly within the 'inclusive education' framework adopted at the in 1994:

"... Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions." (Article 3, Salamanca Framework for Action)

"Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system." (Article 2, Salamanca Statement)

Inclusive education is a relatively controversial topic for many parents and educators. The idea behind inclusive education is that students with special needs will be placed in the same classroom environment as other students their age who do not have special needs. Inclusive education is educating ALL students in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood schools, with high quality instruction, interventions and supports so all students can be successful in the core curriculum. Inclusive schools have a collaborative and respectful school culture where students with disabilities are presumed to be competent, develop positive social relationships with peers, and are fully participating members of the school community. Within inclusive education, there are two main branches of thinking: mainstreaming and full inclusion. Mainstreaming is a process that allows children with special needs to enter certain standard classrooms after they show the ability to keep up with the rest of their peers. Full inclusion puts students with special needs in standard classroom environments without testing or demonstration of skills. Individuals that support full inclusion believe that all children belong in the same classroom environment no matter what. Inclusive education is not just for some children. Being included is not something that a child must be ready for. All children are at all times ready to attend regular schools and classrooms. Their participation is not something that must be earned. Inclusive education is a way of thinking about how to be creative to make our schools a place where all children can participate. Creativity may mean teachers learning to teach in different ways or designing their lessons so that all children can be involved. As a value, inclusive education reflects the expectation that we want all of our children to be appreciated and accepted throughout life.

"Children who learn together, learn to live together."

Inclusive classroom and teaching – learning techniques:

In the educational field, "inclusion" means that children with and without identified disabilities are taught together in the same classroom to the greatest extent possible. Services

such as speech, physical therapy, or assistive technology are provided in that classroom rather than requiring children to leave for "pull-out" services, thereby missing instruction. Sometimes classroom teachers provide accommodations or modifications on their own; other times, they co-teach with specialists so that all children can benefit. Inclusive classrooms are classrooms in which instructors and students work together to create and sustain an environment in which everyone feels safe, supported, and encouraged to express her or his views and concerns. In these classrooms, the content is explicitly viewed from the multiple perspectives and varied experiences of a range of groups. Content is presented in a manner that reduces all students' experiences of marginalization and, wherever possible, helps students understand that individuals' experiences, values, and perspectives influence how they construct knowledge in any field or discipline. Instructors in inclusive classrooms use a variety of teaching methods in order to facilitate the academic achievement of all students. Inclusive classrooms are places in which thoughtfulness, mutual respect, and academic excellence are valued and promoted. In an inclusive classroom, instructors attempt to be responsive to students on both an individual and a cultural level. Broadly speaking, the inclusiveness of a classroom will depend upon the kinds of interactions that occur between and among you and the students in the classroom. 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.

Why use teaching techniques?

“Even though some of us might wish to conceptualize our classrooms as culturally neutral or might choose to ignore the cultural dimensions, students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door, nor can they instantly transcend their current level of development... Therefore, it is important that the pedagogical strategies we employ in the classroom reflect an understanding of social identity development so that we can anticipate the tensions that might occur in the classroom and be proactive about them” (Ambrose *et. al.*, 2010, p. 169-170).

Innovative techniques:

1. Creative Teaching

Take the help of creative tools to stimulate creativity. Include playful games or forms of visual exercises that will excite the young minds and capture their interest. This is a time tested method to identify young student's creative abilities and encourage creative contributions. Bring aspects of creativity into all your subjects, be it mathematics, science, or

history. Think of ways to develop their creative ideas. Encourage different ideas, give them freedom to explore

2. Audio & Video Tools

Incorporate audio-visual materials in your sessions. Supplement textbooks with models, filmstrips, movies and pictorial material. Use info graphics or other mind mapping and brain mapping tools that will help their imagination thrive and grow. These methods will not only develop their ability to listen, but will also help them understand the concepts better. For example, you can get some oral history materials, conduct live online discussions or playback recordings of public lectures. There are a lot of smart apps for preschoolers that you can utilize to create awesome slideshows or presentations

3. “Real-World” Learning

Link your lessons to real world learning. Infusing real world experiences into your instructions will make teaching moments fresh and enrich classroom learning. Relating and demonstrating through real life situations, will make the material easy to understand and easy to learn. It will spark their interest and get the children excited and involved. You can make use of smart apps for preschoolers to make these sessions all the more interesting

4. Brainstorm

Make time for brainstorming sessions into your classrooms. These sessions are a great way to get the creative juices flowing. When you have multiple brains focusing on one single idea, you are sure to get numerous ideas and will also involve everyone into the discussion. These sessions will be a great platform for students to voice their thoughts without having to worry about right or wrong. Set some ground rules before you start. You can go for simple brainstorming or group brainstorming or paired brainstorming

5. Classes Outside the Classroom

Some lessons are best learnt, when they are taught outside of the classroom. Organize field trips that are relevant to the lessons or just simply take students for a walk outside of the classroom. The children will find this fresh and exciting and will learn and remember the things taught faster. Role playing is most effective for students of almost any age group. You just need to customize depending on the age group. You can even use this method for teaching preschoolers; just make sure you keep it simple enough to capture their limited attention span

6. Adapting Classwork and Homework

Students with varying disabilities may need adaptations to their classwork or homework. Possible strategies for adapting these types of work include pairing or grouping students with

various disabilities with other students who can compensate, allowing students extra time to complete classwork if possible, reducing the length of the assignment for students who cannot complete the entire task, and allowing some students to demonstrate their mastery through verbal responses rather than written ones.

7.Adapting Quizzes and Exams

If students' reading or writing skills are weak due to their disabilities, you may want to record classes as much as possible in order to allow students to study using auditory techniques. You can also consider allowing these students to dictate their responses (especially those students with visual disabilities). In addition, you can give some students additional time to complete quizzes and exams, hold some students responsible for less material, and provide notes or outlines for those students who have difficulty taking their own notes.

8.Make skills as important as knowledge.

Innovation and 21st century skills are closely related. Choose several 21st century skills, such as collaboration or critical thinking, to focus on throughout the year. Incorporate them into lessons.

9.School support

The principal understands the needs of students with disabilities.Adequate numbers of personnel, including aides and support personnel, are available.Adequate staff development and technical assistance, based on the needs of the school personnel, are being provided (e.g., information on disabilities, instructional methods, awareness and acceptance activities for students, and team building skills).Appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring individual student progress, including grading and testing, are in place.

10.Collaboration:

Special educators are part of the instructional or planning team.Teaming approaches are used for problem-solving and program implementation.Regular teachers, special education teachers, and other specialists collaborate (e.g., co-teaching, team teaching, teacher assistance teams).The roles and relationship of the school nurse and the paraprofessional to meeting the student health needs on job placements, field trips, and other educational opportunities outside of the school setting.

11.Provide Opportunities for Student-Centered Constructionism:

Engage students in the design process by creating a visual poster about design steps. Include the following steps:

- Think it
- Dream it

- Plan it
- Share it
- Make it.

Some of the specific classroom practices recommended in national reports are:

LESS whole-class, teacher-directed instruction

- LESS student passivity
- LESS prizing and rewarding of silence in the classroom
- LESS classroom time devoted to fill-in-the-blank worksheets, dittos, workbooks, and other “seatwork”
- LESS student time spent reading textbooks and basal readers
- LESS effort by teachers to thinly “cover” large amounts of material
- LESS rote memorization of facts and details
- LESS stress on competition and grades
- LESS use of pull-out special programs
- LESS use of and reliance on standardized tests
- MORE experimental, inductive, hands-on learning
- MORE active learning
- MORE enacting and modeling the principles of democracy in school
- MORE choice for students
- MORE time devoted to reading full, original, books
- MORE deep study of a smaller number of topics
- MORE emphasis on higher order thinking skills when learning key concepts and principles of a subject
- MORE cooperative and collaborative activity
- MORE delivery of special help to students in general education classrooms
- MORE varied and cooperative roles for teachers, parents, administrators, and community members when teaching and evaluating student performance

Conclusion:

Though there lie several obstacles and challenges related to teacher preparation to promote inclusive education it is not impossible to attain success in inclusive education in country through effective teacher preparation strategies. To make inclusion appropriate teacher preparation for inclusive education must be made compulsory in all teacher education programmes irrespective of elementary or secondary level. Further quality resources ,faculties

and facilities must be supplied to each teacher education institution to make inclusive education programme successful.

When everyone is included, everyone wins.

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