



GOOD PRACTICES: SUCCESSFUL INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS.

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

Abstract

This conceptual paper deals with the strategies that are good in a classroom. There are some suggestions given where the inclusive education could be implemented and made successful. It concentrates more on the positive outcomes and practices that would benefit the teaching- learning scenario. It also throws light on the importance and also some principles of inclusive education. To make inclusive education a reality what are the steps and procedures we can implement.



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Importance of Inclusive education: Inclusive systems provide a better quality education for all children and are instrumental in changing discriminatory attitudes. Schools provide the context for a child's first relationship with the world outside their families, enabling the development of social relationships and interactions. Respect and understanding grow when students of diverse abilities and backgrounds play, socialize, and learn together.

Education that excludes and segregates perpetuates discrimination against traditionally marginalized groups. When education is more inclusive, so are concepts of civic participation, employment, and community life.

These are the **principles** that guide quality inclusive education:

All children belong.

Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education is about children with disabilities – whether the disability is mild or severe, hidden or obvious – participating in everyday activities, just like they would if their disability were not present. It's about building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else.

All children learn in different ways.

Inclusion is about providing the help children need to learn and participate in meaningful ways. Sometimes, help from friends or teachers works best. Other times, specially designed materials or technology can help. The key is to give only as much help as needed.

It is every child's right to be included.

Inclusive education is a child's right, not a privilege. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act clearly states that all children with disabilities should be educated with non-disabled children their own age and have access to the general education curriculum.

Inclusive Classroom Practices

As general education classrooms include more and more diverse students, teachers realize the value of accepting each student as unique. Special educators understand that effective general education practices really are appropriate for students with special needs, and general educators often turn to special educators for additional ways to teach their increasingly diverse groups of students.

Some of the specific classroom practices recommended 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 modelling 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

To make inclusive education a reality we need to do the following:

- ensure that educators have the training, flexibility, and resources to teach students with diverse needs and learning styles
- ensure that kindergartens and schools receive adequate and sustainable financial support so that all activities and services are fully inclusive
- empower parents to assert their children's right to education in inclusive settings
- enable the entire community—including mainstream and special educators, social workers, parents, and students—to work together and participate in the design, delivery, and monitoring of education, thereby reframing inclusive education as a shared responsibility
- hold governments accountable for implementing antidiscrimination legislation, legal mandates for inclusion, and policies to remove barriers

Teaching Strategies

Deciding which teaching strategy is right for the child is not always easy. Here are some guidelines you can follow to help you choose which teaching strategies are right for the child:

1. Beware of simple solutions.

Because children learn in a number of different ways, there is no single method for helping all children with learning disabilities. Good teaching is intentional, systematic, and takes time.

2. Ask questions.

It is important to know whether the strategy you are considering has been effective with other children. Some of the questions you may want to ask are:

Has the strategy been studied?

Qualified researchers who will not profit by the results should conduct the study. The results should appear in respected magazines or journals, not as advertisements.

Who has been helped by this strategy?

The strategy should be helpful to children with learning disabilities of the same age, gender, and ability as the child.

Can this strategy be harmful to my child?

Consider whether the strategy will make the child feel comfortable and more independent or whether using it will make her feel embarrassed and different.

3. Trust instincts.

Many people may offer suggestions for helping the child, including teachers, therapists, and other parents. Listen to what others suggest but remember that you know the child best. Gather information, ask questions, and then use those strategies that seem to be most appropriate for the child.

Recommendations and suggestions:

What schools can do to promote successful inclusive education:

Consider inclusive education first.

Special education services can be provided in many different settings. Schools are required to consider the general education class before considering any other setting for the child to receive special education services.

Support each child's learning.

Teachers support learning in inclusive classrooms in three ways. First, they teach so that students with differing abilities and learning styles can understand and participate. Second, they modify assignments when they are too difficult. Third, they model respect and encourage friendships.

Increasing inclusion in elective classes, such as choir and art, by increasing the number of students with disabilities involved and engaged in these activities alongside students in general education programs. Again, buddying in these specialized classes is a very effective support strategy that benefits all involved. In some schools, servicing as a buddy can be counted as part of school service.

Creating a more inclusive UNITY Club to recognize and appreciate the differences between people. Unity Clubs usually focus on cultural and ethnic diversity. By including students with disabilities in these clubs, another area of diversity can be addressed. Schools also may wish to explore, run by Special Olympics, which provides excellent materials for unified and inclusive sports and youth leadership and service programs.

Implementing a cross-age Reading Buddies program; most often, this is designed for kindergarten and upper-level elementary students to increase their vocabulary, develop their self-esteem and social skills, and enhance their love of books and reading. Students with disabilities can be either the reader or the recipient. In some cases, older students without disabilities read to younger students with disabilities. In other cases, older students with disabilities read to younger students with and without disabilities.

Implementing a mentoring program where high school students with disabilities mentor middle school students with and without disabilities in an after-school program.

Developing inclusive Service-Learning Projects so that general education and special education students work together and reflect on service initiatives. Also implementing increased levels of professional development that focus on issues such as diversity and disability.

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