

BASIC TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION

The Special Education Model served us well in introducing learners with disabilities into formal community-based education systems. It taught us that these students can learn. They function adequately within common educational structures, though the Special Education Model sacrifices normal social interaction for a focus on academics.

However, time moves on and change occurs. A new model for education of students with disabilities, Inclusive Education, has developed in recent years.

As noted earlier, the Inclusive Education Model rejects almost all of the beliefs supporting the Special Education Model. The foundational belief is that learning with their typical peers and ways similar to these peers is academically and socially more beneficial for these students. Next to this is that typical teachers should and can be the central figure in the education of learners with disabilities. Inclusive education means that regular classroom teachers take ownership of all students in a class regardless of difference. The regular classroom teacher is the only person who can make all students feel that they belong. We know that all students perform more strongly if they feel accepted and that they can learn. teacher needs expert support. Coupled to this is that Educational Assistants will be of value, though directed more by the typical teacher than by a Special Education Teacher.

The overall result of these beliefs is that change to a quite different model of education, one that did not reflect the limitations of the Special Education Model, is considered appropriate. Inclusive Education is not simply an extension of the Special Education Model. It is a wholly different Model based on the tenets of Education for all

and social justice for all, and one which brings all students together for interaction and learning for mutual academic and social benefit.

THE BASICS OF INCLUSIVE THOUGHT

That learners with disability are much more like typical students than they are different cannot be over-emphasized. Each has a personal learning style. The regular classroom teacher understands the concepts of learning styles and how to apply them. A newer thought is that the strategies involved apply to all learners, including those labeled with disabilities.

Learners with disabilities wish to interact with other students in the classroom and school. They are stronger in some areas of learning and less strong in others, just as are the typical students. They all benefit from teachers who understand that all students gain from a carefully planned program moving from the known to the unknown. You all know that theory. I know it works for all learners. I know that they are eager to learn and to become part of the classroom and school community. They do not wish to be singled out for unusual attention. Singling out reinforces any differences that exist and creates two groups of students. Learners with disabilities wish to learn as best as they can from teachers who believe in them. We now know that regular classroom teachers can fill this role when appropriately supported.

These qualities exist in every student. Knowledge of these qualities is part of every teacher's professional preparation and teaching experience. Individual needs do not change them, though they may require more thought by teachers. When issues seem to be outside the classroom teacher's immediate understanding, it is a good idea to have support from others, such as someone with deeper knowledge of disability. That support

should not mean that another person (e.g. a special education teacher or an educational assistant) take over responsibility. That is special education thought. Inclusive thought is that special education teachers, parents, peers, and others can be part of a team under the leadership of the regular classroom teacher remains responsible for all students. The only person in the regular classroom who can make all students believe they belong in the regular classroom is the regular education teacher.

I now turn to thoughts and teaching strategies around teaching management found to be effective when employed appropriately.

BASIC TEACHING STRATEGIES

Students must be uppermost in the mind of the teacher. An effective teacher tries to understand how the students in her or his class can learn best. Then he or she plans an approach to teaching that fits, in general, how the class of students learns. While most students will be able to work comfortably within this general approach, it may be that some students have specific learning needs, which should be considered.

Below are a series of mini-teaching strategies on which the teacher might draw. At the same time, the teacher needs to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies and develop others. Good sources for adding to one's teaching repertoire for such students are other students, the family, other support personnel, and other teachers meeting similar challenges.

One last point. Always strive for strategies that keep all students in the class working as a group. Avoid special education thinking as a basis for your teaching decisions. Inclusive thinking should be the base.

What Works for Students

The following are teacher management ideas. Most would be beneficial for all students, not only those with diagnoses as having various disabilities. Some ideas raise student confidence and pride, some relate to student-to-student supportive interaction. None demand significant teacher time. None call for participation of special education teachers or educational assistants. All advance inclusion.

- Having another person available to assist the teacher when necessary. First choice is a nearby student.
- Working in small groups or independently on projects and other assignments.
- Having the classroom teacher personally check on how work is going.
- Working in a group with diverse abilities alongside typical students.
- Having chances to show strengths: music, art, listening, mathematics, sports.
- Having someone nearby to ask for assistance when it is needed.
- Having chances to work with a variety of peers.
- Being given responsibility.
- Being praised for work well done.

Dealing with the Curriculum:

A major pillar of inclusive education is that all students work from the same curriculum. Being seen to share the same teaching topic means sharing some of the same basic knowledge. This brings equity to the classroom experience. This does not mean that all students deal with exactly the same aspect of the lesson topic at exactly the same complexity, at exactly the same speed, with exactly the same expectations. But all students learn together in the same curricular area under the classroom teacher's

instruction, even though someone, students or others, are assisting the students with disabilities and any other students requiring additional support.

Teachers know that all students have different learning strengths and levels. They know they need to teach to the individual student in the context of the class. A thoughtful teacher automatically adjusts how he or she teaches various students. A continuing part of the role of teacher is to enable all students to progress. Teachers should watch out for special education thinking intruding. At first it is so easy to slip back into familiar ways. The teacher's objective is to enable the learning of all students. I refer to what the teacher does under the umbrella of differentiated instruction as routinely making enabling adjustments. I believe this term makes more sense to teachers and others than do terms such as differentiated instruction, accommodations, and modifications. The latter are terms created by bureaucrats and senior administrators, not teachers. In addition, many parents do not understand these 'fancy' terms, but most know what 'enable' means and what 'adjust' means.

Questions to Ask Yourself While Teaching

- What are the most important points of this lesson for all students? Which are minor points that elaborate a topic, but are not fundamental?
- How do my students learn best? Does anyone need a different approach, which supports his or her best learning?
- What Enabling Adjustments can I use in this situation?

Handling Enabling Adjustments

Enabling Adjustments are basic to inclusive thought. With a surprisingly brief work-up period, most teachers will begin to employ Enabling Adjustments as just one

more teaching tool to be used as required. Teachers will expand their repertoire of Adjustments as a natural part of what they do. Professional development sessions will add to their repertoire, as will chatting with colleagues. Special education teachers and educational assistants, parents, and other students also are valuable sources for ideas.

As noted, the teacher at any level of education is constantly making adjustments: Inserting a little extra challenge for those who can speed ahead; reducing the level of vocabulary for other students. Walking near certain students whose attention tends to wander. There are examples of easy adjustments designed to lead all students to the greatest individual progress. The term “individual progress” is of importance. It is the glue that binds all classroom teaching together. My experience is that typical classroom teachers quickly understand the reasoning and methods behind enabling adjustments. After all, it takes the teacher a bit of time to work enabling adjustments into her or his teaching repertoire. But it can be done fairly quickly, particularly if not too much is attempted to fast. Inclusion is a process. I have seen teachers teach this way in countries as varied as Canada, Malta, India, Hong Kong in China, the United States, Germany, and Italy. I also have seen what I refer to as enabling adjustments employed successfully in schools in Moscow and Ulan Ude.

Questions to Ask Yourself While Teaching

- What are the most important points of this lesson for all students? Which are minor points that might elaborations?
- How do my students learn best? Does this student have an individual learning style?
- What enabling adjustments would assist this student to learn more effectively?

- Is the curriculum the master in my classroom, or are the students and I?

General Enabling Adjustments

The following are examples of areas where Enabling Adjustments will be of value. This is a listing to be added to as teacher practice requires and need arise.

- Amount of learning: Change the amount of learning for this student. E.g. learn main points but not minor points; complete 4 questions instead of 8; write 3 sentences instead of 6.
- Time needed: increase the time allowed to complete a task. E.g. more time for tests, time before answering an oral question.
- Support needed: Individual attention level increased through use of volunteers, peers, or other person.
- Skill level: Adjust difficulty level, problem type, rules, types of supports used.
- How the student shows learning: Adjust method of exhibiting learning. E.g. written response rather than oral and vice versa, pointing response, pictographs, demonstration.
- Participation level: Individualize participation within student's capacity. E.g. colour map drawn and lettered by peers. Hold up a change of scene sign as part of a play. Collect papers or other student work. Clean chalkboards.
- Alternate goals: While teaching the same lesson to the entire class, individualize goals for this student. On a lesson on effects of smoking the goal for others is to understand the medical effects of smoking. For this student the goal is to know that smoking can make you ill.

- Alternate curriculum level: While other students are working to incorporate newly learned vocabulary into their written work, this student is learning the meaning of words describing some scene from the lesson.
- Vocabulary: Teach vocabulary before a lesson. Use peers or parents.
- Reading assignment: Record reading assignment so that student can listen to the information.
- Bolster understanding: Have a peer partner with the student by reading aloud.
- Use hands on techniques to reinforce lesson: E.g. role-playing, preparing different foods, use drawing, cutting and pasting colouring, dance.
- Social participation. Allow students to choose partners some of the time and assign partners at others.
- Don't make a big thing of adjustments: Use them with other students at times. Let everyone try to use them at times. Team up certain students who both can gain from the activity, teach different words having the same meaning.
- Understanding expectations: Repeat directions on an individual basis. Write directions out for student or on chalkboard for all.

Managing Attention Concerns.

Student attention to a lesson may wander for a variety of reasons. The student might be concerned about something at school or home. Being bullied at school, for instance, is known to occur with students with disability more than with other students. The student may not feel well. Feeling ill or in pain is more frequent with some students than with others. Not being able to understand a lesson may be a cause.

Asking the student, or checking with parents or other students may be revealing.

- Let students know of special events or changes of class routines in advance.
- Keep a daily schedule on the chalkboard and draw attention to it at various times.

Use student assistants to do this and other appropriate tasks.

- Limit the number of materials, questions at the same time.
- Walk past the desks of certain students to remind them to attend to the task.
- Provide recovery time after physical or exciting activities before starting next lesson.
- Support oral instruction with visual cues when possible.
- Organize students in small groups for part of the day.
- Have a nearby student remind peer of need for attention to task.
- Allow students to stand and stretch at the back of the room for a few moments.

Some students cannot take long periods of sitting.

- Ask student to review task instructions orally for you.

Management Plan for Behaviour: Observation is a Powerful Tool

Most students do not act out for no reason. When acting out occurs, it is not likely to last for a long time or be frequent. Usually there is a reason. At time, there may be medical needs, as with migraine headaches. Responding to being bullied may cause the behaviour. Often teachers may not see the bullying occur and only see the reaction of the person being bullied. Being aware of possible bullies helps. Other students may be able to tell teachers when they see that a student is likely to act out. Frustration with schoolwork that is too difficult might be a cause. However, the best tool is the observant eye of the teacher. Once the source of the inappropriate behaviour is known, the teacher can intervene as appropriate.

Step 1: Identify behaviours of concern.

List inappropriate behaviours.

Focus on 1 or 2 central behaviours. You cannot address all at the same time.

Step 2: Observe target students in various settings.

Watch for what sets off behaviour.

Compare behaviour to what is happening at the time.

Step 3: Observe what other students are doing.

Are the behaviours the same?

Why? Why not?

Step 4: Can you put things together and anticipate behaviour?

Can you avoid triggers for behaviour?

Other people, including parent and other students, can be helpful.

Participation with Other Students

Collaboration among students is increasing internationally as a teaching tool. It benefits all students and is of particular value for some. The days of the quiet classroom are passing in many jurisdictions. Now the idea is for quiet when that is suitable and oral and physical cooperation when that fits. This works at all levels of education, though as education continues, the appropriateness of one or the other will increase or decrease according to the subjects of study.

- Neighbour Share: Allow quick chats between students to ask brief questions, clarify a point, give advice on how to approach a lesson.
- Homework Friends: Set a time for 2 students to compare homework efforts, discuss any problems, explain the approach to questions, clarify concepts.

- Know – Want – Learn Groups: (Use when introducing a new topic.) Encourage students to review together what they already know about a topic, state what they need to learn now, present the topic for study, review together what they have learned.
- Test Review Groups: (Use when a test is coming up.) Cooperatively review notes/text on vocabulary, key topics, significant events. Quiz each other.
- Drill Partners: (Use to embed knowledge using back and forth practice.) Students ask each other questions on mathematic facts, science facts, literature readings, important dates, spelling, vocabulary.
- Pairing for Book Reviews: (Use to expand range of readings and general knowledge.) Students interview each other about books they have read, main characters, plot significant events.
- Reading and Listening Partners: (Use to increase reading comprehension.) Having completed an assignment, partners read what they have written to each other to check comprehension, story line, clarify points, enrich vocabulary.

Mathematics Adaptations

Certain subjects may call for specific types of support for some students but not all. Mathematics is used here as an example.

- Teach key terms and vocabulary in advance. (Use other students, parents, others).
- Create a terms/vocabulary dictionary appropriate to topics being learned. Review with partner.
- Tape numberlines or other routinely needed information to student desks for quick reference.

- Real Situations and Materials. Use real money, measure aspects of the classroom, play card games dependent on math knowledge. Have parents shop with children and to involve them in comparing prices, how much can be saved, and whether they have enough money.
- Simplify language when teaching mathematics. Be as concrete as possible.
- Set up a Mathematics Friend (partner or helper) among classmates.
- Use calculators.

Homework

Academic homework is routine through the school years for typical learners. It should be routine for those with disabilities as well. However, teachers must consider the type and amount of homework for some students. Also, parents should be encouraged to monitor homework without actually doing it for the students. Some advice to parents here might be of value.

- Consider attention span of student when assigning homework. Work with parents to set up homework period with routine breaks.
- Set clear, simple directions. Have peer orally check understanding and to write out directions if necessary.
- Provide a few examples of types of questions and answer to refresh knowledge in student's mind.
- State a timeframe for homework with student and parents.
- Individualize amount of homework according to student characteristics.
- Allow alternative homework formats. Questions read aloud to student by parents. Responding recorded format rather than in writing.

- Encourage choosing which question to do first, second, etc.
- Pair student with a homework friend.

Enabling Adjustments Checklist

Preparing Student to Follow Directions.

- Use a prearranged signal to gain attention before giving instructions.
- Make certain student is attending and facing you when instructions are given.
- Change your tone of voice to alert student to sustain attention.
- Provide student with a schedule for each day.
- Set up partnerships among students.

Student Requires Help While Instructions are Given. (Use peers to assist.)

- Combine oral directions, pictures, simple vocabulary, diagrams, physical cues.
- Provide a set of written or recorded directions.
- Describe critical parts of task individually.
- Model expected behaviour.
- Have student repeat task instructions.
- Simplify and repeat if necessary.
- Break task down into smaller parts if necessary.

Student needs help following instructions

- Set up a peer to assist.
- Walk by the student's desk to see if more direction is necessary.
- Go through instructions with student.
- Ask student to repeat each instruction and then complete it.

POINTS TO THINK ABOUT RE. TASKS FOR INCLUDING

	POINT	YES	NO	?
1	Are nondisabled peers in the setting?			
2	How many learners with disabilities are in setting?			
3	Will nondisabled peers & disabled peers interact ?			
4	Is a minimum of peer to peer assistance needed?			
5	Can natural and nonintrusive supports be used?			
6	Does the setting match the age of the student?			
7	Are the materials matched to student's age?			
8	Is the activity appropriate for student age?			
9	Is activity familiar to the student?			
10	Can the student start, or be taught to start, activity?			
11	Need the task be adjusted to facilitate participation?			
12	Can the materials be adjusted for participation?			
13	Is special equipment needed?			
14	Is peer support available?			
15	Is the setting accessible?			
16	Is the activity based on the general curriculum?			
17	Is support needed from a special education teacher or other person?			
18				
19				
20				

Teachers may wish to add to this checklist to ensure that important aspects of learning for all are covered.