

**BASIC PEDAGOGY OF INCLUDING  
LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES  
(And anyone else)**

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## **CLASSROOM CULTURE**

Every classroom has its own culture. Those inside the classroom, the teacher and the learners, create their culture. While similar in many ways to the culture of other classrooms, the culture of any individual classroom is unique.

The leader in creating the culture of the classroom is the teacher. It is this person who sets the tone, whether it be positive and encouraging or negative and destructive.

Think back of the various classrooms of which you have been a part, including those you are in this year. What in the leadership of your teachers meets your needs and abilities as a person and as a learner?

- We all need a classroom culture where we all are accepted, where we all are seen as learners, and where we all can participate.
- Difference in race, ethnicity, and gender do not alter this need.
- Neither does difference in ability.

## **THE PREFERRED MODEL OF EDUCATION FOR ALL (EFA)**

EFA is the call of the United Nations, UNICEF, UNESCO, and other world-level organizations pursuing equity in education for all learners to be included in education beside their peers. Inclusion is becoming the choice of many nations. It is the way the world is turning in terms of education.

It is argued that inclusion of all learners, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and ability is more in keeping with social justice and students' rights than are other approaches to education. Those who support inclusion of learners with disabilities believe it is the right of these students to be educated in the company of their typical peers. The inclusive approach is seen as resulting in higher social and academic achievement for all, advancing citizenship, and leading to stronger community.

## **THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

- All children, youth, and adults are learners.
- All learners have a right to a place in the regular classrooms of community schools.
- All learners have individual abilities and needs which should be recognized.
- Teachers and learners are colleagues in the act of learning.
- Regular teachers should take the lead in the education of every learner in their classrooms.
- Regular teachers have the knowledge to take the lead, though they benefit from the support of administrators, specialist teachers, parents, and their students.
- The learning of all students should be based in the regular curriculum.

## **ADAPTING CURRICULUM FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION-A PROCESS**

- 1. Identify educational goals for students within the general education program. The curriculum is best viewed as a fluid continuum and not as segmented by grade levels and expectations.**
- 2. Agree with teaching colleagues, parents, and others on the teaching content derived from the general curriculum**
- 3. State your expectations for student performance on these goals.**
- 4. Consider your teaching approach.**
  - a. Can you teach this learner as you would other students?**
  - b. If yes, go ahead.**
  - c. If not, keep reading.**
- 5. Consider enabling adjustments (EAs) to support teaching**
  - Amount of learning**
  - Time needed**
  - Support needed**
  - Skill level**
  - Output**
  - Participation level**
  - Alternate goals**
  - Alternate curriculum**
- 6. Assess progress through interaction with learner and her/his work, checking with other involved personnel, and checking with parents.**
- 7. Not working out? Consider further adjustments with input from others involved in the learner's education.**

## **AREAS OF ENABLING ADJUSTMENTS**

- **Amount of learning**  
Expectations for any student are based on the individual's abilities and needs. Adjust amount of learning in keeping with needs and abilities. E.g. learn the main points of a history lesson; do 4 math questions instead of 8.
- **Time Needed**  
Increase the time needed to complete a task. E.g. more time for tests; give time for thought before answering an oral question.
- **Support Needed**

Individual attention level increased through teacher, educational assistant, volunteer, or other person time. E.g. tape record lesson; teach needed vocabulary prior to lesson; read lesson content aloud to student.

- The teacher continues to teach all learners. None are turned over to another person for their education.
- **Skill Level**  
Adjust difficulty level, problem, type, rules, types of support used in keeping with needs, abilities, and learning style. E.g. rewrite material at student's level.
- **Output Method**  
Adjust method of showing learning. E.g. written response rather than oral and vice versa, pointing response, pictographs, computer, demonstration of skill.
- **Participation Level**  
Individualize participation and contribution within a group keeping within student's capacity. E.g. colour map drawn and lettered by peers; be scene manager in theatre classes; write-up discussion notes on computer for group.
- **Alternate Goals**  
While teaching the same lesson to the entire class, individualize goals for this student. E.g. On a lesson smoking the goal for others is to understand the medical effects of smoking, for this student the goal is to know that smoking is harmful.
- **Alternate Curriculum**  
Work at different level of fluid curriculum. While class is beginning algebraic equations, student is working of word problems requiring basic math skills. While other students are working to incorporate newly learned vocabulary into their writing, this student is learning words important in understanding the immediate environment.

## **COLLABORATIVE GROUPS**

### **Neighbour Share**

- Quick chats between students to clarify a point, give a direction, ask a question, or otherwise clarify a task.

### **Homework Friends**

- Checking homework together. Compare homework efforts, discuss when different answers are obtained, explain problem process, share ideas, clarify concepts.

### **Know-Want-Learn Groups**

- **Encourage students to review what they already know about a topic, state what they need to learn, study the topic together, review together (Useful when approaching a new topic.)**

### **Test Review Group**

- **Use when a test is coming up. Cooperatively review notes, text on key topics. Focus on significant events, vocabulary, or content. Use highlighting for emphasis.**

### **Drill Partner**

- **Use to embed knowledge using back and forth practice on math facts, vocabulary, science facts, dates, spelling, etc.**

### **Book/Play Review Partners**

- **Use to learn more about different books. Students interview each other about what they have read, main characters, plot, significant events.**

### **Reading and Listening Partners**

- **Use to increase reading comprehension and listening skills. Have completed a written assignment partners read to each other what they have written to check story line, clarity, organization, content, vocabulary richness.**

### **CLASS TONE (What works for teachers)**

- **Be friendly. Recognize your students as people with outside interests and lives.**
- **Model acceptance of all students and all efforts. Whether you are aware of it or not, your students do look to you for leadership.**
- **Talk to your class on the concept that equal treatment is not always fair. Some learners are at different points than are others. Equity means treating all individuals in terms of their unique abilities and needs.**
- **Let your students know you are a committed teacher and that you enjoy your work, though it can be challenging at times.**
- **Model cooperation by working with others.**
- **Understand that being in a regular class can be scary for students who have been educated separately and who have not had the model of typical peers with regard to behaviour and application to task.**
- **Underline for students, parents, and others that all learning is academic and challenging at one's level of learning. There are no better or worse learners.**

- **Work with class on the concept that working with diverse others is a valuable skill that will help everyone in their lives.**
- **Talk to your students about the idea of individual differences and learning styles. Explain your teaching style and how you adjust it for those students who learn best from a different approach.**

**Gary Bunch**