

Teaching Strategies for Inclusive Classroom

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With the majority of today's special education students, we are not dealing with students with physical or mental incompetence, we are dealing with children who do not learn what we teach or do not like the way we teach it. So we have to improve what we teach and make it useable to students and we have to improve how we teach it.

Dr. William Glasser

In its broadest and all encompassing meaning, inclusive education, as an approach, seeks to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion. It implies all learners, young people - 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 a flexible education system that assimilates the needs of a diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs. It aims at all stakeholders in the system (learners, parents, and community, teachers, and administrators, policy makers) to be comfortable with diversity and see it as a challenge rather than a problem.

The students that are most commonly included are those with physical disabilities that have no or little effect on their academic work, students with all types of mild disabilities, and students whose disabilities require relatively few specialized services.

Research has shown that Inclusive education results in improved social development and academic outcomes for all learners. It leads to the development of social skills and better social interactions because learners are exposed to real environment in which they have to interact with other learners each one having unique characteristics, interests and abilities. The non-disabled peers adopt positive attitudes and actions towards learners with disabilities as a result of studying together in an inclusive classroom. Thus, inclusive education lays the foundation to an inclusive society accepting, respecting and celebrating diversity.

This inclusive approach of including teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms challenges teachers, schools, and districts to re-examine traditional beliefs and practices traditions and beliefs to determine which are consistent with the intent of the IDEA. In addition, new strategies must be developed to address the unique challenges of the inclusive education and ensure the success of both special and general education students. This paper is designed to help educators through this process by presenting a compendium of teaching strategies including that research has shown effective in regular classrooms and those that have been proven effective in the instruction of students with intellectual, emotional, or physical challenges.

Assumptions behind Inclusive Education

Assumptions of inclusive education are opposite to integrated education. Inclusive Education assumes that changes the system to fit the child. It is essential to addresses all types of individual needs, not just disability. Teachers and schools are held responsible for children's learning. It focuses on flexibility of curriculum, teacher training and change in environmental. **Failure is the problem with the system not with the child.** It is quite essential to assumes that all children can learn and that all children need their learning to be supported in diverse ways.

In this model of inclusive education, it is not the Child, but the education system, which is seen as a problem. Therefore, it is the system (with all its components) which should be

Changed, modified & made flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners, including children with disabilities. The success is therefore on the flexibility of the system. It focuses on the environment, as the “disabling” cause because it fails to provide appropriate access to equal opportunities for all persons to participate fully in social life. Though integrated education of differently able children has gained momentum all over the country since 1974, there are some other possibilities too for these children to get education. For example, the NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) offers education which have the advantage of being specially adopted to the needs of every child as well as aimed at giving the child every opportunity to progress at his/her pace. Another example is alternative schooling and community-based rehabilitation programmers. Inclusive education denotes “all children in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. There is a feeling of belongingness among the children, teachers and other functionaries. Inclusive education is a growing concept, which is continually expanding to achieve the target of Education for all. Some focuses on inclusion as it relates to different disabilities and difficulties in learning,

Westwood found that the characteristics of effective teachers included those listed below (Westwood 2003).

Effective teachers tend to have well managed classrooms, provide students with the maximum opportunity to learn, maintain an academic focus, have high expectations of what students can achieve, adopt a style that is work-oriented, show enthusiasm, use strategies to keep students on task, motivated, and productive, impose structure on the content to be covered, present new material in a step-by-step manner, employ direct and explicit instructional procedures, use clear instructions and explanations, demonstrate appropriate task-approach strategies, monitor closely what students are doing, adjust instruction to individual needs; re-teach when necessary; provide Frequent feedback to students, use a variety of resources, spent a significant amount of time in interactive, whole-class teaching.

The special teaching strategies identified as proven effective for teaching children with learning and developmental difficulties (Westwood 2003):

Abundant guided practice, Students are reinforced through descriptive praise and encouragement, High levels of student participation and engagement, Fast pacing of lessons, Positive student-to-student interactions and peer assistance, Frequent student-teacher interactions, Carefully controlling and sequencing the curriculum content to be Studied, Providing abundant opportunities for practice and application, Ensuring high levels of participation on the part of all students, Using interactive group teaching, Modeling by the teacher of effective ways of completing school tasks, Teaching children how to best attempt new learning tasks.

This paper will keep in mind the needs of teachers in today’s inclusive classrooms presenting a variety of teaching strategies that have been proven effective in educating both general and special education students.

Inclusion in education is an approach to educating students with special educational needs. Under the inclusion model, students with special needs spend most or all of their time with non-disabled students.

Inclusive education differs from previously held notions of ‘integration’ and ‘mainstreaming’, which tended to be concerned principally with disability and ‘special educational needs’ and implied learners changing or becoming ‘ready for’ or deserving of accommodation by the mainstream. By contrast, inclusion is about the child’s right to participate and the school’s duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from students without disabilities. A premium is placed upon full participation by students with disabilities and upon respect for their social, civil, and educational rights.

Students in an inclusive classroom are generally placed with their chronological age-mates, regardless of whether the students are working above or below the typical academic level for their age. Also, to encourage a sense of belonging, emphasis is placed on the value of friendships. Teachers often nurture a relationship between a student with special needs and a same-age student without a special educational need.

Teachers use a number of techniques to help build classroom communities:

- Using games designed to build community
- Involving students in solving problems

Preeti Singh

- Sharing songs and books that teach community
- Openly dealing with individual differences by discussion
- Assigning classroom jobs that build community
- Teaching students to look for ways to help each other
- Utilizing physical therapy equipment such as standing frames, so students who typically use wheelchairs can stand when the other students are standing and more actively participate in activities
- Encouraging students to take the role of teacher and deliver instruction (e.g. read a portion of a book to a student with severe disabilities)
- Focusing on the strength of a student with special needs

If you are teaching in an inclusive classroom, the challenges can seem overwhelming. These teaching strategies for inclusive classroom settings can help you create an environment in which all of your students can thrive.

ENCOURAGE EACH STUDENT TO COMPLIMENT EACH OTHER

One of the most important teaching strategies in inclusive classroom settings is that you can involve each student share an "island of competency" with the rest of the class. For example, if a student struggles academically but enjoys music, the student should be encouraged to make up or sing "review songs" to help the rest of the class study. A student with multiple disabilities who enjoys finger painting can create the background for a poster that the class will use at a party or fund raiser. Encourage students to compliment each other on their skills and talents. In an inclusive classroom setting, all students should know that they can learn from each other.

DEVELOP CONCRETE AS WELL AS ABSTRACT THINKING

If you teach topics, you may cover plenty of material; if you teach questions, you can teach students how to think. Using "big questions," such as "What makes poetry, poetry?" or "How did the Civil War change the way we live today?" can help keep the class interesting for students at all levels of understanding. Students who understand the material on a more basic level can give a simpler answer to the big question, whereas students who understand the material on a deeper level can give a more complex answer. Concrete thinkers and abstract thinkers can both answer the big question and join in the discussion, even though they have comprehended the question in different ways.

LEARNING CENTERS ENABLE GROUPS

Many teachers, when presented with an inclusion setting, find it difficult to meet all of the students' needs at once. Using learning centers helps to solve this problem. Learning centers enable groups of students to work on different tasks at the same time, leaving teachers to work with individuals or smaller groups of students as needed. At times when no students need additional instruction, the general education and the special educator can circulate the classroom, helping out the students at various centers and offering enrichment as necessary.

DEVELOPING GOALS BEFORE TEACHING

Students who enter an inclusive classroom require close attention in an inclusion setting as opposed to mainstream setting. Teachers must be sure to meet the goals and to help the student achieve much more than what the other students require in the classroom. Rather than pulling a child out of the classroom, try incorporating those goals into the lesson. For example, if a student is working on communicating more maturely with peers, the teacher can have that student work in a small group on a specific project. A student who is learning how to identify colors can work with a special educator on choosing colors for a group map or another art project.

These teaching strategies in inclusive classroom settings can be helpful for general educators and special educators alike. If all members of the classroom work to include all students in classroom activities, the inclusive classroom can be a safe haven for everyone involved.

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE SETTING

Team Teaching

Preeti Singh

An education of Children with Special Need is an area, which has foundations in many disciplines; you may have to seek help of other teachers/ specialists/ professionals like physiotherapist/ occupational therapist/speech therapist/ social worker so that the Bed./In-service training curriculum is transacted in totality properly to the trainees. Hence, at times you may have to teach as a team. Team teaching is an approach in which two or more teachers, join together, plan together, teach together and evaluate together. As an educator, you have to work out the depth in which the therapists and doctors give their inputs and how they can be related to education and behavior of the child in school. In inclusive schools the regular education teacher and the special education teacher also work together in providing service to children with Special Need in the classroom. In inclusive education, meeting the special educational needs of children is the joint responsibility of the regular teacher, the special teacher and other professionals. For team teaching you have to plan jointly with others for teaching and evaluating a particular topic or subject depending upon your expertise/experience.

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring involves one-to-one instruction from a student to another in the tutoring role and the tutee who receives instruction. Peer tutoring meets the individual's needs of the child with disabilities by providing remedial or supportive instruction. Steps involved in peer tutoring are as given here:

- Make an assessment of pupil's performance in the class.
- Prepare a profile of tutee's performance in all areas of development.
- Identify the strengths of the pupils in the class to select peer tutors
- Match the tutor and the tutee. The tutor should be good in the subject and should have the skills to transact what the tutee with loco motor disability has to learn.
- Develop adapted instructional materials in advance for use by the peer tutor and tutee e.g. communication board may have to prepared for a child with cerebral palsy with communication problems.
- Organize a short training for tutors for carrying out tutoring effectively for children with Special Need. In a child with Special Need the specific disorder has to be assessed and catered to by the Teacher and the peer tutor in the following way.
- Tell peer tutor about the present profile of the tutee and levels expected from the tutee in a particular time frame set for the child. Lot of practice may be required for SN children with limited intellectual potential.
- Give very specific instructions to the peer tutor and to the tutee.
- Allot space and suitable work environment for tutoring e.g. a child with asbestosis may Need a helmet and lot of space so that he does not hit against the walls. A child with Wheeled chair may need lot of space to move around. A child with sensory impairment May need the necessary equipment.
- Keeping in mind the convenience of both, work out a practical work schedule.
- Reinforce the tutor for doing his job well and the tutee for the progress made by him.
- Build good relationships between them by encouraging both of them for their performance.
- Monitor the progress of tutoring.
- Change the tutor for different subjects or for different tests or for revision if the need be.

Above all, seek the permission from the parents of the tutor and the tutee for this activity. They have to be convinced that it is useful for both. Parents need to be told that the tutor also learns by teaching and the tutee learns better this way. Parents of the tutee need to be Oriented to the disability and they need to be ensured that it will not affect their child in any adverse way.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative Learning is a strategy used by group/number of students to achieve a common Goal with mutual collaboration and support. In an inclusive classroom where a large number of children with and without disabilities have been enrolled, children can be taught with the help of cooperative learning in which they have common goals. If a child with Special Need is to be taught he/she should be placed with the children who have the sensitivity and skills to deal with them. All students in the class may have to be oriented and prepared to work with children having

Preeti Singh

locomotors disability. They need to be told about the difficulties the child faces and in what ways they can be of help. Grouping should be such that they help each other learn, they work together to seek solutions to problems and to complete an assignment. It is opposed to the existing system of education in the regular classroom where children are forced to compete against one another; the educational system encourages children to learn cooperatively through joint ventures. It is particularly suited to children with Special Need as they may feel insecure in a competitive setting. Children having loco motor disability, learning disability and emotional disturbances often lack the opportunity for social interaction. They need to develop the skills necessary for positive peer interaction. Using cooperative learning will provide opportunities to children with special needs, as they would take turns, ask questions, seek assistance, answer questions, offer suggestions, learn and display good manners, speak positively about others and correct others. The teacher would operate only as a1. Planner 2. Facilitator 3. Evaluator 4. monitor

After the instructional objectives are laid, the students are grouped and assigned roles of leader, actor, recorder, evaluator etc. Roles are restarted. The support material to carry out the task is also rotated. Conduct the activity in such a way that each child has to take responsibility for his own learning. Thus individual accountability is ensured. The teacher has to ensure inter group interaction without which cooperative learning is meaningless. Monitoring is done by the teachers in terms of – level of mastery, completion of task, quality and quantity of work done, peer interaction and collaboration and satisfaction of the group as a whole. Grouping of children with Special Need should be done in such a way that the work goes on smoothly in the group. Cooperative learning is also used in a situation where a large number of children are on roll as in Govt. Municipal Corporation schools or rural schools in remote areas where we have on one/two – teacher schools. It benefits not only children with special educational needs but also all other children. It promotes academic achievement, develops problem-solving skills, leadership skills and pro-social skills; increases motivation, understanding, retention and transfer of learning to varied situations. It provides opportunity for peer interaction and social integration of children with disabilities. It also sensitizes and orients all children in the class as they know about the potentialities of many children with Special Need who may give a different appearance. However, teacher should monitor closely the materials, and the way they are used and the activities conducted in the class. In this approach children learn to share things instead of developing a unhealthy competition. Cooperative learning provides opportunities to all children to participate and contribute.

Language Learning

The Language learning Approach integrates the development of reading skills with the development of listening, speaking and writing skills. What the child is thinking and talking about would make the material for developing the lesson. It deals with the

Following thinking process:

- (a) What a child thinks about, he can talk about,
- (b) What a child says, he can write (or someone can write for him), and
- (c) What a child writes (or others write for him), he can read.

Many children with Loco motor Disabilities may talk like any other child in the class e.g.

Children with visual impairment polio, muscular dystrophy and some types of spinnabifida. However, some children with hearing impairment, mental retardation, cerebral palsy and some types of spinal bifida may show difference in thinking, talking or communication. In such cases the teacher will have to make special efforts to see that she/he talks about the experiences in the child's world or she should try to give the experience to the child before discussing it.

Multi Sensory Approach

The Multi Sensory approach is based on the premise that for some children learning is Facilitated, if content is presented via several modalities. Kinesthetic and tactile stimulation are used along with visual and auditory modalities.

This approach may be more useful in case of children with multiple disabilities as they need repetition through different modalities for reinforcement.

Breakthrough to Literacy Programmed

Many children cannot remember what they read as it seems very remote from their immediate environment. If they are taught to write what they are actually doing they should be able to retain it. Hence a strategy that could promote retention over a long period of time should be based on involvement of the child at different levels. One such strategy called 'Breakthrough To Literacy Programmed' could be used with children having Special Need, as some children with hearing impairment, mental retardation cerebral palsy and spinal bifida may not be able to read easily. The strategy involves following steps

- The child narrates his experiences
- The cards consisting of letters and words spoken are prepared
- The teacher arranges the cards as child narrates
- The teacher reads its out
- The child repeats it till he can read it independently

Task Analyses

In task analysis, the task to be learnt by the child is broken up into small teachable Components. The components are sequenced and each component is transacted to the child. The next component to be taught is taken up only after the child masters the initial ones. Children with Special need cover a large range of disabilities. For each child the basal level and the profile have to be assessed and accordingly considering his pace of learning, the task is to be broken down. Various activities of daily living as need academic activities can be taught through this method. You should ask the teacher to task analyze different tasks and administer them on children with Special Need.

Modifying Materials and Activities:

Teaching social studies can involve many different instructional practices. Within then classroom setting teachers can employ discussions, demonstrations, and learning centres.

Other intriguing techniques involve simulation activities, role-playing, or dramatic improvisation. Some additional techniques that teachers can utilize to enhance student performance are presented here according to instructional methodology

- Textual material: prepare study/reading guides and vocabulary exercises, rewrite materials, preview reading selections, have students do something special after they read selections, use a language experience approach, develop graphic organizers.
- Independent study: teach study, library and research skills
- Lecturers: use advanced organizers, check note-taking skills, follow prepared outlines, frame outlines.
- Inquiry approaches: emphasize cooperative learning, provide some teacher-directed learning.

Outside the classroom, field trips to museums, historical sites, and community locations can be engaging. The local neighborhood can serve as a plentiful and primary source of information.

Word Analysis Skills

Phonetic analysis teaches a student to "attack" an unfamiliar word. Although it does not teach the total range of reading skills, it does teach the essential skills of decoding. In addition, pictorial, contextual, and syntactic clues can help decode unknown words, as can configurationally and structural analysis. Children can use all of these methods to unlock new words at one time or another and beginning readers use this variety of strategies most frequently. In phonics, students are taught the sounds for consonants and vowels and the ways to blend these sounds. Key words are usually presented to reinforce the memory of each letter sound; for instance, *nun* suggests the *n* sound. Phonics instruction is divided into two basic, complementary methods. The synthetic method teacher's letter sounds and blends and then progresses to words, such as c-a-t cat. The analytic method begins with the teacher dictating words to students, who then break the words into their component sounds: cat c-a-t. Phonetic analysis can be used with student's at all educational levels, although it is most appropriate in elementary school. It can be used with young

Preeti Singh

students just beginning to learn to read as an initial step in a developmental program or it can be used as a remedial technique with students who have developed a strong sight vocabulary but lack the skills needed to analyze unfamiliar words. It can be adapted for learners being taught with a basal series or with a language experience approach using simple drills and games to reinforce basic rules. In

Each case the teacher's goal is to produce fluent readers with the necessary skills to decode unknown words. Once decoded, the word should become part of the student's sight word vocabularies so that they can be read without analysis when next encountered.

Prerequisites for learning phonics include skill in auditory and visual discrimination. Students must be able to recognize the difference in the sounds that begin words such as

And the difference in the configuration of the letters

In the above paper different strategies of teaching that you can use with all children in your classroom where children with special needs have been included. The

Strategies described in this paper will help you to make the students understand the curriculum in a better way and at their level. You can use these strategies with children with different types of impairment. Based on the special needs of the children you will have to choose the strategy, which you think, is appropriate for the child as well as for the whole class.

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