

Chapter 13

Promoting Learning in General Education for all Students

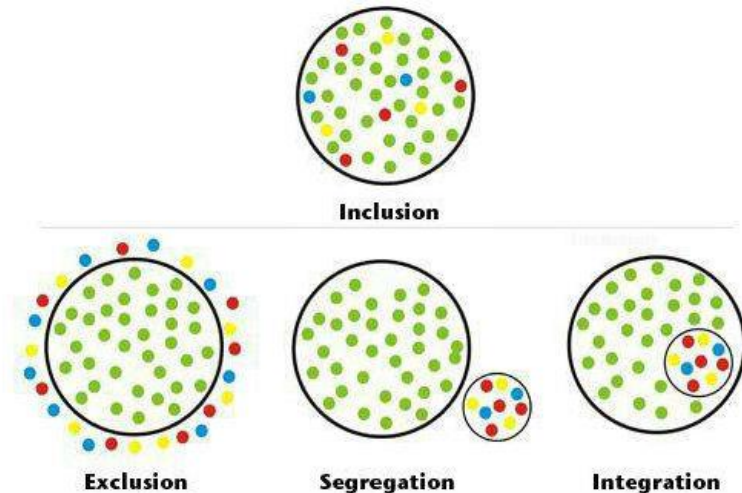
Rationale for and strategies to support inclusion of ALL students

- students lacking communicative intent
- students with difficulty moving any part of the body
- students with short attention spans
- students with significant intellectual disabilities

Rationale for Inclusive Education

“Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society...”

(IDEA Act, 2004)



Positive Effects of Inclusive Education

- higher expectations for learning, better IEPs, improved academic outcomes
- improved communication and social skills, more satisfying and diverse social relationships; heightened social participation
- improved adult outcomes (post-sec education, employment & independence)
- fewer absences and less referrals for behaviours

Benefits for Students without Disabilities

- Improved attitudes towards diversity
- Unique opportunities to learn about prejudice & equity
- Improved educational outcomes for all students when inclusion was the primary school reform

Important to Note

- No studies conducted since the late 70s have shown an academic advantage for educating students with disabilities in separate settings
- Performance of students without disabilities is not compromised by the presence of students with disabilities in their classrooms

Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Students

Truly inclusive education means students are:

- in age-appropriate general ed classes and participate in inclusive academic, social and extracurricular activities
- presumed competent to communicate about and learn general ed curriculum
- provided with the appropriate means to communicate with teacher and peers
- given aids and services that enable them to learn and meet IEP goals

Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Students

- taught self-advocacy and self-determination skills
- provided with intentional facilitation of their social relationships
- involved in making choices about their learning and in decisions about their future

Quality Indicators of Inclusive Schools: Educators

- work collaboratively - teach, evaluate and measure success
- instruction primarily within general education class
- work in partnership to support inclusion
- use of person centered planning
- professional development, supported by leadership, hiring of qualified staff, use of data-driven decision making

Collaborative Teaming and New Roles

Collaboration is key among team members to make inclusive schools successful.

Critical to promote effective team collaboration:

- essential communication skills
- meeting structures
- team processes

(Jorgensen and colleagues, 2010)

Communication Skills

Communication skills that make effective collaborative team members: pausing, paraphrasing, probing, knowing when to add or remove items, balance between advocacy and inquiry.

Inclusion Facilitators - new role and title for Special Education Teachers

Meeting Structures

Effective meetings = efficient use of time + good ideas

- clear purpose
- find meeting space where interruptions will not occur
- have an agenda
- identify who needs to attend
- rotate meeting process roles

Authors recommend a weekly hour-long meeting

Team Processes

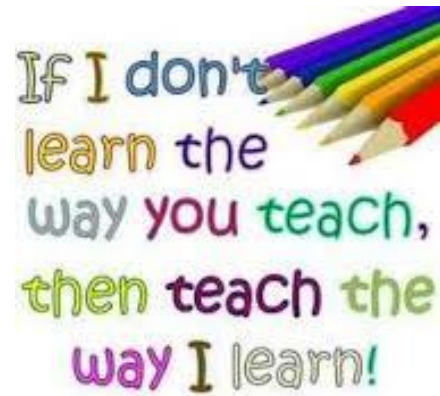
Important to build a strong team through:

- building team identity
- setting and maintaining norms
- building and carrying out sustainable agreements
- reflecting on practices
- resolving conflicts
- maintaining and sharing accurate information
- collaborating in the actual delivery of instruction

Accommodating the needs of ALL students

It does not matter if the school is fully inclusive or a traditional school, teachers can use UDL to promote all students' learning through multiple means (differentiation) of:

- knowledge representation
- action and expression
- engagement

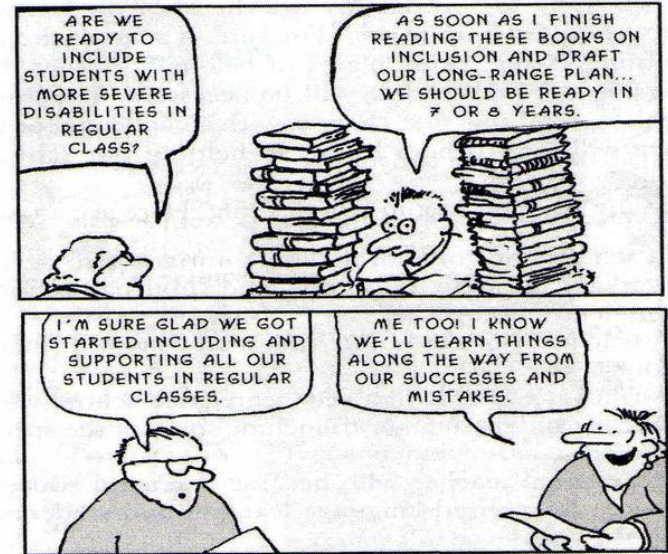


If I don't
learn the
way you teach,
then teach the
way I learn!

Supports for Students with Significant Disabilities

Even with UDL, there will be some students who need more intensive or personalized supports. The supports to be considered are:

- physical supports
- sensory supports
- emotional/behavioural supports
- adapted materials
- assistive tech
- personalized instruction
- communication supports
- individualized means for demonstrating learning



A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLS.

Supports for Students with Significant Disabilities

- One of the most important guidelines for the provision of support is to use that which is “only as special as necessary”.
- Care must be taken to not pull students with disabilities aside for one-to-one instruction for the majority of the class period.
- Peers need to be taught how to provide support.

9 Action Steps

1. Establish an inclusive leadership team.
2. Use an inclusive education quality indicator tool to assess current practice and use results to inform the implementation plan.



9 Action Steps

3. Start a professional learning community to learn about inclusive education by reading books based on current research.
4. Provide professional development on inclusive evidence-based practices.
5. Create a chart of team roles comparing and contrasting current responsibilities with what is needed for successful inclusion.

9 Action Steps

6. Design a master school schedule that prioritizes common planning time or get creative to find time that will enable team members to collaborate.
7. Use instructional planning forms. Teams that commit to using the forms usually find that students' participation and learning improve.

9 Action Steps

8. Complete an environmental survey to assess the physical and sensory accessibility of the building and then address barriers.
9. Purchase and provide training in the use of instructional and assistive technology. Identify a person who is responsible for cataloging and maintaining all equipment and software.