

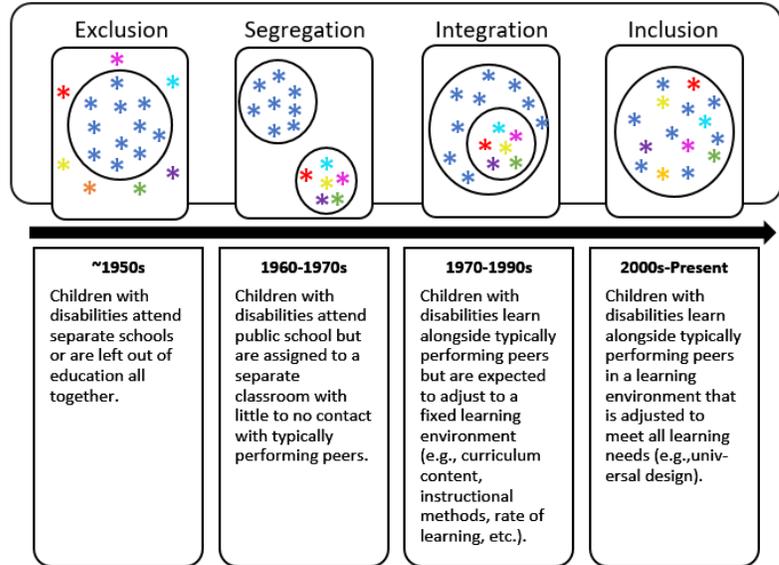
What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education means that all students experience the majority of their learning in the general education classroom with same-age peers. All students are supported and provided equal opportunity to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life, though some may still require brief individual supports outside the common learning environment at times.

The Evolution of Instructional Settings in Schools

Students have the basic human right to access equitable education, regardless of any challenges they may have.

In response, instructional settings have evolved to include all students. The movement towards inclusive practices ensures that all students have the opportunity to learn with same-aged peers in the general education classroom.



Key Features of Inclusive Education

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| <p>1 Administrators advocate and support creating an inclusive school community</p> | <p>2 School staff accept diversity unconditionally and make efforts to increase all students participation in the curricula and school community</p> |
| <p>3 Administrators, educators and parents have high expectations for all students</p> | <p>4 Educators respond to all students' diverse needs to help them learn and achieve to their fullest potential</p> |
| <p>5 Educators develop goals according to each student's abilities. Thus, students work on individual goals while participating in their age-appropriate classroom</p> | <p>6 Administrators, educators, parents and clinicians work together to determine the most effective ways of providing quality education in an inclusive school community</p> |

Strategies for an Inclusive Classroom

Build Relationships with Students. Positive student-teacher interactions help build a classroom community where students feel comfortable and safe while engaging in learning. A few ways to build relationships include:

- Talking to them about non-school related subjects.
- Remembering things about their lives.
- Letting them teach you about their interests.
- Using their interests in your lessons.
- Following through on promises.

Plan for the Outliers. All students have strengths and weaknesses. Structure lessons that focus on strengths and what all students can do while allowing more advanced students the opportunity to challenge themselves. For instance, scaffold learning material, allow more time to complete tasks, incorporate assistive technology, etc.

Multiple Modalities and Differentiated Instruction. All students have different ways in which they learn best. Consider differentiating teaching strategies and utilizing various modes of teaching to meet the learning needs of students. After all, strategies used to support students with diverse needs are helpful for all students. A few examples include:

- Project-based learning (i.e., projects that meet curricular objectives and are within a student's personal interest)
- Hands-on learning (i.e., manipulatives, experiments, creation)
- Visual learning (i.e., modelling, videos, graphics)
- Verbal learning (i.e., singing, defining vocabulary, mnemonic devices, small group discussions)
- Interactive learning (i.e., field trips, play, games)

Change Classroom Dynamic. Many students have trouble adjusting to the school environment which can result in stress behaviour. Consider modifying the environment to support positive behaviour, such as:

- Increasing predictability (i.e., transition cues, routine, schedule)
- Post clear expectations framed positively (e.g., "hands to yourself" rather than "no pushing")
- Decreasing sensory load (i.e., ear muffs, organized shelves, reduce clutter)

Provide Opportunities and Options. All students have hard days. Instead of insisting that a student participates, provide opportunities to engage. These opportunities may involve:

- Extending the invitation and accepting their decision
- Providing choices
- Asking what will help them feel comfortable enough to participate, if appropriate

Build Student Confidence. Emphasize mistakes are part of learning and focus praise on work ethic and the process of learning (as opposed to the outcome). Allow for small responsibilities and helping roles, such as class jobs, and opportunities to experience success and obtain positive social attention.

Advantages of Inclusion

- ✓ Fosters positive learning environment
- ✓ All students benefit from **universal** teaching strategies
- ✓ Students learn acceptable social behaviours
- ✓ Students can practice social skills and develop friendships with same-aged peers
- ✓ Promotes a sense of belonging
- ✓ Students learn compassion, sensitivity and acceptance for individual differences
- ✓ Encourages the involvement of parents
- ✓ Prepares students for life in the broader community

Adapted from: *How to Promote Inclusion in the Classroom* by Amy Curletto; *What is Inclusive Education* by Inclusion British Columbia; *Inclusive Education and its Benefits* by New Brunswick Association for Community Living; *The Evolution of Inclusion: The Past and Future of Education* YouTube video by Shelley Moore