

Ten approaches to inclusive practices and quality teaching and learning

The ten approaches to inclusion are intended to be a framework for good practice teaching and learning. Teachers will likely be doing much of this already which benefits all learners. Specific interventions around the ten approaches can meet specific needs for particular individuals and groups of learners (and in turn meet everyone's needs). This puts the emphasis on inclusion rather than special educational needs which could be perceived as exclusive. It also puts the emphasis on learning rather than 'conditions' such as dyslexia, ADHD and Autism.

The approaches are displayed in the form of a pie or pizza slices and it is intended that in training teachers may wish to experiment and use different slices which may help them to notice different ways they are working to inclusion. It is not intended that they would do everything all at once or all the time. The ten approaches are of course cross cutting and integrated rather than completely separate.

Celebrating Diversity

Encouraging and celebrating diversity is primarily concerned with ensuring positive contributions from everyone whatever the learning differences and difficulties and where special educational needs may have been noticed and identified. The unique contribution of everyone is valued and expressed through the materials and resources. This may also be clearly represented through visuals, texts, images, audio, etc.

A secure and supportive learning environment is evident where there is the safety to have a go, to make a mistake and indeed where mistakes can be regarded as 'a gift' for learning and in developing mutual understanding. The focus is on the assets that all learners bring to a learning community rather than a focus on problems.

Clear and achievable measurable learning outcomes

A learning outcome based approach will ensure that everyone can positively participate and learning can be measured according to an appropriate and agreed criteria. Agreed implies between trainers/teachers and participants/learners. Everyone works to agreed learning outcomes - perhaps taking different paths or routes depending upon learning needs identified. In considering learning outcomes we start from where learners are and what they 'can do' and not an abstract level or outcome on what they 'should' achieve.

Starting from and linking to what is already known

This involves a 'two footed' approach, starting from what is already understood what needs to be understood in meeting the learning aim. This is sometimes called a 'constructivist approach to learning'.

Learning is related to a topic or interest – so everyone can be engaged in what needs to be understood and learnt.

One good way to do this is to link the topic to something widely known and understood by everyone – though different people may have different interests. For example, football – the details of the football, something about the different players, the different countries involved, competitions in general, geopolitical issues. It is important to be inclusive in terms of interest. Is there is something for everyone?

Clutter

Clutter is anything that detracts from the purpose of promoting learning. Modifications to the materials may be necessary to permit everyone to learn more effectively. This may also involve avoiding stylistically 'less busy' and over colouring of materials that may confuse the content and tasks. Clutter might be teachers' instructions, teachers talking too much. It's all about making meaning comprehensible and understandable. Also, how to support learners to go on task, keep on task and task achievement. Is there clutter from outside the classroom or school that is a barrier to learning?

Scaffolding

Scaffolding involves promoting confidence and providing achievable and reachable aims.

Scaffolding also promotes a concept of 'learning for understanding' and approaches that encourage learner/learning independence in a supportive 'laddered' way.

There are clear steps where everyone is supported but can make their own decisions.

Differentiation

Differentiation involves providing different learning routes for everyone based upon their learning needs but focused on achieving similar standards.

Differentiation is also used in ways so as to not signal negative concepts of difference e.g. where Individuals are targeted for particular task i.e. 'here's a simpler task for you'. There are different ways of differentiating – the task itself, different tasks, different types of content and different ways of responding to tasks.

Differentiation is based on easification and inclusion involving everyone at achievable levels rather than simplification.

Accessibility, access needs and engagement planned and catered for

Accessibility is concerned with environmental factors such as ensuring physical conditions allow for inclusion and equality of access to learning. This may involve the physical conditions in a class/room or the access via technology.

Access needs are much more related to specific needs of the individual in promoting learning. For example, for learners with visual impairment use braille versions or screen readers. There are dyslexic friendly fonts or tasks related to access needs. Also resources for individuals with speech and language difficulties.

However, most importantly how do we move on from accessibility (ensure learners can participate in learning) to engagement (ensure learners can develop learning and achieve)?

Multi-sensory and multi-modal approaches

Most people can learn in visual, auditory or kinaesthetic ways, though most have a preference and it is good to know what these are. However, integrated multi-modality approaches are the most inclusive.

The importance of multi-sensory approaches is that it allows for a range of options in reaching the way learners learn. If content is only delivered through a single sensory channel then we are less likely to meet both individual and group needs.

As we all experience through our senses a sensory approach to learning allows for understanding in meaningful contexts.

Some learners, for example on the ASD spectrum are very hypersensitive to sensory stimuli and may demonstrate negative reactions - this need to be considered and catered for too.

Ensuring appropriate space for the learner's voice

The learner voice is concerned with understanding learning through the experiences of the individual participating in the learning.

It also involves actively encouraging and enabling a sharing of responsibility for achieving a productive, purposeful and harmonious working and learning atmosphere through a cooperative learning approach.

Assessment for learning

An inclusive learning assessment approach starts from an 'assessment for learning' rather than an 'assessment of learning' approach.

This will require evidence of ongoing/continuous formative assessment which is both achievable at every stage of learning and moves individuals in 'a scaffolded way' towards achievement at a summative assessment stage. It is also collaborative between learners, learners and teachers and based on a concept of positive affirmation on what someone can do rather than what they can't do.