

PEDAGOGIES IN INCLUSIVE SETUP

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ABSTRACT

Education is a lifelong process involving many planned and unplanned experiences that enable children and adults alike to develop and learn through mutual interaction with the society and culture in which they grow and live. Education also involves adaptation to society and culture. With all the combinations of life, events, adaptation will mean that each person is subject to a unique set of learning and problem solving experiences that constitute an understanding of the world and the events that take place in it. However, if we limit our attendance to intentional learning and instruction of children across the time from preschool to tertiary education, this would involve learning from a curriculum that has been determined by the central or state education authority. There are many children who, for some reason, are unable to take full advantage of the school curriculum as it is normally offered. For these children, special strategies must be used to ensure that they receive the opportunities and experiences, which will help them to learn and develop to the extent of their capabilities. This paper is an effort to unfold the teaching pedagogies which can be used to cater to the needs of all students in the inclusive setup.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, Cooperative Learning, Inclusive Education, Peer Tutoring

Inclusive Education

Inclusive Education signifies the dictum, "*Children who learn together, learn to live together.*"

In inclusive education, the children with disabilities are educated in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate to meet their "unique needs." In inclusion the children learn together and learn to live together. Inclusive education, as an approach, seeks to address the learning needs of specific groups of children, youth and adults who are vulnerable to marginalization, discrimination and exclusion. It implies that all learners, irrespective of certain forms of disability being able to learn together through access to common pre- school, schools and community educational setting. Only a flexible and liberal education system that focuses on assimilation can turn such possibility into reality. Inclusive education aims at all stakeholders in the system, inter alia, learners, parents, community, teachers, administrators and policy makers. The stakeholders are made to appreciate the diversity of learners and handle it as a humane opportunity rather than a social burden.

Teaching In Inclusive Setup or Inclusive Teaching

Inclusive teaching refers to recognizing, accommodating and meeting the learning needs of all students including children with special need. It acknowledges all such students that have a range of individual learning needs and belong to of diverse communities. A student with physical impairment may also have additional difficulty and bodily constraints. But, Inclusive teaching also avoids pigeonholing students into specific groups with fixed format to learning.

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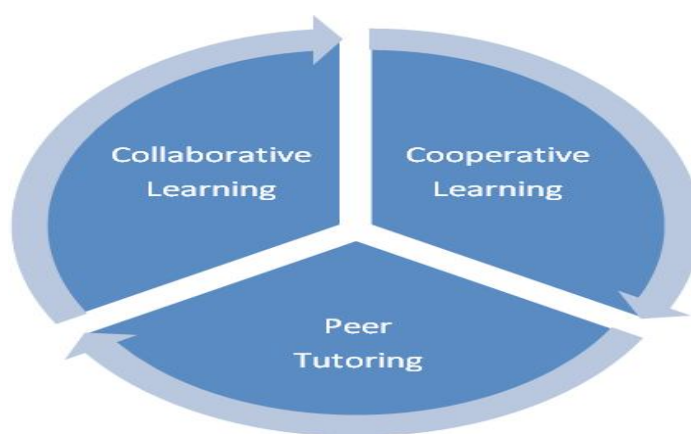
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Celebrating diversity lies at the core of inclusive teaching and it enhances the teaching and learning experiences of students as well as teachers. While inclusive teaching relates to all students, it is necessary for students from Indigenous cultures, low socio-economic backgrounds, students with disabilities, students from marginal social and/or cultural backgrounds.

Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

We have categorized the three-fold strategies to cope up with Inclusive Teaching as follows:

- I. Collaborative Learning
- II. Cooperative Learning
- III. Peer Tutoring



Strategies for Inclusive Teaching

I. Collaborative Learning

Collaboration among teachers is essential and necessary in Inclusive Educational Settings. Collaboration is a style that professionals choose to use in order to accomplish a goal they share. *Friend & Bursuck* describe how "any activity that teachers work with someone else requires collaboration" *Friend and Bursuck* further mention that "collaboration is how people work together, not what they do."¹

Majority of educational centres provide inclusive education for students with and without disabilities. Teachers and associated educational staff support students in achieving academic skills as well as developing skills and attitudes to cope up with the biopolitical needs as good citizens. It is only through collaboration that ideas can be shared, refined and better strategies can co-evolve. A changing strategy can monitor students' progress in a better way. True collaboration can enhance an effective inclusive education .

Characteristics of Collaboration

Friend & Bursuck (1999/1996) outlines the characteristics of collaboration to be:

- i. Voluntary.
- ii. Parity in relationships
- iii. Share a goal

- iv. Shared responsibility in key decisions.
- v. Shared accountability in outcomes
- vi. Shared resources.
- vii. Growing trust and respect.

Prerequisites for Collaboration

In order to create collaborative relationships among team members, Hwa Lee² summarizes following ingredients as essential:

- A. Reflecting on one's personal belief system:
- B. Refining interaction skills
- C. Contributing to a supportive environment: Administrative and staff support, teachers' effort to contribute to collaborative atmosphere, and the availability of time for collaboration.

Hwa Lee also stressed upon the need for proper communication skills for effective collaboration³ and summarized the steps under an eight-fold scheme:

1. Use knowledge of frame of reference to foster effective collaboration.
2. Recognize that shared problem solving begins with the understanding that there are many "right" answers for addressing student learning and behaviour.
3. Develop effective strategies for listening.
4. When someone shares a concern with you, avoid the temptation to offer advice immediately.
5. As much as possible, focus your interactions on observable information.
6. Use collaborative language; that is, ask questions that encourage others to speak.
7. Monitor how much you interact.
8. If you have a disagreement with a colleague, address it as soon as possible and in a straightforward manner.

Sometimes, consulting may become necessary to address the concerns of a team when divergent views cause impediment to implementation of effective strategy. Consultation is a specialized problem-solving process in which one professional who has particular expertise assists another professional who needs the benefit of others⁴. Hwa Lee explains the whole process of consultation in inclusive education. The *consultee uses the information* and expertise of consultants and other collaborators to provide direct service to the client. All who are involved including *consultants, consulter, and client are collaborators working together* in a combined effort to address a particular need. For example, a learning-disabilities consultant (consultant) may serve a new student (client) who has a learning disability indirectly by collaborating with the classroom teacher (consultee) who provides direct service to the student⁵

II. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an approach to organize classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. Students are encouraged to work in groups to complete the two sets of tasks collectively. Everyone succeeds only when the group succeeds. Students are given structured activity in which each has individual responsibility and each has to also contribute to the success of the group. In such task-oriented groups, teachers

gain new insight about the capability of individual students and also their pitfalls. Diversity is celebrated, and all contributions are valued. There is parity among each member of the group and this allows sense of equity and fairness among the physically impaired students.

Cooperative and collaborative learning differs from traditional teaching approaches because students work together in congenial atmosphere rather than competing with each other individually.

Research suggests that cooperative and collaborative learning bring positive results such as positive intergroup relations, greater acceptance of mainstreamed students, and self-esteem. But, the effect has been on other important educational outcomes. These include liking school, development of peer norms in favour of doing well academically, feeling of individual control over the student's own fate in school and cooperativeness and altruism⁶

Cooperative Learning can be formal, informal and group- based. Brown & Ciuffetelli Parker⁷ discuss the *4 basic and essential elements* to cooperative learning:

1. *Positive Interdependence*

Students must fully participate and put forth effort within their group

2. *Face-to-Face Interaction*

Students explain to one another what they have or are learning and assist one another.

3. *Individual Accountability*

Each student is accountable for their learning and work

4. *Social Skills*

These must be taught in order for successful cooperative learning to occur and the skills include effective communication, interpersonal and group skills

Cooperative Learning is advantageous for students as such process increases self esteem and self concept in general. For the marginalized groups, it is an antidote to exclusion and discrimination. Cultural and physically/mentally handicapped barriers are broken down that creates a conducive environment for positive interactions and friendships among each member on equal basis.

III. Peer Tutoring

A peer tutor is someone who is of a similar status as the person being tutored. In peer tutoring, both the tutor and the tutee are from the same grade and the peer tutor helps the peer tutee. There are many benefits for both the peer tutor and tutee in this relationship. The peer tutor can establish a rapport with the tutee in a way that a teacher cannot. A peer tutor is not bound to give any grade on the paper, whereas a teacher serving in a tutor role may still be perceived as someone who grades papers. This brings in a non-hierarchic atmosphere for the tutor and the tutee.

Various types of Peer Tutoring has been studied. Educationists have categorized these as Including Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), and Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT).

There are various advantages of Peer Tutoring to school children. The student who provides the tutoring remembers and revises the learned material. Similarly, tutee student also learns fast as the student can discuss in non-intimidating atmosphere. Peer tutoring helps nurture new friendships. It has been observed that students involved in peer tutoring behave better in the classroom and show more engagement throughout the learning process.

Conclusion

The aforesaid discussion seeks out the way to bring in inclusive education at the doorstep of each child. Strategies like cooperative learning, collaborative learning and peer tutoring can facilitate the learners requiring special need with optimum development. These strategies can be utilized by the teachers or the resource persons engaged with the inclusive setup. In collaborative consultation the individuals with diverse expertise interact to provide services for children. Collaborative learning encourages shared responsibility. Another effective methodology which can be effectively practiced in the inclusive classroom is the cooperative learning. It helps in catering the individual differences as well as following the principle of constructive approach. Learners get full advantage of holistic development by engaging themselves in a group. Peer tutoring is quite effective in improving the relations among children from different ethnic groups as the tutor can establish a rapport with the tutee in a way that a teacher cannot. It provides the opportunities for better understanding, long retention and stress free learning. Collaborative, cooperative learning and peer tutoring can emerge as effective tools in inclusive educational setup.

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