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How to Implement an Inclusive Vision

by

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Abstract

The rationale for this project is to create a user-friendly manual for general education teachers on how to create a clear vision as to how a successful inclusive teaching model can be implemented within their classroom. This manual is entitled *A Clear Vision for an Inclusive Classroom: How to Ensure All Students are Successful* and provides concrete suggestions for classroom designs, behavioral management, and techniques on how to differentiate instruction for all students. The manual addresses six areas: inclusion, learning styles, classroom design, classroom rules, classroom jobs, behavioral management, and differentiation. All of the information provided supports general education teachers to result in full inclusion for special education students, higher student participation, and a decrease in student non-academic behaviors. This manual was purposely designed for elementary school general education teachers and classrooms because of the experience of the researcher as an elementary special educator.

*Keywords*: Inclusive education, inclusive educational strategies, students eligible for special education, vision, inclusive classroom
Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

Academic instruction for special education students needs to occur in the least restrictive environment and according to their educational needs. For special education students to access general education curriculum with their peers an inclusive teaching model is required. Students with disabilities may require accommodations and modifications within the general education classroom to ensure their learning needs are being meet. If the curriculum is too intense, students begin to disengage and may exhibit behaviors. It is imperative that students learn in a welcoming and safe environment. Students that are provided with the opportunity to receive academic instruction in an inclusive teaching model are not viewed as “different.” However, general education teachers can become overwhelmed when instructing students with special needs, as these students require additional teaching time, accommodations, modifications, behavior plans, and Individual Education Program (IEP) plans. In order to successfully meet the learning needs of all students and successfully implement an inclusive instructional approach, adequate supports and strategies need to be put into place. In addition, some general education teachers have limited special education training or training in differentiating instruction, which can lead to resentment and frustration toward students with unique learning needs, including students with IEPs in the classroom.

Statement of Problem

There are general educators who are in need of instructional and behavioral management strategies and techniques to differentiate instruction for all students, in order to actualize a vision to successfully implement an inclusive instructional model.
This is because there still are general education teachers who have had limited support or training on how to support students who need differentiated instruction, including students eligible for special education. As an increasing number of school districts, nationwide, begin to implement an inclusive teaching model, it is imperative that general educators have the strategies, tools, and knowledge to properly support these students and their learning needs.

**Purpose of Project**

The purpose of this project is to help teachers develop and actualize a clear vision as to how to implement a successful inclusive teaching model within their classroom. This manual will provide general educators and their administrators strategies, tools, and teaching techniques to make an inclusive teaching model successful for students and themselves. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that the placement of first choice for students eligible for special education is alongside their peers in general education classrooms where their teachers and the aids, supports, and services provided them in that environment allows them to access the general education curriculum. This requires general education teachers to have the knowledge and strategies to meet students’ academic and behavioral needs, to avoid frustration and resorting to strategies that inadvertently denying students’ full access to general education curriculum. The manual that is the product of this project is designed to assist general educators and special educators (known as Education Specialists, in California) to collaborate with one other to ensure students with an IEP is receiving a quality education that meet their individual learning needs.

**Significance of Project**

Providing resources to teachers and faculty to embrace students with disabilities, and provide knowledge on how to implement an inclusive teaching model successfully. These
resources will help assist general educators in collaborating with education specialists, and administering the correct strategies, accommodations, and modifications to ensure each special education student is reaching their highest potential in a general education setting.

**Conclusion**

Every student learns differently and each has differing needs and learning styles. For students with IEP and other special education needs, these needs may be amplified. It is important for teachers to have knowledge of a variety of strategies and tools to meet the variety of needs and learning styles of each student. When students are successful in the classroom they have confidence, participate, and are eager to learn. Chapter 2 examines the current research regarding laws that relate to special education, inclusion data, and ethical rationales.

**Definition of Terms**

**Accommodations.** Accommodations are adaptations to the classroom or instructional lesson the teacher does to ensure the needs are being met for students identified with a disability. Co-teaching is defined as “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended group of students in a single physical space” (Cook & Friend, 1995, p. 1).

**Individualized Education Program.** An Individualized Education Program or IEP is an abbreviation for Individualized Education Program, which is a written legal document for providing a free and appropriate education to any student in the United States who qualifies for special education (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2014).

**Inclusive education.** Inclusion education can be defined is when students with disabilities receive services and supports based on their individual needs in the general education setting (Hardman et al., 2014).
**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), most recently reauthorized in 2004, is a federal mandate that requires schools to provide a child eligible for special education a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

**Least Restrictive Environment.** Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is the placement in which “students with disabilities are to be educated with their peers who do not have disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate” (Hardman et al., 2014, p. 52).

**Modifications.** Modifications are changes made to the instructional curriculum or testing material to ensure all students with disabilities are having their needs meet.

**No Child Left Behind.** No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is the nickname of 2001 reauthorization of the U.S. federal law otherwise known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with provisions for improving the overall education performance of all students by holding districts accountable through academic standardized testing and ensuring that educators are highly qualified.

**PATH.** PATH “is a creative planning tool which starts in the future and works backwards to an outcome of first (beginning) steps that are possible and positive” (Gallagher & Hinkleman, 2012, p. 66).

**Pull-out special educations service delivery.** A pull-out special educations service delivery approach to special education service delivery where a special education teacher pulls a student out of the general education classroom for a period of time each day to provide specialized academic instruction (Nichols, Dowdy, & Nichols, 2010).

**Special education.** Special education is “instruction that is specifically designed for students who have identified disabilities at no cost to the parents” (Hardman et al., 2014, p. 52).
**Visionizing.** Visionizing is a systems change process that “involves creating and communicating a compelling picture of a desired future state and inducing others to commit to that future” (Villa, & Thousand, 2005, p. 59).
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

This manual will provide general educators with classroom designs, behavioral management, and techniques on how to differentiate instruction for all students in order to provide a clear vision to successfully implement an inclusion-teaching model. In this chapter research on legalities of special education, inclusion data, and ethical rationale will be reviewed.

Legalities of Special Education

Throughout history individuals with disabilities have been segregated into different classrooms than general education students. Historically, individuals with disabilities have received an unequal education in the public education system. The Civil Rights movement and the decision in Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 was “important for students with disabilities because the concept of equal opportunity was applicable to them as well as to students of minority background (Yell, Rodgers, & Rodgers, 1998). As parents and advocates fought for an equal education for children with disabilities the progress was slow. According to Yell, Rodgers, & Rodgers (1998), in 1958, the Supreme Court of Illinois, in Department of Public Welfare v. Haas, held that the state did not have to provide a free public education for students who were “feeble minded” or “mentally deficient” and who, could not reap the benefits of a good education due to their limited intelligence.

It was not until 20 years after the Brown v. Board of Education that the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Pennsylvania (PARC), and Mills v. District of Columbia Board of Education occurred. In the case of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Pennsylvania (PARC) parents and advocates of children with intellectual disabilities challenged
the Pennsylvania statutes the relieved the State Board of Education from any education obligation to a child if the public school psychologist determined the child uneducable and untrainable. The plaintiffs in *PARC* argued that this “exclusion violated the student’s rights to due process and equal protection.” This case resulted in agreement to “place each mentally retarded child in a free, public program of education and training appropriate to the child’s capacity” (LaNear & Frattura, 2007, p. 94). In the *Mills v. District of Columbia Board of Education* case, Mills addressed the exclusion of children who were “mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped, hyperactive, and other children with behavioral problems” in the Washington, D.C public schools. The Board of Education agreed to provide the plaintiff children with a “publicly supported education suited to their needs.” The Board failed to comply with the settlement because “it would be unfair to the normal children because they were already receiving an education that would be hampered by the shift in funds” (LaNear & Frattura, 2007, p. 95). The court evaluated the merits of the plaintiffs’ equal protection and due process claims, and in their conclusion referencing the *Brown* decision that the “Board of Education was required by the Constitution of the United States, the District of Columbia Code, and their own regulations to provide a publicly supported education for these “exceptional children” (LaNear & Frattura, 2007, p. 95). The *PARC* and *Mills* Cases are given credit for providing guarantees for children with disabilities and education that were written into the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), later renamed IDEA.

All of these cases have helped make adequate progress in obtaining an equal education for children with disabilities, which ultimately led to The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA). EAHCA ensured children with disabilities obtain an education, which would meet their unique needs. President Clinton made changes to EAHCA and renamed
it Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1990 (IDEA). Due to President Clinton’s changes there are 90% fewer developmentally disabled children living in institutions, hundreds of thousands of children with disabilities attend public schools, and three times as many young adults with disabilities are enrolled in colleges (Yell et al., 1998).

In 2004 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was passed which requires grade-level testing for all students since children with disabilities are provided access to the general curriculum (Henley, McBride, Milligan, & Nichols, 2007, p.60). The results in school-wide low academic scores and has lead to demonize students with disabilities placing blame of the school’s failure. NCLB also requires students with disabilities to make adequate yearly progress alongside non-disabled peers, which creates internal tension for students with disabilities (LaNear & Frattura, 2007, p. 102). There have been numerous laws passed throughout history to help ensure children with disabilities receive an equal education. However, there are still less than half of the students with disabilities between the ages of six and seventeen are receiving instruction in general education settings with their typical peers for more than 89% of their school day, only 3% of these students are in general education for the entire day (LaNear & Frattura, 2007, p.88).

**Inclusion Data**

Implementing an inclusive teaching model can be met with resistance from general educators and school faculty. As stated by Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas (2002) some individuals opposing inclusion have suggested that special education will become diluted and contain no elements for it to be “special.” They also note that that opponents have suggested that general education is not properly prepared to meet the various needs of students with disabilities. To provide a better understanding of why inclusion is imperative for students with disabilities there is a plethora of data to support the teaching model. Three meta-analyses Baker, Wang, and
Walberg on effective settings for special education students suggest that “special-needs students educated in regular classes do better academically and socially than comparable students in non-inclusive settings” (as cited in Villa & Thousand, 2005, p. 46).

Currently one of 88 children are diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder or autism. This recent increased prevalence has contributed to a renewed emphasis on the inclusive teaching model within schools (Sansosti & Sansosti, 2012). Students with disabilities, particularly students with autism, may have social skills limitations and anxiety that can lead them to become easily agitated and emotional when faced with change. These characteristics can result in tantrums, aggressive behavior, or noncompliance, which can be difficult for general educators to manage, resulting in teachers being hesitant to embrace an inclusive instructional model (Sansosti & Sansosti, 2012) out of concern for the effects of these behaviors on other students. However, as Villa and Thousand (2005) report, standardized tests and report card grades indicate that the inclusion of students with disabilities, including severe disabilities, has not had a negative effect on the academic or behavioral success of their peers. It has been well demonstrated that students with the most significant disability can be effectively taught in a general education classroom (Snell & Brown, 2011, p. 438).

Rea and colleagues (2002) compared “the performance of middle school students with learning disabilities who were served in inclusive classrooms with similar students served in pullout special education programs” (p. 204). The study compared all students with learning disabilities at two different middle schools within the same school district. There were 22 students who received special education services in a “pullout” method, and 36 students who received services in an inclusive support model. The results indicated that, “Students with learning disabilities (LD) served in inclusive classrooms earned significantly higher grades in all
four areas of academic instruction” (Rea et al., 2002, p. 212). Results also indicated that students did not exhibit any additional or greater behaviors in a general education setting. Also, when students with disabilities are placed in an inclusive setting their overall attendance increased as results indicated by Rea et al., (2002) “students with LD served in inclusive classrooms attended more days of school than those in pullout programs” (p. 219). In addition, providing increased opportunity for students with disabilities to receive quality instructional and social experiences can produce a positive influence on student attendance (Rea et al., 2002).

A study conducted by Tremblay (2013) also supports an inclusive teaching model. This study was a comparative analysis of special educators providing special education services via co-teaching in an inclusive setting versus special educators providing special education services in a pull-out self-contained classroom. The findings compared students’ outcomes in reading, writing, mathematics, and attendance and found that students’ mathematics performance was higher in inclusive settings, while reading and writing scores were comparable in the two settings. Nevertheless, the author concluded that “inclusion with co-teaching provided students with learning disabilities with the necessary support for academic achievement on standardized tests” (Tremblay, 2013, p. 256). Based upon their findings, Rea and colleagues (2002) also concluded that “with adequate support and accommodation, students with learning disabilities can maintain acceptable achievement standards established by schools’ grading practices while in inclusive classrooms” (p. 219).

Ethical Rationale for Inclusive Education

Gallagher & Hinkleman (2012), in their *Intentional Teaming: Shifting Organizational Culture* text, describe real life stories of individuals with disabilities and how their inclusive and non-inclusive experiences have impacted their lives. One person, Tim, an adult with a disability
lived in a group home from the age of three to 33. Throughout his life he was told that he was “not capable” or “too low functioning” to live on his own. However, Tim was determined to live the life he saw others living, “driven by the desire to live a fully included life” (p.82). With the assistance of an organization, he mapped out an Essential Lifestyle Plan and determined what his goals were. His goals included living on his own with a roommate, traveling to Las Vegas, having friends over for BBQ’s, and learning how to ride a bike. Living independently allowed him to meet neighbors and develop relationships with a network.

After 13 years of working at restaurant he wanted a change, because he worked in the back of the restaurant away from rather than with people. He wanted to work at a grocery store where he could interact with others. He got a job at his desired store due to his “natural work ethic; he was efficient, polite, learned quickly and was easy to get a long with” he quickly became their “best employee” (Gallagher & Hinkleman, 2012, p. 84).

Tim continued to work and was living a “self-determined life,” but desired a companion. Tim entered a relationship after being set up on a blind date with Jaime, a woman who also receives services from the same organization. With the support of Tim and Jaime’s service providers, Tim relocated to be closer to Jaime. With the assistance of a PATH planning meeting and the support organization, Tim and Jaime saved and were able to hold the wedding and honeymoon of their dreams. Tim’s story has a happy ending. However, had he been included in general education during his education, perhaps he would not have been deemed “too low functioning” or “not capable.” The authors conclude that “[t]he greatest crime you can commit is to deny someone the opportunity to give their gift” (32).

Canfield, Hansen, McNamara, and Simmons (2007) tell a story of Lauren, a 16-year-old girl with Down syndrome, who wanted to play for the girl’s basketball team at her school. While
her parents “treated her like our other children. Same school. Same church camp. Same chores around the house. We didn’t want her to feel disabled or different” (p. 19), her father had silent reservations about her decision because of her disability. Since they lived in a small town everyone made the team, however, everyone might not play. Before the first game of the season, the coach approached Lauren’s dad and said “We’re glad Lauren came out for the team” (Canfield et al., 2007, p. 21). Lauren came out and practiced with the team before the game, and intensely watched from the bench. With two minutes left in the game, Lauren was put in to play. The point guard called a play, and passed the ball to Lauren. Lauren scored a layup, the fans and teammates erupted in cheers. After the game, Lauren ran to her dad and said, “Did you see? I scored! I made a basket!” (Canfield et al., 2007, p. 23). Providing students with disabilities the same opportunities as other students it empowers them and boosts their self-esteem.

**Conclusion**

There are various rationale and ample evidence as to why implementing an inclusive vision within schools is necessary and do-able. General education teachers embrace students with IEPs, so do their other students. All students learn about diversity, tolerance, and the uniqueness of each student. Students with disabilities are not looked as outcasts when integrated with the general education population. Providing students with disabilities the opportunity to be in a general education classroom allows for their own growth, behaviorally, academically, and socially. Inclusion increases student’s academic performance and overall attendance.

When teachers embrace and have skills to actualize inclusive education, it allows them to provide instruction to students of all academic levels. When teachers are aware that every child learns differently and differentiation is a necessity, inclusion becomes easier and more natural, as
they are already making the proper adjustments to their lessons. There are many different
teaching techniques that can be used to support all students and their unique individual needs.

The next chapter, Chapter 3, describes the methodology for creating a manual to promote teachers’ vision of and skills in structuring an inclusive classroom.
Chapter 3

Methodology

Design

The purpose of creating this manual is to provide teachers and administrators a clear vision on how to implement a successful inclusive classroom. This manual will provide an understanding of inclusion, classroom design, behavioral strategies, and differentiation tools to assist general education teachers and help their special education students be successful in a general education setting.

The researcher wanted to create a manual that was user-friendly and allowed for general education teachers to easily implement the strategies and ideas into their daily lessons and agendas. The manual was based upon the idea of an Inclusive Teaching Model and made into a user-friendly manual.

Procedure

Reviewing various resources in order to provide the most current and effective strategies to general educators created the manual. The information for the manual was gathered from a variety of sources, including the following three texts: a) *Creating an Inclusive School* (Villa & Thousand, 2005), b) *Because we can change the world: A practical guide to building cooperative inclusive classroom communities* (Sapon-Shevin, 1998), and c) *Adapting instruction to accommodate student in inclusive settings 4th edition* (Wood, J., 2001). Other sources included various journal articles on inclusion and student behavior in an inclusive classroom, and websites as well as the author’s personal experiences as an Education Specialist at an inclusive school. Numerous additional credible resources were reviewed during the process of developing, this manual but not all were not included as the information was already discussed in the previously
mentioned resources. The criteria for gathering information was that the resource had to a) be credible, b) focus on the ideas of an inclusion, and c) provide a clear understanding of how differentiation, behavioral management, and classroom design serve as essential tools in implementing a successful inclusive education model.

The content of the chapters for the manual were based upon the experience of the researcher, who had worked in an inclusive school, and her discussions with general education teachers concerning areas they had difficulty with when teaching special education students within their general education classrooms. The manual is separated into sections, by chapter, for easy navigation. The first chapter of the manual defines inclusion and examines why it is important for teachers to implement an inclusive teaching model within their classrooms. The second chapter is on classroom design, which provides information on how to design effective classroom rules that will aide in decreasing non-academic behaviors from students. In addition, the chapter includes options for classroom jobs, various classroom designs, and examples that assist teachers with meeting the needs of every learner. The third chapter on classroom rules features behavioral management techniques and visuals that provide positive reinforcement. It also offers ways to individualize behavioral management strategies and techniques. The fourth chapter on differentiation will provide lesson plans gathered from various elementary school general education teachers and ways to adapt them so that they illustrate differentiation for special education students in their classrooms.

Once the manual was created and completed the researcher presented the guide to various general education teachers to gain insight on user-friendliness and obtain overall input. The researcher then reflected on gained knowledge, then made appropriate changes to the manual that were deemed necessary to create the finalized manual.
Chapter 4

Results

There is a plethora of information explaining what inclusion is, why it is necessary for students with special needs, and how to implement it into general education classrooms. What inclusion entails, various learning styles, classroom design, classroom rules, classroom jobs, behavioral management, and differentiation ideas were collected and created a manual for general education teachers and administration.

The final project, which is the manual, can be accessed in Appendix A. It is designed into six chapters, each concise and easily navigated. The first chapter is dedicated to explaining what inclusion is and why it is necessary. In addition, there are the four learning styles, how to identify them, and ideas and tools to implement in lessons to meet the needs of each learner. The second chapter on classroom design provides ideas on how to design a classroom to provide an inclusive environment. Chapter 3 is on classroom rules, why they are necessary, how to create them, and how ensure every student feels part of the process. It also includes examples of how to implement rules while creating an inclusive environment. In Chapter 4 classroom jobs are discussed, along with examples and visuals of how to successfully implement them so that all students participate. Chapter 5 discusses behavioral management and the importance of establishing a structured environment. This chapter provides examples of the various ways behavioral management can be implemented with the whole class, and how they can be individualized. Chapter 6, the final chapter, discusses the importance of differentiation in instruction. It provides examples of how to successfully differentiate for the various learning needs to ensure an inclusive teaching model is being implemented.
This manual is intended to be user friendly and a “quick reference guide;” thus, there are many lists and visual representations. Notice that inclusion was primary topic. The researcher determined that only pertinent information regarding information on successfully implementing an inclusive teaching model would be included. This decision was based upon the personal experiences as an Education Specialist and conversations held with general education teachers.

The researcher used numerous resources to gather information for this manual, but the core concepts came from the book, *Creating an inclusive school 2nd ed.* Villa, R.A. & Thousand, J.S. (2005), and *Adapting Instruction To Accommodate Students In Inclusive Settings 4th ed.* Wood, J.W., (2002), along with personal experiences from the researcher.
Chapter 5

Discussion

The inspiration and motivation for this project was to provide a manual for general education teachers to quickly access tools and strategies to assist them to promote academic and behavioral success of students with disabilities, as they implement the ideas in their classrooms. The project product is a manual entitled: *A Clear Vision for an Inclusive Classroom: How to Ensure All Students are Successful.*

The manual is based upon the premises that all students learn differently and that various techniques can easily implemented to ensure every student can have their needs met. It, therefore, provides strategies and tools in a concise way for general education teachers to a) implement an inclusive teaching model, b) craft accommodations and modifications to their lessons to meet every student’s needs by increasing student participation, lowering behavioral disruptions, and increasing overall academic success.

The manual is a good resource for new or beginning teachers who are just developing their teaching approaches and concept of what an effective classroom can be. It is designed for Kindergarten through fifth grade classrooms, as this is the experience of the researcher/author, an elementary Education Specialist. It is organized with multiple illustrations, tables and lists, so teachers can easily and quickly implement the suggestions.

Limitations

A first limitation of the manual is that it designed for use only in elementary school environments. Therefore, if it is used, for any other purpose, such as a handbook for supporting secondary students, the user would need to make adjustments to fit the setting and student population. Second, for the strategies provided to work optimally, a teacher use must identify
the learning styles of each student to implement the proper accommodation or modification.

Third, the manual does not provide every inclusive strategy, as it is intended to be a quick guide of strategies, tools, and ideas on how to implement an inclusive teaching. If the user wants more in depth information they will have to do additional research from sources such as those used to develop this manual. Finally, the manual has not been field tested by teachers at the author’s school or other setting.

Next Steps

To determine the actual effectiveness of the manual, the researcher would have to complete additional implementation field research. This could include having conversations with general educators after implementing the manual’s information to discuss its effectiveness or observing classrooms of teacher users, with an eye on the overall all participation, behaviors, academic success of students with and without IEPs. Pre and post-use interviews and observations also could be conducted to determine the impact of the information included in the manual on teacher perception and behavior and student success.

Conclusion

The product of this project, a manual entitled *A Clear Vision for an Inclusive Classroom: How to Ensure All Students are Successful*, is intended to be a reminder that every student learns differently, and every lesson needs to be differentiated for the various learning styles of every child. My hope is that those who read and use the manual experience the joy of seeing student success and reinforce or expand their vision and practice of inclusion education. It is the clear vision of tomorrow.
References


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A Clear Vision for an Inclusive Classroom:

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A Clear Vision for an Inclusive Classroom: How to Ensure All Students are Successful
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If I Have Special Needs
Adapted from the poem by Ruth Reardon

If I have special needs,
Remember they are special,
but I am not.
I'm not a special student
But a student with special needs.
Be sensitive, and make allowances.
But whenever it is possible,
treat me like all the rest.
Don't let those special needs
Be all you see of me.
Give me the dignity of living
With the same rule as the others.
Not set apart, or different,
except where I must be.
Keep me, and others,
From using handicaps.
Chapter 1: Inclusive Education and Learning Styles

What is Inclusion?

An inclusion education can be defined is when students with disabilities receive services and supports based on their individual needs in the general education setting (Hardman et al., 2014). Every student has the right to be placed in the least restrictive learning environment as possible as per Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 and No Child Left Behind Act (Villa, R.A. & Thousand, J.S., 2005, p. 3). Implementing inclusion in all classrooms ensures that every student with disabilities is having their rights met accordingly. By placing a special education student in a general education it allows for them to access general education curriculum with their peers. Every student learns differently, accommodations and modifications may need to be incorporated into lessons to meet each student’s individual learning style and needs (Wood J.W., 2002, p. 376).

Learning Styles

In order for teachers to meet the needs of every student, they must identify how each student learns. At times it is difficult for teachers to identify how a student learns due to lack of training and necessary tools needed. There are four different learning styles: visual, kinesthetic, tactile, and auditory. Every student has a dominating learning style. It is important that teachers recognize and accommodate all of the various styles, in order to successfully implement an inclusive teaching environment. By making accommodations to the various learning style it is ensuring every student with and without a disability is having their educational needs met. Once a teacher can identify how a student learns, making accommodations and the learning content
accessible to every student becomes an easier process. By implementing an inclusive classroom, the objective is to acknowledge the various differences every student has, and embrace the individuality to create a sense of belonging for each student.

**Visual Learning**

![Image of eyes](image.png) 

"When I see it, then I understand"

Caption: Pictured above is a visual representation of a set of eyes to demonstrate the importance of how important being able to see a visual is for students who favor this learning style.

Characteristics of Visual Learners:

- Like to read.
- Memorize information by seeing them written down.
- Are organized.
- Would rather watch, than talk or physically do.
- Notice details.
- Have difficulty following verbal instructions.
- Are easily distracted by noise.
- Doodle on paper.

Ideas and tools to engage a visual learner:

- Posters/Post-it notes
- Note taking
- Timelines
• YouTube Videos/Clips
• Color coding information
• Charts/Tables

Kinesthetic Learning

Caption: Pictures above is a visual representation with a brief definition of what a kinesthetic learner requires in order to succeed.

Characteristics of Kinesthetic Learners:

- They have the desire to touch everything.
- Like to physically make things with their hands.
- Well coordinated.
- Physically active (enjoy sports over reading).
- High energy.

Ideas and tools to engage kinesthetic learners:

- Games
- Taking notes
- Doodling
- Fieldtrips
- Finger trace words while reading
- Reenactments

Tactile Learning

Caption: Pictures above are hands touching the material as they learn to demonstrate what tactile learners require to be successful in the classroom.

Characteristics of Tactile Learners:

• Prefer to actively participate in activities.
• High energy.
• Learn best with a “hands-on” teaching approach.
• Have a difficult time sitting and listening.

Ideas and tools to engage tactile learners:

• Puzzles
• Modeling
• Calculators
• Displays
• Games
• Whiteboard activities
• Felt letters

Auditory Learning

Caption: Pictured above is a visual representation of an ear to demonstrate what sense is being used for a student who is an auditory learner.

Characteristics of an Auditory Learner:

- Memorizes information by steps in a sequence.
- Easily distracted
- Prefers to be read to.
- Has difficulty with written instructions.
- Enjoys talking
- Talks to self aloud.

Ideas and tools to engage an auditory learner:

- Videos
- You-tube clips
- Discussions
- Songs/rhymes
- Listen to music while working
- Study groups/group work

Chapter 2: Classroom Design

Classroom design is the physical environment in which the students receive their academic instruction. The environment should stimulate the students to promote effective learning. The physical environment includes walls, flooring, lighting, learning space, and how the individuals in the space coexist. Maintaining organization and awareness of the learning environment will prevent classroom problems from arising.

Classroom design assists the teacher in deciding how to deliver the academic instruction so that every student’s learning needs are being met. Arranging the classroom so that the various grouping strategies; whole group, small group, or one-on-one can be implemented based on the lesson throughout the day, as needed. Ensuring that all students actively participate in the classroom and have a sense of belonging is critical when creating the classroom design. The following is a checklist to use when developing a classroom design from Adapting instruction To Accommodate Students in Inclusive Setting (Wood, 2002, p. 335). In addition, there are examples of various styles of classroom designs that are most effective in implementing an inclusive classroom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wall Areas</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walls clean to prevent distractions.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin boards neatly designed and seasonally up-to-date.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulletin boards available for students’ use and display.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows clean or neatly covered.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboards in view of all students, clean and undamaged.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper window lighting.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling lighting sufficient.</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Floors
- Clean
- Obstructive Objects removed
- Barrier-free for wheelchairs, etc.

### Room Area
- Appropriate chair sizes for age level.
- Arrangements for left- as well as right-handed students.
- Areas provided for small-group instruction.
- Areas provided for independent instruction.
- Areas in room designated for specific behaviors, such as quiet time, reading in twos, game areas, motor areas, art areas. Learning centers provided.
- Study carrels provided.
- Areas designated for listening to tapes, such as recordings of lessons or in chapter books.
Example 2.1: Table Classroom Design

This is an example of a classroom that has tables as seating arrangements. The front of the room has an open area with a carpet for a gathering area, and the tables are placed in a U formation so that every student has a clear view of the whiteboard.

Caption: Pictured above is a classroom with six oblong tables with four chairs at each. There is a carpeted area with a white board in front of the class.
Example 2.2: Table Classroom Design with Exercise Balls

This example also uses tables as seating their arrangement, but has replaced the chairs with exercise balls. This is a way to meet the kinesthetic learners in your class and anyone who might have sensory needs. This is an example of how the back of the class can be arranged with the class library and a reading area available.

Caption: Pictured above are three oblong tables. Two tables have six exercise balls used as chairs, and one table has four exercise balls. There is an open carpet area where the classroom library is located in the back of the classroom.
Example 2.3: Desk Classroom Design

This is a classroom designed with desks put together to create “table groups”. This is an option for a class with low number students. Creating the table groups allows for students of all academic levels to participate in group work. This teacher used small bookcases for each table group to organize supplies for the students at each of the groups. There is also a focus wall with a classroom schedule on the back wall.

Caption: Pictured above are desks placed together to form four table groups. Each table group consists of six desks. There is a small two shelf bookcase next to each table group to store the student’s materials.
Example 2.4: Classroom Library Design

This is an example of how to create a classroom designed with a reading area and classroom library. Creating a separate area for students to read silently, or to take a break is important when developing the classroom design to ensure all student’s needs are being met. Incorporating a quiet area provides an area for students who may need a sensory break or a quiet space to work.

Caption: Pictured above is a corner of a classroom designated to the classroom library. There are two chairs, an area rug, and two bookcases with books organized by reading levels.
Example 2.5: Focus Wall Classroom Design

This is another classroom design used with desks to create “table groups” to create an inclusive setting. There is also the colored carpet used for a seating area when doing activities on the focus wall. The classroom schedule is clearly posted on the focus wall. There is also a small area created for the classroom library and quiet area.

Caption: Pictured above is a classroom with 5 desks put together to create tables. There is an open area with a rainbow colored carpet where the focus wall is displayed. In the corner there is a small reading area where the classroom library is located.
Example 2.6: Horseshoe Classroom Design

This classroom design is used with desks to create a U shape around the class to ensure all students can see the whiteboard, and that everyone has a working buddy they can refer to for help. The teacher’s desk is front and center to create an equal and inclusive environment.

Caption: Pictured above are desks put together to create three oblong shape table groups. The desks are then placed in a horseshoe formation. In the open area in the middle is where the teacher’s desk is placed.
Chapter 3: Classroom Rules

Classroom rules are imperative when designing an inclusive classroom. Classroom rules are needed to maintain organization and prevent behavioral issues. When developing the rules the students should participate in the process, this ensures that every child feels included, important, and has a sense of belonging within the classroom. It is important that the students understand that the classroom does not only belong to the teacher, but that it is also theirs. Classroom rules should reflect the students and their personalities. Thus, the classroom rules might change yearly depending on the various personalities in the class. Developing the rules as a class on the first day of school will help the students take ownership and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Having the students participate in signing the completed list of rules is an additional way of acknowledging they understand what is expected of them. It is also important that there are visuals to accompany the written rules for students who are visual learners.

Examples of Classroom Rules:
- Raise your hand to ask a question
- Use kind and polite words
- Do your best
- Share with each other
- Keep your hands and feet to yourself
- Quiet voices
- Listen to who is speaking
- Look at the teacher
- Be prepared

The following are examples of visuals for displaying and communicating classroom rules.
Example 3.1: Five Basic Rules Posted

A clear list of classroom rules that are posted in front of the room and visible. This is a good example because it clearly lists the agreed upon rules and has a visual that accompanies the writing. It is also hung in the front of the class near the ceiling so it is always in view for the students to refer to.

Caption: Shown above are five classroom rules (e.g., Listen when your teacher is talking) on a banner that would run across the wall just below the ceiling so all students can clearly see the basic rules.
Example 3.2: We Promise Poster
A classroom promise of agreed actions that are acceptable in the classroom. Student then sign and put their handprint to acknowledge their understanding of the promise. This is interactive with the students, and it ensures that they participate in the process of creating the rules and have a sense of belonging amongst their peers and with the teacher.

Caption: Pictured above is a poster of the classroom promise with a handwritten list of the classroom rules (e.g. we promise to make good choices). Each student wrote their name around the boarder of the promise, and then put a handprint on their name with paint.
Example 3.3: High 5 Poster

This is a simplified list of rules that are agreed upon with the students. This particular visual is helpful for younger students who can understand the phrase “high 5” or “give me 5” and can relate the saying to the five proper behaviors they should be demonstrating.

Caption: Shown above is a poster titled “High 5” on a hand. Under the title is a list of the five classroom rules (e.g. I will be positive)
Example 3.4: Class Promise Bulletin

This is another example of the classroom promise made between the students and the teacher. It is clearly written out and students draw a picture of themselves to represent their signature. It is then hung in front of the class as to be visible at all times for students to refer to.

Caption: Pictured above is a paragraph listing all of the classroom rules (e.g. we take turns and help each other). Each student drew a picture of their face and they are placed around the boarder of the bulletin.
Example 3.5: Classroom Rules with Visuals

This is an example of a very clear and concise list of classroom rules. Visually it is appealing for students because it lists the rule, a description, and then a visual of what that rule looks like. Thus, ensuring all students learning styles are met when creating the visual for the classroom.

Caption: Pictured above is a poster of the six classroom rules (e.g. listening bodies). Each rule has a definition with a visual next to it (e.g. listening bodies has a student sitting nicely at their desk).
Example 3.6: We Pledge To Poster
This is an example of classroom rules that are agreed upon. To relate it to the Pledge of Allegiance, the rules are written on the stripes, and each student makes a star that symbolizes their pledge agreeing to follow the agreed upon rules. This is another interactive way to create the classroom rules to ensure all students participate and feel included when agreeing as a class.

Caption: Pictured above is a hand drawn poster resembling an American Flag. It has six horizontal rows, each row containing a classroom rule (e.g. always stay on task). In the upper left corner is a box where the stars go, each student cut out a star, put their name on it and placed it in the box.
Chapter 4: Classroom Jobs

Classroom jobs are another area of classroom design that helps ensure every student is included and participates in the classroom community. This is a positive way to teach students about responsibility and inclusion. Developing a rotation system with how the jobs are assigned ensures every student will experience every responsibility. This allows the teacher to observe the students in action and learn who is good at each task. This also allows for students to learn what they like to do, and learn a new skill that they may be good at. The teacher can then assign jobs based on personality, skill, and enjoyment for each student. Classroom jobs provide students with a responsibility and then a sense of accomplishment once they have fulfilled their duty. In addition, the jobs help build students self-esteem and promote an inclusive environment. The following are examples of classroom jobs and how they can be displayed in the classroom.

Examples of classroom jobs:

- Line leader
- Office messenger
- Class library organizer
- Pass out papers
- Board eraser
- Phone answerer
- Homework Checker
- Attendance taker
- Classroom organizer
- Lights
- Floor monitor
- Door holder
- Absent clerk
Example 4.1: Technology Driven Design

This is a visual that can be displayed in the classroom to ensure every student see what the jobs are. The teacher can use popsicle sticks with names on them to identify who is assigned which jobs. This is a great visual to engage student’s interest because of the high interest with electronics and technology. Many students enjoy technology and are tech savvy. By incorporating classroom visuals that are relevant to them, such as visuals including technology helps keep student engagement. The individual envelopes and popsicle sticks make it easy to rotate jobs to promote an inclusive environment.

Caption: Pictured above is a square poster resembling an ipad. It is titled iHelp and has three horizontal rows with five individual envelopes in each row. Each envelope has a visual of the classroom job and underneath it is the title of the job.
Example 4.2: Help Wanted Poster

This visual is very similar to example 4.1, it uses envelopes and popsicle sticks to identify who is assigned to which job. Each envelope has a picture of what the job, and the title below it to ensure all students understand. It uses the concept of a newspapers “help wanted” ad to engage students.

Caption: Pictured above is a laminated newspaper with the title “Help Wanted” at the top. There are three horizontal rows with four individual envelopes in each row. Each envelope has a picture containing a classroom job with the title below it. Each envelope also has one popsicle stick with a students name on it to assign that student to the job.
Example 4.3: You’re Hired Ribbon Design

This is another way to implement classroom jobs using the “help wanted” and “you’re hired” concept. This is very simplified with two columns of ribbon with the jobs listed and a picture that corresponds to ensure complete understanding of the duty. The teacher could use “hands” or nametags to place next to each job duty. This is also an easy set-up for rotating the jobs to ensure every student experiences each responsibility.

Caption: Shown above are two pictures. On the left is a typed sign that says, “you’re hired!” with two pieces of ribbon attached to it. The ribbon hangs vertically and has two circles listing classroom jobs (e.g. Librarian) attached to each ribbon. The right picture contains a more detailed picture of the small circles with the classroom jobs. The circles consist of a picture of the job and a title listed below it.
Example 4.4: Casting Call Poster

This example is a way to reward students with jobs for their positive behavior. Each job listed has a description of what the job entails. Students earn points and then pick the job they would like for the week. Once you have done a job you must choose a different one the following week to ensure the rotation of jobs is still occurring. Implementing classroom jobs is a simple way to teach responsibility and helps promote an inclusive classroom.

Caption: Shown above is two vertical posters with the title “Casting Call”. The posters contain a list of the classroom jobs and a detailed description of what the job entails. The boarders of the posters are yellow circles that align next to each job. In the middle of each circle is a piece of Velcro so that a star can be attached containing a student’s name to assign them a job.
Chapter 5: Behavioral Management

Behavior management is essential for creating a successful inclusive classroom. Student behaviors need to be managed to provide a structured classroom environment. Once boundaries are provided to students, it allows for a risk-free environment and students understand what behavior is expected from them (Wood, J.W., 2002, p. 262). It is important to follow through and be consistent with the class wide behavior strategies implemented. To successfully implement an inclusive classroom, it is imperative to determine the antecedent of a behavior that a specific student may continue to exhibit. Once the antecedent has been determined, the teacher may need to implement a more specific behavior plan for that individual student as well as the classroom behavioral strategies. The following is a list of simple interventions for surface level behaviors, and examples of various whole class and individual behavior strategies.

Simple Interventions:

- Signal interference
- Planned ignoring
- Proximity control
- Diffusing Tension through humor
- Support the routine
- Create high engagement lessons
- Remove distracting objects

Example 5.1: Clip Up/Down Chart

This is a behavioral chart that allows every student to start on the green face, labeled “ready to learn”. Every student has a clothespin with his or her name attached to the chart. The teacher acknowledges when a student is doing a positive or negative behavior, and instructs the student to clip up or down depending on their behavior. The students have the ability to go up and down the chart throughout the day. This behavior strategy is an effective strategy in an inclusive classroom because it allows the opportunity for all students to reach “extraordinary” by the end of each day.

Caption: Pictured above are five pieces of paper with a different face and color on each paper (e.g. a green smiley face labeled “ready to learn”). The green face is the starting place for every student’s clip at the beginning of the day.
Example 5.2: Bravo Board Strategy

This is a behavior strategy commonly known as “table points”. Each group of students is given an assigned color, and the teacher gives out a tally mark at their discretion. At the end of the week or day the group with the most points earns an award that is determined ahead of time. This is another effective strategy in inclusive classrooms because it provides students with disabilities to participate with their peers, and being exposed to and learning proper social behaviors.

Caption: Pictured above is a white board titled “bravo board”. There are five different color squares vertically with tally marks next to each color.
Example 5.3: Marble Jars Strategy

This is used as a whole class behavior strategy. The teacher is given a jar with marbles in it, and the students are given an identical jar and marbles. The teacher puts some of their marbles into the students’ jar when they exhibit positive behavior. When the students are disruptive or exhibit negative behavior, the teacher takes some marbles from the students’ jar and adds them to the teacher jar. This strategy is effective in an inclusive setting because it promotes positive behavior from all students creating an environment where they must work all together.

Caption: Pictured above are two jars that contain marbles. One jar is designated for the teacher and the other is labeled “students’ marbles”.


Example 5.4: Coin System Strategy

This is a behavior strategy that includes all students but every student is accountable for their own behavior, as opposed to a team aspect. Each student has their name on the board, and is given coins of different value at the teacher’s discretion. The teacher can set a goal amount, and the students who meet the goal at the end of the week can earn awards from the treasure box or free time.

Caption: Pictured above is a whiteboard with two rows of owls with student’s names on them. Next to each owl are different value coins that students have earned.
Example 5.5: Token Board Strategy

This is a behavioral strategy that is modified for an individual student to may exhibit behaviors more frequently. The student decides what they are working for, and then has to earn five stars to earn their reward. The stars are given based on the student’s behavior and at the discretion of the teacher.

Caption: Pictured above is a small white board with five squares across the top and have Velcro in each one where a star can be earned. There are two stars in the first two boxes. In the middle of the whiteboard it is labeled “I am working for…” with a picture of Cheetos below it as an example.
Chapter 6: Differentiation

When creating an inclusive classroom it is imperative that each lesson is customized to meet the academic needs of every student. When teachers differentiate the academic content, positive academic and behavioral outcomes increase for all the students, and there is increased effectiveness of the overall academic instruction (Thousand, J.S., Villa, R., & Nevin, A., 2007, p. 7). To successfully implement an inclusive classroom a teacher must support the learning by providing curriculum, instruction, and assessment that is uniquely constructed to each student’s individual learning needs (Sapon-Shevin, M., 2010, p. 148). The following are examples of accommodation and modifications that can be easily and quickly implemented to differentiate to meet the needs of the learners.

Example 6.1: Highlighting Paper

When students are instructed to complete a writing assignment, it is a simple and quick modification to highlight the lines on a piece of paper for a student who may have difficulty writing. This ensures the student can focus on their thoughts, and have guidance on where to start and stop their sentences.
Example 6.2: Sentence Frames

Sentence frames are providing the student with the first few words of a sentence to assist them in gathering their thoughts and ideas. This is an excellent modification for students who struggle with writing and brainstorming because it allows them to understand what the teacher is asking for. An example of a sentence frame and how to implement it would be if a teacher asked the students to write in their journal with answering the question “what is your favorite movie?” The teacher would then provide a sentence frame to an individual student or the entire class depending on the needs of the learners, “My favorite movie is ______ because ______.”

Caption: Pictured above are six strips of paper with a sentence frame on each one (e.g. I like (fill in the blank)).
Example 6.3: Graphic Organizers

Graphic Organizers are a great way to assist students with organizing their writing and ideas. This can be implemented as an whole class differentiation or on an individual basis.

There are many graphic organizers such as, t-charts, concept maps, Venn diagrams, story maps, timelines, and cause-and-effect charts. Some are very simplified and others are more complex.

Deciding on which chart to provide for the student(s) depends on their learning needs.

Caption: Pictured above is a Venn Diagram.
Caption: Pictured above is a story map graphic organizer that consists of five blank squares.

Each square is labeled with a part of a story (e.g. characters, setting, etc.).
Example 6.4: Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is an individualized accommodation based on the learning needs of the student. Assistive technology can be critical for some students to successfully succeed academically. It can be extremely useful for students who have extreme difficulty with writing/spelling, or a physical impairment that prevents them from writing. There are many talk to text programs that allow the students to say what they want and the program types it for them. Assistive technology is also beneficial for students who have visual impairments. These students can use programs where books are read to the students, in addition to the talk to text programs.
References


