



Chapter 4

Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms

Pooja is a teacher in primary school in a village. She has undergone some training but finds it difficult to teach in a large class having children, from different grades. Though she likes children she finds teaching in such circumstances very challenging. There are also a few children with disabilities in her class. There are so many things that she has to think and plan about: What to teach? What materials to use? Where to get these materials from? How to make curriculum accessible to all children? How can a single teacher do so much?

In any rural setting there may be just one or two teachers in a primary school. These teachers may find their work extremely challenging. To be a good teacher means reacting to the interests of different children and building teaching on what the children already know, which may sometimes prove to be difficult. This chapter will give you some ideas about how to plan teaching and





learning in inclusive classrooms that comprise of children with diverse abilities and from varied backgrounds.

As mentioned earlier, inclusion basically is an attitude of acceptance of diversities. For teaching in an inclusive classroom, a teacher needs to possess competencies that help her/him to plan and implement strategies that provide students wider access to regular curriculum. Research says that the teachers in an inclusive classroom should have the:

- ❑ ability to problem-solve, to be able to informally assess the skills a student needs (rather than relying solely on standardised curriculum);
- ❑ ability to take advantage of children's individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing required skills;
- ❑ ability to set high but alternative expectations that are suitable for the students. This means developing alternative assessments;
- ❑ ability to make appropriate expectations for each student, regardless of the student's capabilities. If teachers can do this, it allows all students to be included in a class and school; and
- ❑ ability to learn how to value all kinds of skills that students bring to a class, not just the academic skills. In doing this, teachers will make it explicit that in their classrooms they value all skills (Chadha, A. 2001)⁷.

Also the teachers must be able to:

- ❑ recognise and respond to the diversity of students in their classrooms;
- ❑ accommodate to students' different learning styles and rates of learning by employing a range of teaching methods, including cooperative group learning, peer tutoring, team teaching and individualised instruction;
- ❑ be aware of the rights of students with education support needs
- ❑ locate appropriate material, equipment or specialists; and
- ❑ identify and overcome barriers to learn.
- ❑ consult with and develop partnerships with parents/caregivers and colleagues;
- ❑ use appropriate forms of assessment;
- ❑ adapt their instruction to the prior knowledge and beliefs of students;

⁷ Chadha, A. (2001). Teaching Competencies in Inclusive Education. In Julka, A. (eds.) *Inclusive Education: Orientation Package for Teacher-educators*. Unpublished manuscript, National Council of Educational Research and Training.

- ❑ create an inclusive community that extends beyond the walls of the school; and
- ❑ seek to enhance the self-esteem of all students (Quinn, S. and Ryba, K. 2000)⁸.

Teaching Strategies

The last section described some of the teaching competencies required to teach in an inclusive classroom. On one hand, the teacher in an inclusive classroom has to accommodate the different learning styles and rates of learning. On the other hand, s/he has to ensure that equitable educational opportunities are provided to all students. Therefore, the first step is to ensure that effective and inclusive teaching practices are in place. The following are the two major strategies that are commonly used in inclusive classrooms:

- (a) Cooperative Learning
- (b) Peer Tutoring

(a) Cooperative Learning

While using cooperative learning methods, the class has to be divided into mixed ability groups to achieve a goal. To use this



⁸ Quinn, S. and Ryba, K. (2000). *Linking Inclusive Policies with Best Teaching Practices*. In Deborah Fraser, Roger Moltzen and Ken Ryba (eds.) *Learners with Special Needs in Aotearoa*. New Zealand. Dunmore Press.

you will require a large room or an open space where you can form groups. The following factors may have to be taken into consideration while using this strategy.

- Students in a group may have same or different goals to achieve.
- Students may be assigned different roles.
- Students accept ideas from others.
- Students help each other to learn.
- Students interact with each other to solve problems.

Techniques of Cooperative Learning

You can plan the technique you are going to use for grouping from your own experiences. However, some examples are given below:

- ❑ Students may be assigned to groups. The aim of each group is to study what the teacher has taught and help each group member to achieve the highest level possible.
- ❑ Students may start with a partner and end in a group. The students convey their knowledge about a topic to a partner and both may reach an agreement finally sharing this information with other group members or with the whole class.
- ❑ Students may form groups. The teacher may provide each group member a piece of information related to a topic. The group members can put their pieces of together to present to the class.
- ❑ Students may form groups to research on various topics and bring together the facts learned to present to the class. This clarifies the topic in detail and all students participate in the teaching-learning process.



Examples of Teaching Strategies

- Observe carefully and plan interventions for students at risk
- Let the light fall on your face and not behind you. This would be helpful in lip reading
- Audio visual presentations are helpful for all students
- Signing helps in communicating with children who cannot understand the language of instruction well
- Adapt curriculum materials when required to suit the needs of different students
- Use hands-on approach that maximises the use of all senses
- Expose students to real objects and meaningful experiences in natural environments at naturally occurring times of the day
- Let all students experience success
- Collaborate with experts to teach learning strategies and study skills to students
- Provide extra time if required to complete assignments
- Provide small group tutoring or individual tutoring in or outside the class
- Maintain high expectations for all
- Provide leadership opportunities
- Teach appropriate social skills
- Use a pleasant tone of voice
- Never make fun of any child
- Provide opportunities to use language
- Promote positive interdependence in the class
- Teach life skills
- Keep directions brief and clear
- Give examples
- Have interclass and within class groupings
- Provide reinforcements
- Ensure success for all

Classroom Design Modifications

- *Students who are able to lip read or not able to see should be placed in front rows*
- *Classroom should be well lit without shadows and glares*
- *Make children with disabilities sit with a competent peer*
- *Remove sources of excessive noise from the classroom*
- *Speak and write on the blackboard simultaneously*
- *Put posters and displays in the classroom at eye level of students*
- *Provide adequate furniture for meeting the special needs of children*
- *Eliminate sharp objects from the wall*
- *Assist the visually impaired with good colour schemes*
- *Provide flexible group learning areas*
- *Have flexible time schedules*
- *Personally meet the needs of all students*

(b) Peer Tutoring

A peer is defined as the individual of the same social gathering. In an inclusive classroom peer means a fellow student. Peer tutoring, thus, means students teaching each other on one-to-one basis. So when a student from same age or class provides instruction to another student of the same age or class the technique is called peer-tutoring. This tutoring is within the class.

It is also possible in some situations that an older student may tutor younger students. This is called *cross-age tutoring*. Sometimes, peer-tutoring may prove to be quite effective and both the tutor and the student receiving instructions, the tutee, may gain from the process. However, it is not necessary that students with special needs should always play the role of a tutee.



According to M. Dash⁸ (2001) in peer tutoring the tutor should perform four acts, such as:

- Monitoring means supervision and regulation of the performance of a tutee;
- Reinforcing means providing appropriate contingencies for approved behaviour. S/he may praise the tutee if s/he has completed the work to a required standard;
- Modelling means the demonstration of a particular activity or behaviour by the peer tutor; and

⁸ Dash, M.M. (2001). Classroom for All. In Julka, A. (eds.) *Inclusive Education: Orientation Package for Teacher Educators*. Unpublished manuscript, National Council of Educational Research and Training.

- Explaining means exposing the relationships on a topic and providing appropriate examples to clarify doubts.

Some Examples of Curricular Modifications

Following are some examples of curricular modifications that will help in addressing the special needs of different children:

1. *Multi Level Curriculum Instructions* refers to teach a diverse group of learners within a shared activity in which students have individually appropriate learning outcomes within the same curricular area (Giangreco, Cloninger and Salce Iverson, 1998⁹). For example, in a science class while majority of students may be working on what makes objects float or sink students with special needs may be understanding the concept of sinking and floating and the difference between them.
2. *Curriculum overlapping* happens when students have individually appropriate learning outcomes from different curricular areas but work on these in a shared activity. For example, when students are working in groups some may be achieving the learning outcomes for social studies while students with special needs may be working on development of communication skills.
3. *Students with Physical Disabilities*– may require adaptations to the physical environment of the school like ramps, proper toilets etc.
4. *Students with severe visual impairments*–may require adaptations in the equipment and the materials like reading material in Braille.
5. *Students with intellectual challenges*–may require modification in the curricular content to provide less complex information and learning of functional and vocational skills.

Theatre is the most inclusive subject as it challenges both disabled and non-disabled. The stereotype of success and ability enforced through schools and colleges lead to a scuttling of learning through expression of human face, body and sound, says veteran theatre personality Steve Clorfeine.

***Source: Disability News and Information Service National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People
<http://www.dnls.org/>***

⁹ Giangreco, M., Cloninger, C., and Salce Iverson, V. (1998). *Choosing outcomes and accommodations for children* (2nd edition). Baltimore: Paul H. Brooks.

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6. *Students with hearing impairments* may require the teacher to use short sentences, look at the student often while talking and ask the peers to help as much as possible.
 7. Finally, Johnson (1993)¹⁰ has suggested to explore the following alternatives in relation to content, teaching materials, responses expected from the child and methods of assessment:
 - *modification*; for example, computer responses instead of oral responses;
 - *substitution*; for example, Braille for written materials;
 - *omission*; for example, omitting very complex work for children with intellectual disabilities; and
 - *compensation*; for example, self care skills, vocational skills.

What a teacher can do for children with disabilities to increase their access to school and learning potential:

1. Children with disabilities sometimes find it difficult to get to school. Try to organise transportation to school and make school accessible by ramps, and other resources that respond to specific needs.
2. When a child with a disability first comes to your school, talk with the family member who is with the child. Find out what the child's disabilities are and what she or he can do despite the disability. Ask about any problems and difficulties that the child may have.
3. When the child starts school, visit the parents from time to time to discuss with them what they are doing to facilitate the child's learning. Ask about plans for the child's future. Find out how you can best work with the family.
4. Ask if the child needs to take any medicines while in school.
5. If you do not have enough time to give the child all the attention she or he needs, ask the school or community to find a helper for you. The helper could give the children the extra help needed during school hours.
6. Make sure that the children can see and hear you when you teach. Write clearly so that they can read what you are saying. Also, let a child with a disability sit in front of the classroom so, they can see and hear better.
7. Find out if the child and the parents have problems about schooling. Ask if the family thinks that other school children are helpful to the child and whether the child gets on well at school.

UNICEF <http://www.unicef.org/teachers/protection/access.htm>

¹⁰Johnson, T. (1993). *Toward an Inclusive School*, Geneva: UNDP.

CBSE Relaxation for Disabled Children

The facilities extended by the Board to the disabled candidates (Dyslexic, Blind, Spastic and candidate with Visual Impairment) are as under:

1. The persons with disabilities (Dyslexic, Blind, Spastic and Candidate with Visual Impairment) have the option of studying one compulsory language as against two. The language opted by them should be in consonance with the overall spirit of the Three Language Formula prescribed by the Board. Besides one language they can offer any four of the following subjects—Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Science, Another Language, Music, Painting, Home Science and Introductory Information Technology.
2. From the 2002 Examination, alternate questions in lieu of questions requiring special skills based on visual inputs have been provided in Mathematics and Science for Secondary School Examination (Class X).
3. Blind, Physically Handicapped and Dyslexic students are permitted to use an amanuensis. The amanuensis must be a student of a class lower than the one for which the candidate is taking the examination.
4. The visually handicapped students appearing from Delhi were provided questions papers with enlarged print for 2003 Examination;
5. Disabled candidates are allowed additional one hour (60 minutes) for each paper of external examination.
6. Board does not give relaxation in minimum marks prescribed by it.
7. Exemption from Examination in the Third Language.
8. The Board considers the Physiotherapeutic exercises as equivalent to Physical and Health Education course of the Board.
9. Centre Superintendents have been instructed to make arrangements for the conduct of the examination of such candidates on the ground floor as far as possible.
10. Physically challenged children will specifically indicate their category and also state whether they have been provided with a Writer in the columns provided in the main answer book.
11. Answer books of such candidates are evaluated by the Regional Officers at one Nodal Centre.

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12. The Centre Superintendents have been requested to send the answer books of such candidates in a separate envelope to the Regional Officer concerned.
 13. Separate question papers in Science and Mathematics at Secondary (Class X) level have been provided for blind students w.e.f. 2003 Examinations.
 14. Assistant Superintendents for the blinds are teachers from the schools where the blinds are studying. As far as possible, teachers of the same subject are not allowed to be appointed on the day of examination. One invigilator is from outside the school.
 15. Assistant Superintendents supervising the physically challenged children who have been granted 60 minutes extra time are paid remuneration @ Rs 50 + 20.
 16. Amanuensis are paid @ Rs 100/- per day/paper daily by the Centre. Superintendent from the centre charges the amount.

Children studying in mainstream schools are first the responsibility of general education teachers. Collaboration with specialists may be sort only if the teachers are unable to meet some special needs of these children.