

What do we think we know about inclusion?

Inclusion means ensuring every learner has what they need to succeed in a group setting or environment. Inclusion is a good idea if sufficient supports are in place to ensure that exceptional learners have what they require to succeed. Given the current operating environment and financial constraints I'm not sure it would be feasible to do this effectively (i.e. by really supporting the needs of exceptional learners). In my opinion (I know everyone knows this I just feel better saying it) a great deal of effort would be required to assess re-engineering the service model and to determine if this is feasible from a financial and Human Resources perspective.

I don't like the focus of these questions because they all use the word "inclusion", and the opposite of inclusion is exclusion and that sounds bad.

Enhanced opportunities for learning.

We know

More workload on the teacher to prepare for the student and work with the extra staff in classroom if the child requires an EA or the LST/LRT

Inclusion means belonging.

There can be some exclusivity in being included in the group.

requires additional specialty staffing to assist the student with their educational plan

Inclusion must be genuine, not tokenistic.

Meaning of inclusion compared to purpose of inclusion.

You can put a definition out there for the meaning, but purpose is a harder piece to get to.

Inclusion means not being singled out.

we know it is hard because we all have prejudices and beliefs

There are several schools of thought. Some people think they are experts, some people are afraid, it can be expensive, there are positives and negatives, it blends (creates) diversity, it can be a hard sell,

We know

Sometimes the theory and ideal is not always realistic.

It can be straightforward and easy, or it can be very complex.

It doesn't always work because it is sometimes an afterthought.

We know

Children with the need for specific supports are included in a regular classroom

It touches everyone.

we know it doesn't always work because we don't have enough supports

There are always multiple needs which require multiple teaching styles and methods in addition to typically developing students that it becomes overwhelming for both staff and students.

Inclusion means being included in a group.

Empowering the student to fully participate as any other student in the classroom or activity

We know.....

Inclusion is students with all abilities and disabilities included in the regular classroom.

What do we think we need to know about inclusion?

We also need to think about the impact on teachers, EAs and other support staff/staff. What will the impact (both positive and negative) be on staff if we transition to an inclusive environment? Will this be better or worse than our current operating environment/service delivery model? How do we support teachers and support staff and provide them with tools and training to assist exceptional learners in larger/ mainstream environments (for example using ABA techniques in larger settings is possible but poses more challenges due in part to intervention from other individuals/students - you essentially have less control over the environment and what is being reinforced either intentionally or unintentionally both behaviourally and academically).

Is it possible to include all learners in inclusive environments? One consideration would be the need to look at student profiles and do an assessment for each type of learner. For example a learner on the spectrum with severe sensory issues may have a difficult time participating in an inclusive or mainstream environment because the noise and movement in the room may be too much.

EAs are only provided for behaviour or medical needs

Does it bump up against diversity?

That each classroom with an "included student" will have additional support

What happens when a child is included in a class, but their needs are not fully supported?

How are students qualified to be included?

Inclusion includes all children no matter the level of need

What is the optimal staffing model to ensure the included child gets full needs and educational support

Inclusion doesn't work for all students

When is it beneficial?

Is there a hard definition?

Part of me wants a set of statements that help me understand where we still need to go. Is a definition idealistic? Is it culturally acceptable? Why is inclusion something people oppose? Am I brave enough to say there are some circumstances when inclusion is not acceptable? Is inclusion necessarily achievable in this climate?

Does it work? Does it contribute to the wellbeing of those being "included," and to the population as a whole?

Less time for non-exceptional students

Teachers are preparing multiple lessons and required to provide a great of one-on-one with one student to the detriment of others

How do students feel about it? Do they feel as if they're afterthoughts? As if they're being consulted and heard?

Lack of Peers

Students can have a lack of peers when included.

Who decides/

Who decides what the definition is? Does there have to be one definition, or is it differentiated based on values, culture, beliefs?

How do we evaluate and measure the success on individual and group level? Would you evaluate on both performance and the student experience/ perception of if they feel they are included.

Inclusion

Not interest of the student

We need to know how to be successful in achieving student success in an inclusionary classroom

We need to know what supports are available and how to access them. But....we also cannot have 10 different teams coming in and just loading suggestions on to classroom staff that are already overwhelmed with the needs.

What do we think are the complexities of this discussion?

Complexities include:
Financial and staffing considerations
Class sizes
Needs of learners
Impact on other students
Answering the question - if this is a feasible option - is this the best or a better option than our current service delivery model and how do we measure or assess this

Needs?

Does accommodating the very high needs of a student to meet the goal of inclusion sometimes come at the expense of other students with exceptionalities who may also have needs....but whose needs may not appear as high (example--learning needs as opposed to other needs). What does "undue hardship" mean in a resource constrained environment.

What is the impact on children that are seeing behaviour issues that are seemingly not addressed

Us vs Them

Community

Family has a desire for their child to remain in their own community where they have support systems in place, siblings, no hour long bus rides, etc.

How are teachers needs being met in included classrooms. Are they being reassured they are doing a good job - even if the impacts/results are not evident

Trauma to other students

students are afraid

All situations are unique. Individual characteristics, etc, makes it challenging to optimize accomodations and supports to match student expectations vs encouragement and supports

Measuring efficacy

Parents ask if there are multiple high needs students included, how does the teacher make sure all children's learning needs are addressed daily

Class Size

How do we reach every child and insure the integrity of programming for all students?

One size fits all?

One size fits all brings a risk of assuming "we" know best. How does it consider individual choice/rights/beliefs

Behaviours Increase

Better to be bad than dumb...

How is the mental health and educational needs being impacted by non-high needs student i.e evacuations

Different views (parent versus staff) on what is best for the student in terms on inclusion.

Self Esteem

Students feel different, dumb, etc...

How is the teacher's time allocated between high needs and non-high needs

Appropriateness of inclusion/exclusion.

Oh hell! Bigger brains have struggled with this one.

Is there is a way to get past the known complexities? Can complex situations co-exist constructively and effectively? Can our differences on the issue of inclusion be respected and acknowledged for what they are - are there ways to work with/around obstructive people?

Each group feels that their diversity is important and needs to be heard.

How can we ensure that everyone is addressing exceptionalities the same way?

Does everyone have the same approach/vision for inclusion?

Resources

Staff skills (EAs, ECEs, teachers) and staffing.

This discussion is complex because there are multiple meanings to the definition of inclusion. Does it just mean that the child/student is integrated all day? Does it mean they are included in all activities, some activities whether appropriate or not?
