

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ITS BENEFITS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### **Abstract.**

*Inclusive teaching plays an essential role in teaching in Higher education. Inclusive learning and teaching recognizes all student's entitlement to a learning experience that respects diversity, enables participation, removes barriers and anticipates and considers a variety of learning needs and preferences. This article identifies the advantages of inclusive teaching in higher education.*

### **Key words.**

*Inclusive teaching, respect, friendly atmosphere, method, culture.*

### **Introduction**

Inclusive education takes into account the different needs of all students in order to create an inclusive learning environment. This can be done by modifying the teaching methods, materials, and resources used in the classroom and creating a supportive school culture. Inclusive education can benefit all students, not just those with special needs. Inclusive education is a term used to describe a type of schooling where all students, regardless of ability or disability, have access to quality education that meets their specific needs. This can be done in a variety of ways, depending on the school and the community.

According to Sheridan Center "Inclusive teaching is an explicit intellectual and affective inclusion of all students into our fields and disciplines, through course content, assessment, and/or pedagogy" While Dewsbury in 2017 gave his own contribution to the definition inclusive teaching as follows: "A philosophy of teaching that provides equal opportunities for all students to have a successful learning experience" <sup>123</sup>. Furthermore, Saunders, S and Kardia claimed that content and other course objectives are "explicitly viewed from the multiple perspectives

<sup>123</sup> Dewsbury, B. (2017). On faculty development of STEM inclusive teaching practices. FEMS Microbiology Letters, 364(18): 2.

and varied experiences of a range of groups...and help students understand...how they construct knowledge in any field or discipline."<sup>124</sup>

Besides that following opinions are also given about inclusive teaching. According to Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M. & Lovett, M.C. (2010) stated that "Even though some of us might wish to conceptualize our classrooms as culturally neutral or might choose to ignore the cultural dimensions, students cannot check their sociocultural identities at the door, nor can they instantly transcend their current level of development [...] Therefore, it is important that the pedagogical strategies we employ in the classroom reflect an understanding of social identity development so that we can anticipate the tensions that might occur in the classroom and be proactive about them."<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Gibbs, K.D., & Marsteller, P. (2016) highlighted that "We defined the term 'broadening participation' to mean efforts that develop talent and promote the inclusion of students and scientists from all social backgrounds in all levels of the life sciences (K-12 through postdoctoral training, early-career independence, and senior leadership). ... It is our vision that the results of broadening participation efforts would be a vibrant scientific enterprise that continues to harness the contributions of those from traditionally well-represented backgrounds while fostering full participation and engagement of those from other backgrounds (e.g., women, racial and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, sexual and gender minorities, first-generation students, those from low-income backgrounds)."<sup>126</sup>

### Methodology

In order to identify the advantages of inclusive education in higher education, I have conducted an interview with several senior teachers at the workplace. The interview questions consisted of 3 questions as follows:

1. What is inclusive teaching in your mind?
2. What kind of advantages does inclusive teaching in higher education?
3. Do you prefer to conduct inclusive teaching?

According to these questions, the teachers were questioned and their answers were recorded to the Checklist. In order to conduct this mini research, observation

<sup>124</sup> Saunders, S., & Kardia, D. (2000). Inclusive classrooms: Part one of a two-part series. *The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education*, 10(15): 21.

<sup>125</sup> Ambrose, S. A., Bridges, M.W., DiPietro, M. & Lovett, M.C. (2010). *How learning works: Seven research-based principles for smart teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass. 169-170.

<sup>126</sup> Gibbs, K.D., & Marsteller, P. (2016). Broadening participation in the life sciences: Current landscape and future directions. *CBE Life Sciences Education*, 15(3).

and comparison methods are used. All results have been investigated and they were generalized.

#### Results and Discussions

According to the results of the interview, the benefits of the inclusive teaching are subtitled as follows:

##### Helps All Students Reach Their Full Potential

Inclusive education benefits all students by providing a learning environment that meets each student's individual needs. Inclusive education allows all students equal access to the general education curriculum, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. This approach helps all students reach their full potential by providing the necessary support they need to succeed.

##### Creates a Culture of Acceptance and Understanding

Inclusive education seeks to create a culture of acceptance and understanding by bringing together all students, regardless of ability, in one learning environment. By doing so, inclusive education helps to break down the barriers that often exist between students with and without disabilities. This, in turn, fosters a sense of community and understanding amongst all members of the school community. Inclusive education also allows students with disabilities to learn from their peers, which can benefit them academically and socially.

##### Builds Friendships and Bonds Between Classmates

Inclusive education helps classmates bond and build friendships with one another. By having all students in the same classroom, regardless of abilities, classmates have the opportunity to get to know each other better. They can learn from one another, share experiences, and make friends. This can help to break down barriers and prejudice that may exist between different groups of people.

##### Prepares Students for Life After School

Inclusive education prepares students for life after school by allowing them to learn in various settings with different types of learners. This prepares them for the real world, where they will encounter people from all walks of life. Inclusive education also helps students learn how to work together and respect others' differences. This is an important life skill that will help them be successful in their personal and professional lives.

##### Benefits the Whole School Community

Inclusive education benefits the whole school community by creating a more tolerant and understanding environment. When all students are included in the classroom, it helps to break down social barriers and fosters a sense of community.

Inclusive education also allows all students to learn from each other and helps to develop empathy and compassion. By including all students in the learning process, we are teaching them to respect and accept each other for who they are. This is a valuable lesson that will benefit them throughout their lives.

#### Increased Self-Esteem and Confidence Among Students

Inclusive education can lead to an increase in self-esteem and confidence among students. By providing a learning environment that is welcoming and supportive, inclusive education can help all students feel seen and valued, regardless of their abilities or differences. This can boost self-confidence, as students come to see themselves as capable and valuable members of the community. Additionally, inclusive education can help students develop social and emotional skills, such as empathy and cooperation, which can also increase self-esteem. In short, inclusive education can be instrumental in helping all students feel confident and valued, both inside and outside the classroom.

#### Improved Social Skills Among Students

Inclusive education has been found to improve social skills among students. This is because inclusive education ensures that all students, regardless of their ability, are allowed to learn in a mainstream classroom setting. Inclusive education also allows for more significant interaction between students of different ability levels, which helps to break down barriers and misconceptions. As a result, students in inclusive education programs tend to have better social skills than those who are not in inclusive education programs. Furthermore, inclusive education fosters a sense of community among students, as they all work together towards a common goal.

#### Welcomes Diversity Within Schools

Inclusive education welcomes diversity within schools by providing a safe and supportive environment for all students. Inclusive education allows all students to feel accepted, respected, and valued for who they are. This education approach helps create a more positive and inclusive school climate, which is essential for promoting social justice and ensuring that all students have an opportunity to reach their full potential.

#### Improved Academic Outcomes

Inclusive Education has been found to improve academic outcomes among students with and without disabilities. A study by the National Center for Education Statistics found that, on average, students in inclusive settings perform better than those in segregated settings on standardized tests. This may be due to

the fact that inclusive settings provide students with a more diverse learning experience, which allows them to learn from and interact with classmates who have different strengths and weaknesses.

#### Help to Reduce Bullying and Harassment

Inclusive Education can help to reduce bullying and harassment in schools by creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students. By ensuring that all students feel welcome and included in the school community, inclusive education can help to prevent bullying and harassment from occurring. In addition, inclusive education can also help to provide support for students who have been victims of bullying or harassment. By providing students with a safe place to turn for help, inclusive education can help to reduce the negative impact that bullying and harassment can have on students' lives.

Overall, inclusive education has many benefits that all students can enjoy. It is important to remember that inclusive education is not just for students with special needs but for all students. All students can benefit from being in an inclusive learning environment. Moreover, it fosters a culture of respect and belonging. It also provides the opportunity to learn about and accept individual differences. Additionally, it provides all students with opportunities to develop friendships with one another. Friendships provide role models and opportunities for growth.

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