

THE FACTS ON EDUCATION

For a truly inclusive school

There is an ongoing debate between integration, with its particular emphasis on discrimination and segregation, and inclusion, which is known for potentially leading to teacher burnout and even abandonment of the profession. The following three definitions speak to the importance of achieving true inclusion that can produce healthy changes in all students and even in their teachers, who face the daily challenge of raising the performance level and ensuring the well-being of each and every student – a challenge that can end up taxing their own well-being.

CONCEPT	DEFINITION
Integration	The state of the relationship between the Self and the Other where each remains fixed. For example, a child who enters a class group, with neither the child nor the group experiencing any changes.
Assimilation	A relationship between the Self and the Other where the Self is in a position of change and the Other is in a position of fixity, or vice versa. A new student who adapts to other students in the class while none adapts to him or her is an example of assimilation, and vice versa, if some students adapt to a new student and he or she makes no effort to adapt to them.
Inclusion	The state of the relationship between the Self and the Other in which each changes and adapts. A child who joins a group experiences changes according to the influence of the group, and the group also changes in response to the child.

(Phyllis Dalley, 2014)

The usual indicators for an inclusive school, namely behaviour, success, adaptability, participation rates, and social interactions, often fail to measure the success of non-identified students in terms of their ZPD (Zone of Proximal Development) and in terms of their ability to accommodate diversity. We suggest the four components below to help ensure a more inclusive school.

COMPONENTS FOR A TRULY INCLUSIVE SCHOOL	
Empowering practices that help in meeting the basic needs of all students	For example, project-based learning, experiential learning, and all strategies that allow teachers to better manage their instructional time in order to provide more support to students who need it to feel productive in a group and to progress within teams of diverse strengths.
Contribution of new technologies – ICT (Information and Communication Technology)	Staff training in ICT essentials promotes the development of the skills required by learners, such as the recent “publishing know-how” skill. Like empowering practices, ICT requires a personal investment on the part of the teacher.
A place for Individualized assessment	Assessment designed to rank students and create competition among them can be detrimental to progress and mental health. It should be rethought for each individual student, in keeping with what Vygotsky calls the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which represents the distance between what is already known and new learning.
Coaching leads to student and teacher growth	Coaching is about guiding students strategically and astutely, letting them be their own masters, finding their own solutions to the problems they encounter and acquiring new knowledge. The teacher-coach helps students find their way through the growing flow of information; one-on-one sessions with each student give the most reserved students a chance to express themselves. Teacher-coaches will be better able to support struggling students in the time available to them, thus increasing their sense of self-efficacy.

For online resources and references please visit:
www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education

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