



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES FOR ADDRESSING DIVERSE NEEDS OF LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

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Abstract:

Inclusive education includes learners with or without disabilities capable of learning together in any ordinary educational setting with appropriate support services. It is essential in education system for the development of all children. The problems such as lack of positive attitude, well-educated teachers, appropriate resources, infrastructural facilities, awareness etc are creating obstacles for expanding the approach of inclusive education. Inclusive practices such as inclusive education at home, school and community environment is an important issue and utmost essential in present times. Inclusive community is helpful for all pupils with any socio emotional, socio economic and socio cultural backgrounds. The present paper focuses on how pedagogical practices are addressed in order to meet diverse needs of learners in inclusive classrooms.

Keywords:

Inclusive education, Pedagogical practices, Inclusive community, Disability.

Introduction:

Inclusive education is an approach which includes all students in a common educational setting recognizing diverse needs of learners and ensures quality education through appropriate curricula, teaching strategies, support services and partnership with the community and parents. It also includes all children with or without disabilities learn together. According to UNESCO, "Inclusive education means that the school can provide a good education to all pupil irrespective of their varying abilities. All children should be treated with respect and ensured equal opportunities to learn together. Teachers must work actively and deliberately to reach its goals".

The inclusive education system designed previously suited more to a homogeneous groups of learners but failed to accommodate individual needs of learners. Though inclusive education is gaining importance day by day, many schools still struggle to cater students with appropriate individualized support that can maximize achievement in learning. Lack of pedagogical practices, infrastructural facilities, lack of trained teachers are the difficulties faced in implementing inclusive education. Due to absence of comprehensive planning in

integrating pedagogical innovation with an efficient support system students with diverse learning needs would continue to experience educational disparities. Pedagogy refers to the methodology of teachers approach to teaching and learning using a specific curriculum in order to achieve specific goals.

Diversity can be defined in various ways based on the specific context. Broadly, it is referred to the presence of a large variety of occurrences. In present times global classrooms are characterized by diversity in accordance with varied cultural, linguistic, cognitive and socioeconomic origin which brings specific view points and difficulties to the classroom.

Research Objectives:

- To identify pedagogical practices that can be adapted for addressing the diversity in the classroom.
- To discuss the key pedagogical practices for accommodating diverse learning needs in the inclusive classroom.

Methodology:

The researcher has employed a review strategy. An extensive review of related literature has been done, and the most relevant research has been listed to draw general conclusions from particular facts.

Pedagogical foundation and differentiation:- The pedagogical foundations of the differentiation approach in education comes from the belief that every student possess unique learning needs, interests, and abilities. Pedagogical practices play a vital role in shaping the educational experience of pupils with diverse learning needs. The learners require specialized instructional methods in order to cater their unique learning needs and acknowledges that any specific teaching method is ineffective for reaching all students and maximizing their learning potential. It aims to tailor instruction in order to meet the diverse needs of learners within a classroom. Learners from diverse backgrounds possess different styles of learning, preferences and abilities. Therefore, instruction is designed in order to accommodate these differences and empower students to take ownership of their learning. In an inclusive classroom, teachers recognize the diversity of their students and collaborate with them to create a secure and supportive learning environment. Continuous professional development (CPD) and reflection are essential for teachers in order to refine their differentiation practices and meet the evolving needs of their students. Through these, educators can create more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments that increases academic achievements of all student.

Implications and application of cognitive and behavioral theories of learning:- There is an urgent need for various pedagogical practices in the effective teaching of students with special educational needs. The teaching strategies for inclusive education rests on several foundational theories that guide current practices and policies aiming to provide equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse learning needs. Some of the theories include Vygotsky's Social Constructivism, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence and Bandura's social learning theory.

Curriculum and Pedagogies as per recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP-2020):

- Shift towards understanding techniques of learning.
- Facilitate attaining the potentialities/hidden abilities of all learners.
- Integration of specific sets of skills and values across domains.

- Curriculum to focus on core concepts, constitutional values, and bonding with one's country.

Recent Pedagogies practices as per the research studies explored:

- Team teaching
- Problem posing teaching
- Inquiry-based instructions (IBD)
- Visualization as a strategy
- Technology-based teaching
- Collaborative learning in the classroom
- Imagery and Visualized learning
- Exemplifying in the classroom
- Experimental-learning in classroom

Adapting pedagogical practices addressing the needs of students with diverse abilities is a significant aspect of inclusive education. The researcher has selected and discussed only those pedagogical practices used for children with diverse abilities, ranging from gifted to developmental disorders. Differentiated instruction is another strategy, enabling teachers to modify curriculum content, processes, and products in order to align with individual students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2017).

Inclusive pedagogy is an approach that values diversity, promotes equity and creates an environment where students feel valued and empowered to learn together. Implementing inclusive pedagogies effectively requires careful planning, reflection, and adhere to best practices.

Below are pedagogical practices recommended for fostering inclusivity in educational settings:

- **Fostering an Inclusive Classroom Environment:** Apart from celebrating diversity inclusive classroom environment also provides encouragement. Teachers should establish norms that promote respect and inclusivity among learners, ensuring all students are valued and feel safe to express their perspectives. For example, setting ground rules for discussions can help prevent discriminatory language and behaviour (Gay, 2018).
- **Using Culturally Responsive Teaching:** Culturally responsive teaching acknowledges and integrates students' cultural backgrounds into the learning process. By incorporating diverse perspectives and materials into the curriculum, educators can make learning more relevant and interesting.
- **Differentiation of Instruction:** It is a key component of successful inclusive education where stress is laid on adjusting the learning process in order to meet each student's unique requirements, skills, and learning preferences. Differentiated instruction emphasizes that kids with special educational needs have particular cognitive, emotional, and physical obstacles that call for a more flexible teaching method, in contrast to traditional instruction, which assumes a one-size-fits-all approach. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to tailor their methods to meet varied needs recognizing that students learn

differently. Strategies such as using multiple formats for content delivery (e.g., visual, auditory, and hands-on activities) and providing alternative assessment options can help ensure equitable access to learning (Tomlinson, 2014).

- **Co-Teaching Models:** Co-teaching practices, where general and special education teachers work collaboratively, have been included to enhance student outcomes in inclusive settings (Friend et al., 2010).
- **Peer-Mediated Teaching Strategies:** Peer tutoring and cooperative learning activities encourage interaction between students of diverse abilities, foster academic and social growth (Carter et al., 2005). Some peer-mediated teaching practices include “peer teaching”, “partner learning”, “Peer education”, “child-teach-child”, and “mutual instruction”. Unlike peer tutoring, assigning roles based on strengths of students in group activities can ensure participation and build confidence. Three forms of peer tutoring are Class Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), Reciprocal Peer Tutoring (RPT).
- **Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS):** PBIS involves using practices in order to promote a positive classroom environment, which is essential for managing behaviour in inclusive classrooms (Sugai & Horner, 2002). It is a unique approach that eliminates challenging behaviour and supplements it with skills and tools helping students make better choices. Clear expectations, consistent reinforcement, and individualized behaviour plans help ensure all students feel motivated.
- **Assistive Technology:** Accessibility can be greatly improved by using assistive technology and software, allowing students to successfully interact with the curriculum and participate fully in class activities. Use of assistive technology, such as speech-to text tools or communication devices, can significantly support students with disabilities in accessing the curriculum (Edyburn, 2013).
- **Addressing Biases and Stereotypes:** Educators must actively reflect on and address their own biases, as these can unconsciously influence teaching practices and interactions with students. Regular professional development focused on equity and inclusion can help teachers identify and mitigate these biases (Sue, 2010).
- **Evaluate and Reflect:** Continuous assessment of teaching practices is essential in order to maintain inclusivity of education and for this educators should seek feedback from students, peers and self-evaluate to identify areas for improvement in their inclusive practices (Brookfield, 2017).
- **Teacher Expertise and Reflection:** Implementing differentiation requires skilled teachers who can effectively assess needs of students, plan and deliver differentiated instruction and reflect on its effectiveness. Critical reflective practice is essential in order to enhance teacher competencies, skills, and transform educational systems towards inclusion (Di Gennaro et al., 2014). Several key factors such as context, teaching experience, knowledge of inclusive education policies, pre-service education, professional learning and interaction with people with disabilities, affect teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive education (Wray et al., 2022).

Conclusion:

Understanding variety is an asset. The findings underlined the need for diverse pedagogical practices in order to accommodate different styles of learning. Additionally, it explained that various innovative and evidence-based pedagogical practices cater to the needs of diverse learners. Contemporary pedagogical frameworks and strategies highlights the importance of inclusivity and adaptability in education. The research concludes that significant challenges and limitations would remain; teachers should opt for a multifaceted approach by combining various pedagogical techniques in order to meet students' learning styles. Schools must promote cooperative learning strategies in order to enhance students' achievement in the classroom. Educators and policymakers must stay updated about best practices, emerging technologies, and new research. A teacher should have a deeper insights of pedagogical or teaching methods and learning styles to gain insights into optimising educational methods that enhance learners' ability and improve the efficiency of teaching.

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