



Getting Started with Inclusive Education

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Amanda Kirby

I think teachers are in a really good place to recognise when children are not progressing. Because if all the other children are progressing in the class and this child isn't, they're not progressing. So, sometimes we get hung up with "What is this?" And then, I think next is really to think at a functional level. So that if the child is finding it hard to attend, think about reasons why somebody might have challenges for attending. Is that intrinsic that it's difficult for them? So, ask the questions of yourself about that child. Do they find it difficult listening? Do they find it difficult focusing for any length of time? Do they seem to fidget and is that in certain subjects? Are they fidgeting more in French? Because they can understand English, but when it's another language they start to fidget a lot? So, what are the patterns of behavior that might give you clues?

So, being a detective to map some of that out can really help. When you can see that it is something like attention, then there are strategies you can do. So, can you make sure that they are at the end of the row? And if they want to stand up, you allow them to stretch? But at the same time, allow all the other kids to stretch as well, you know? So, it's how do you do things that are going to be useful for all the kids.

Because in that class of 30 you're going to have the child who's tired, who needs to attend, and you're gonna have the child who's impulsive that needs to attend. And you can have the child who's just, needs to be stretched further, you know? So, getting up and moving around would be useful for all of them. And I think that becomes less overwhelming for teachers to think, "I've got to differentiate my learning 30 times," to actually thinking about, "How do we have systems in our classroom that support different sorts of learners and differentiate the learning in that sort of way?" So, it could be thinking most seven-year-olds can't concentrate for more than 10 minutes.



Really can't concentrate! So, it would make sense to break up the classes and have just a point of stretching every 10 minutes. So, it's thinking about those things.

Paul Ellis

So, it might in fact be that the old ways, if we can put it that way, of teaching and learning, are actually only good for a very small number of people. (Colleagues humming approvingly). And if we were to adapt our ways of teaching and learning, it might be better for more people, including those who might otherwise have been excluded in some way.

Amanda Kirby

Yes. (All laughing)

Paul Ellis

To sum it up!

Amanda Kirby

To sigh! (All laughing) And I think that if you look at a normal distribution, so if you look at that sort of bell curve, really, in reality we teach to the mean, so we teach in the middle. So, we teach to those who can learn using the techniques we use to teach those we want to teach. So, it's a bit circuitous. And that some children find if they can't record, then they're disadvantaged, or they can't listen for a long time, then they're disadvantaged.

So, we also teach in our comfort zone. So, we often teach in a style which is comfortable for us to do so, and the least disruptive to us. And that's a practical thing that also is less challenging for us. So, if you've got a system that you can operate and it contains the 30 children, you'll use the system that contains most of them. So, it depends whether you are trying to teach to all or teach to some.

And I think the challenge is that sometimes differentiating is challenging 'cause it looks messy. (colleagues humming approvingly) And I think sometimes traditionally we'd like a neat classroom. And so, it's changing some of those metrics which say, "Untidy classrooms: children getting up, children moving around may be a really good classroom." 'Cause it says that working in groups, and then coming back to the front, and really thinking about flip classrooms as well, thinking about different styles of teaching. Maybe some of those different methodologies actually include all the children.