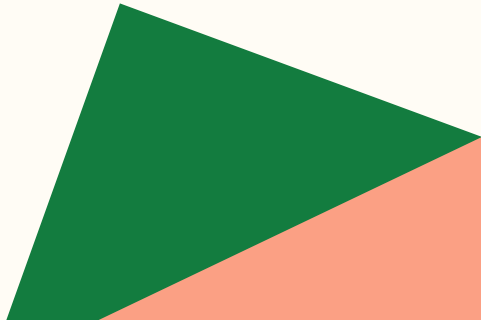


Final Choice Project: Inclusion or Exclusion?
Katie Morgan

Department of Education, University of Northern
British Columbia

EDUC 626: Inclusive Education: Learning For All

Melanie Raymond
June 9th, 2025



To start....

- For my choice project I would like to further explore the topic of inclusion within our classrooms and if this is really including all students or further marginalizing our students who are the least bit different from their peers.
- Throughout the five short years of my career as a public school educator, I have already experienced how difficult it can be to create a truly inclusive classroom. Our classrooms are complex environments and while our education system promotes the inclusion of all students, there's ongoing debate about whether the approach of inclusion truly includes everyone, or if it unintentionally excludes those who differ from their peers.
- Some argue that creating alternate spaces for students with complex needs separates them from their peers. However, it can also be seen as placing them in an environment where they are best supported. There are many challenges associated with creating an inclusive classroom such as the lack of resources provided and the already high stress environment schools can be.

This project will examine:

Throughout this presentation I hope to address the following questions I have regarding inclusion within our classrooms:

- **Is inclusion simply about presence, or is it about meaningful participation and belonging?**
- **Is separation always segregating or can it sometimes be a form of support?**

The topic that I have chosen for my choice project is exploring whether inclusion is including students with disabilities or excluding them from their peers.

Inclusion



- According to the “inclusionBC” resource library: “inclusion is not simply integration or “mainstreaming” of students who were once characterized as different or special compared to “the mainstream.” Inclusion removes systemic barriers that persist in legacy systems that were designed with a narrower understanding of who belonged in normal society. It re-configures physical and social structures to welcome diversity (e.g. of abilities, culture, ethnicity and gender identity).”
- To put it simply: Inclusion is not just about letting people in. It is about transforming the system so that everyone belongs, feels valued and is able to succeed not in spite of their differences, but because of them.

Inclusion vs Integration

“Farrell (2000, p. 154) describes inclusion as: taking a full and active part in school-life, be a valued member of the school community and be seen as an integral member.” (Koster et al., 2009)

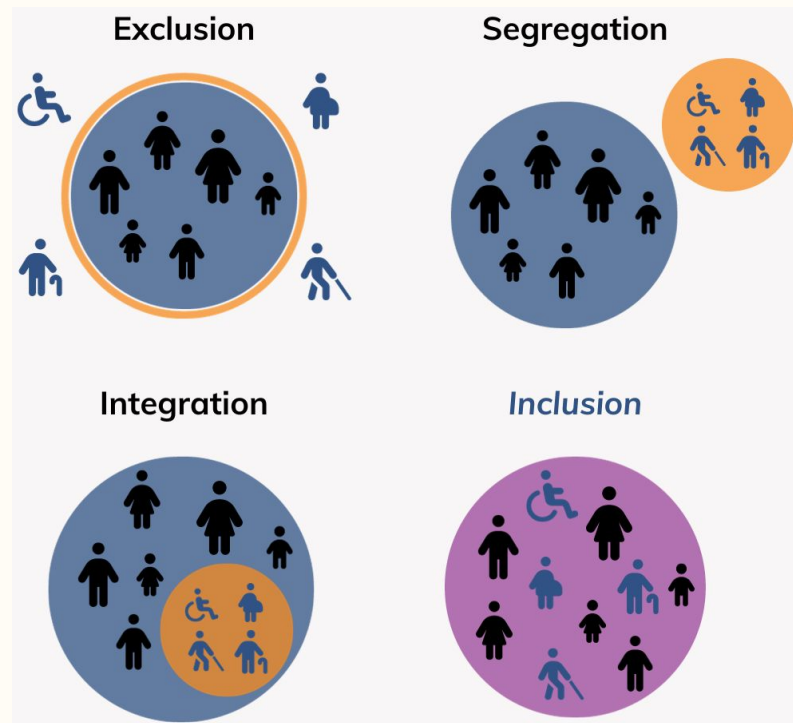
True inclusion includes the following:

- Having friendships and connections with classmates
- Feeling valued within the classroom
- Acceptance from their peers
- A sense of belonging

“Maximizing the interaction between pupils with and without special needs is generally considered an important aspect of inclusion. However, it is frequently questioned whether pupils with special needs (SEN) in regular classrooms have interactions and friendships with their peers. In order to be able to evaluate these relationships, it is necessary to clarify concepts such as social participation, social integration and social inclusion. At the moment there is much ambiguity regarding these concepts. This article aims to elucidate on these concepts and reveal its characteristic themes. An analysis of literature was carried out to identify these concepts.” (Koster et al., 2009)

Inclusion for some or inclusion for all?

I would like to pose the question of: Is separation always segregating or can it sometimes be a form of support?



Teacher readiness to inclusive education



Even with the best intentions, I have struggled to meet the needs of all learners within my classroom.

The importance of student voice

"Inclusion is a process—student voices are essential in shaping it." (Ainscow & Meesiu, 2018)

"True inclusive education includes listening to the voices of our learners and involving them in shaping their learning experiences." - Ainscow & Meesiu (2018)



Inclusive Practice ≠ One-Size-Fits-All

Inclusive education is not a one size fits all approach. Each year our students face and needs change. Inclusion means more than being in the same room, **it means feeling connected, valued and supported.** Policies alone cannot achieve this, especially if they do not adapt to individual learners.



Resources for teachers



"Inclusive education is In-possible" by Dr. Nandita de Souza



Reimagining Special Education: A Conversation on Inclusion | Think Inclusive Now

Podcasts:

- Think Inclusive
- The Education Table Podcast
- The Inclusion Podcast
- Good Morning HR- Episode 118
Evidence Based Inclusion with Dr. Jonathan Ashong-Lampety

References

- Ainscow, M., & Messiou, K. (2018). Engaging with the views of students to promote inclusion in education. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19(1), 1–17.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-017-9312-1>
- Alexiadou, N., & Essex, J. (2016). Teacher education for inclusive practice - responding to policy. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(1), 5–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2015.1031338>
- Baglieri, S., Bejoian, L. M., Broderick, A. A., Connor, D. J., & Valle, J. (2011). [Re]Claiming “Inclusive Education” toward Cohesion in Educational Reform: Disability Studies Unravels the Myth of the Normal Child. *Teachers College Record*, 113(10), 2122–2154.
- Inclusive schools*. Education and Early Childhood Development. (2024, September 6). <https://www.gov.nl.ca/education/k12/inclusion/>
- Juvonen, J., Lessard, L. M., Rastogi, R., Schacter, H. L., & Smith, D. S. (2019). Promoting Social Inclusion in Educational Settings: Challenges and Opportunities. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(4), 250–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1655645>
- Koster, M., Nakken, H., Pijl, S. J., & Van Houten, E. (2009). Being part of the peer group: A literature study focusing on the social dimension of inclusion in education. *International journal of inclusive education*, 13(2), 117–140.
- Leijen, Ä., Arcidiacono, F., & Baucal, A. (2021). The Dilemma of Inclusive Education: Inclusion for Some or Inclusion for All. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.633066>
- What is inclusive education?*. Inclusion BC. (2024, July 26). <https://inclusionbc.org/resource/what-is-inclusive-education/>