



IE+ Training Course: Chapter II

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1. Introduction

Poor attitudes are a key barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive education. To support a shift in the mindset and approach of key decision-makers in the field of education, this chapter will support individuals to understand and overcome fears and stigma linked to inclusive education.

The achievement of inclusive education cannot be seen as an isolated phenomenon, rather it can only be understood and realised as part of a complex process in which the attitudes of people in society must change.

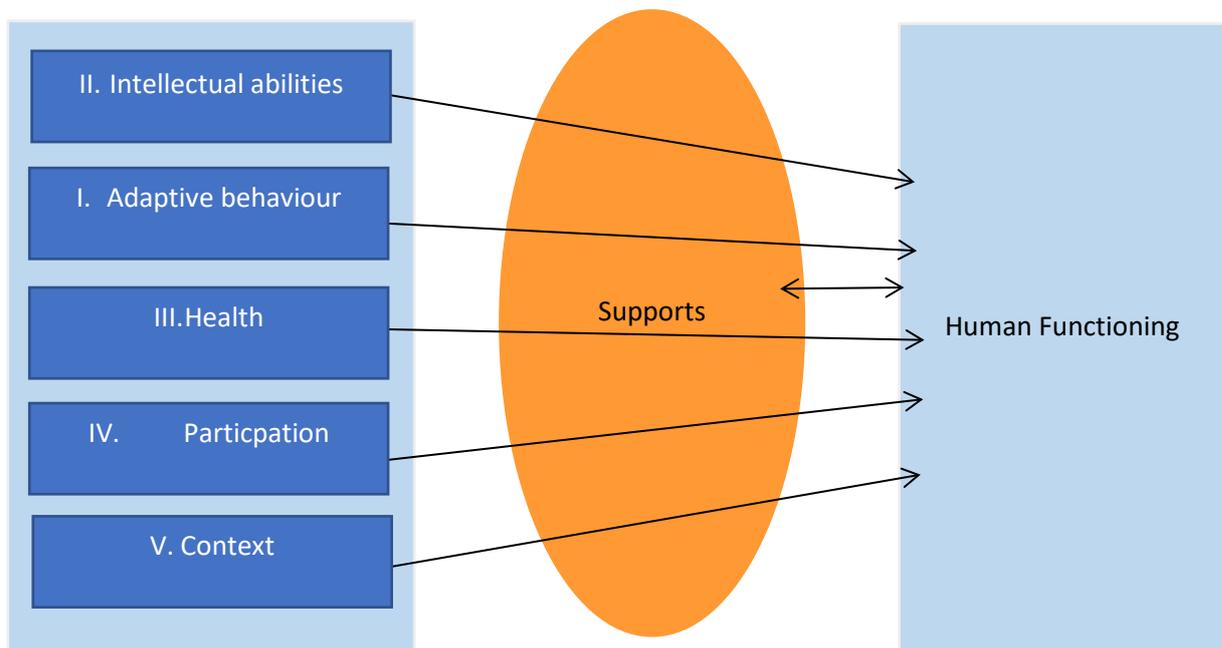
This chapter will offer four different elements of a broader paradigm shift, that aims to bring persons with an intellectual disability into a position of real citizens in our society.

2. The “socio-ecological approach”

A first dynamic factor that we want to refer to in this complex process is called “the socio-ecological approach” of intellectual disability.

This approach starts from the idea that a person and an environment do not exist independently from one another. This basic idea inspired the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to introduce a multidimensional model of human functioning as shown in following scheme: (Schalock et al., 2010 [42])





The above framework of human functioning recognises that the phenomenon of Intellectual Disability involves a dynamic, reciprocal engagement among intellectual ability, adaptive behaviour, health, participation, context and individualised supports. Persons with an intellectual disability experience problems in every domain and this has repercussions on their functioning in their context and in society.

What is different in a socio-ecological approach of intellectual disability?

This model offers enormous opportunities to make a paradigm shift: going from a perspective on intellectual disability as a personal characteristic (a defect within a person) to intellectual disability as the **(mis)fit between the person's capacities and the contexts in which the person functions**. (Schalock et al., 2010, p. 13 [42]) It turns away from being a problem that resided within a person to activate motion and, instead, focusing on the fit between a person's capacities, their strengths, and the demands of the context in which he or she might live, learn, work or play. This understanding, in turn, introduces a **supports model** that challenges us to use our imagination to figure out not only how to increase personal capacity, but also to modify the environment and context and to put in place supports that will enable people to function successfully in typical environments. An intellectual disability is situated in the gap that exists when a person is participating in daily activities at work, at school, in the family, in the



neighbourhood... It is necessary to provide support to maximise the participation of persons with an intellectual disability.

It is not that Jack is not able to use public transport because he cannot read. An app on his telephone can help him see if he is on the right bus. His parents have taught him to be as independent as possible and that coming out and being in the world is important. In order to go to work he has moved near the city center, so there are a lot of opportunities for public transport, close to his door.

It is not that Jenny is not able to work with small children because she does not always see dangers properly. Jenny is working as a co-worker in childcare facility and she started to help with the smallest children. She took care of the fruit and made sure all tables and eating chairs were cleaned after eating. Gradually she became more and more involved with the children and also learned to give them a bottle and change their diaper. Jenny is never alone, there is always one colleague she works together with and who is available for questions and help, if Jenny needs it.

Let us explain the model of human functioning of the AAIDD.

- I. In this model **intellectual abilities** are seen as a concept that helps to understand and to clarify why individuals differ in their ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to their environments, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, and to overcome obstacles by thinking and communicating (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 15 [42])
- II. **Adaptive behaviour** is understood as a collection of social, practical and conceptual skills that have been learned and performed in people's everyday lives. A person's strengths and limitations in adaptive skills should be documented within the context of ordinary community environments typical of the person's age peers and tied to the person's individualised needs for support. (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 16 [42])
- III. For people with intellectual disabilities the effects of **health** and mental health on functioning range from greatly facilitating to greatly inhibiting. (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 16 [42])
- IV. **Participation** refers to roles and interactions in the areas of home living, work, education, leisure, spiritual and cultural activities. Participation includes social roles that are valid considered normative for a specific age group. Participation is best reflected in the direct observation of engagement and the degree of involvement in everyday activities. (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 16 [42])
- V. **Context** represents the ecological perspective of this model. It refers to the immediate social setting of a person, but also the neighbourhood, the community or organisations providing education and supports; and finally, also the overarching patterns of culture and society are included (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 17 [42]).



Supports are resources and strategies that aim to promote the development, the education, the interests and personal well-being of a person. There is clear evidence that human functioning is facilitated by the congruence between individuals and their environments. Facilitating such congruence involves determining the profile and intensity of needed support for a particular person vis à vis certain contexts. (Schalock et al., 2010, p. 18 [42])

Jeremy grew up in a family context where he was constantly stimulated to think about politics. He learned skills that he could use in his daily life. This way he can read and understand an accessible newspaper. In this newspaper the points of view of the different political parties were explained. At the recent elections he cast his vote with great enthusiasm. In the polling booth he could count on the appropriate support of his mother to cast his vote correctly.

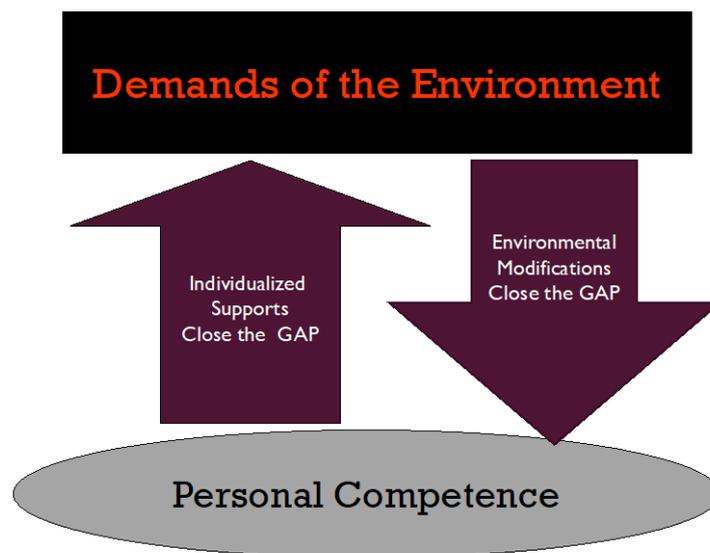
Helen is studying to become a kitchen assistant in secondary education. Together with the supporter and the teacher a step-by-step plan was drawn up and the use of the different machines in the kitchen was explained. She can follow this step-by-step plan to get all the things she needs together and in the end leave her kitchen neat and tidy. Where all students cook a full menu once a week, Helen chooses one dish. She needs more time and works together with another student in the classroom. Helen is always allowed to watch a video of how the dish is prepared first. She sees this vividly, not only verbally through the teacher's instructions. The classmate notes all the steps and then they work together.

The understanding of the multidimensional nature of human functioning of persons with intellectual disability offers a lot of **advantages**. These include:

- The model recognises the biological and social complexities associated with intellectual disability.
- The model offers opportunities to capture the most essential characteristics of an individual person.
- The model establishes an ecological (person x environment) framework for the provision of supports (Schalock et al., 2010 p. 19 [42]).

In this way the socio-ecological model positions supports as a **bridge** between an individual and his/her talents and the demands of an environment (Jim Thompson, 2016 [43])





Patrick needs to take the bus to his meeting. He is used to going from his hometown to the city by train and then he takes a bus to the meeting centre. He gets on, but the bus is stopped by road works. Everybody needs to get off the bus and walk a few minutes to go catch another bus. Patrick is panicking: why did the bus stop? Where is he? He is not able to figure out what to do and to just follow the general instructions the driver gives all the people on the bus. The driver goes towards Patrick who stays in his seat and asks him to get off. The driver asks another person on the bus to accompany Patrick to the right bus. The woman takes Patrick with her to the next bus. On the bus Patrick calls his colleagues who are also attending the meeting. Can they pick him up at the bus stop? That way, he will know where to get off.

William is in class. He has 3 folders with 3 different colours: yellow is for maths, green is for languages and blue is for writing. When the other pupils need to take their materials: they have a notebook for each subject. This is not possible for William to manage. By making it accessible for him, we make sure that he is able to understand what the teacher wants and that he can provide his own learning material when needed. William sits in a group of 4 children, so he can see what they are doing and how they start working. This helps him translate the messages of the teacher about what she expects the pupils to do. Sometimes the teacher needs to address him individually in order to get what she asks. Two times a week William gets support from a special educator. She provides adaptations of the learning material so William can participate with his peers. She also installed a buddy system for the playground so that William knows what to do and who to play with. She helps the teacher to see how William comes to learn and what is necessary to do in order to support his learning.



Highlights:

- The socio-ecological approach starts from the idea that a person and an environment do not exist independently from one another. People with ID experience a **mismatch** between their personal competency and environmental demands.
- Understanding intellectual disability through a social-ecological lens is more useful than through a deficit lens because it puts the burden on settings/activities to be more **accessible** and human service systems to provide **sufficient supports**, than on the person to change/transform.
- The context in which an individual is situated is a vital component of this approach. We need to think about **reasonable accommodations**, so that the person is able to participate in that context.

3. Quality of Life

The Quality of Life (QOL) framework starts from some very important premises (Verdugo et. al. 2005 [44]). First, QOL is **important for all people** and should be thought of in the same way for all people, including individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Second, measuring QOL is required to **understand the degree** to which people experience a life of quality and personal well-being. It is not a matter of yes or no, but of nuances: less and more. We can work towards more quality of life on several specific domains.

Third, measuring QOL reflects the **blending of two meanings** of quality of life: the one which is commonly understood by human beings all over the world and the one which has become valued by individuals as they live their lives within their unique environments. The personal and subjective understanding of quality of life is also valued in this framework.

4. Universal Design for Learning

Most students with intellectual disabilities get personal support and reasonable accommodations. At the same time – if we want to stay within the logic of the framework of a socio-ecological model – we should try to find ways to design new approaches for all learners and adaptations to environments and systems as a counterbalance for the purely individualised way of thinking and working.



... Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is promoted as a philosophy, framework, and set of principles for designing and delivering flexible approaches to teaching and learning that addresses student diversity within the classroom context... (Capp, 2017, p. 791 [45])

Universal design is originally a term from architecture. It means that buildings are designed in such a way that they are accessible to everyone. By taking into account the needs of all possible users from the outset, fewer adjustments are needed afterwards. For example, a building is fitted with a staircase with a sloping surface and with doors that open automatically. Visitors with reduced mobility, but also parents with pushchairs, visitors carrying luggage... will thus have easier access to the building.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines universal design as “the design of products, environments, programmes and services which can be used by everyone in the widest sense without modification or special design” (CRPD, Art. 2).

The underlying principles of UDL provide us with guidelines for designing and implementing instruction in a flexible manner that meets the needs of diverse learners, whilst improving the learning process for all students. The philosophy of UDL is based on the idea that there are multiple ways of representing knowledge (principle one), multiple ways students can demonstrate their understanding (principle two), and multiple ways of engaging students (principle three). (Capp, 2017, p. 792 [45])

Daisy, together with the other children in the classroom, learns about the blood circulation and which organs are vital in our body. Daisy has a large print with a human body, the heart and the lungs. She has stuck a red and blue strip on the body with the caps of bottles. These are the veins and arteries. This drawing hangs at the front of the classroom. The children of the class use the drawing to name all the organs and explain how the heart works.

Madeline needs a clear structure so that there are not too many unpredictable things in her path. In the morning the teacher starts with a schedule of what the day will look like and what the class will do. This daily schedule gives Madeline a handle, but also appears to work for the other children in the class to have a better grip on what will happen on a particular day.

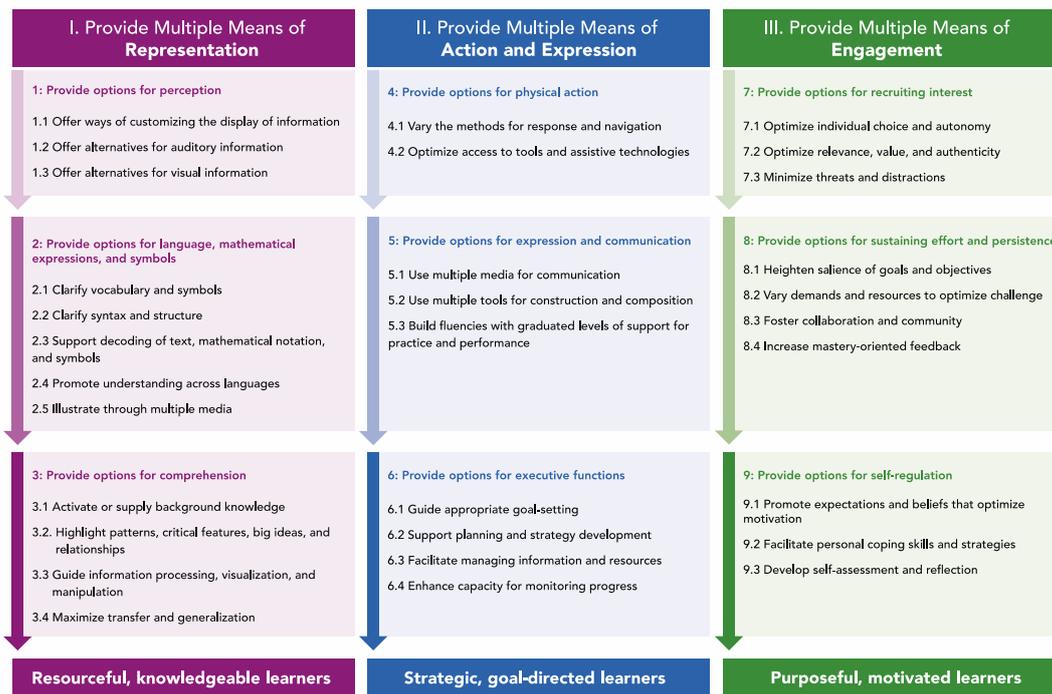
By systematically offering different options, UDL creates easier learning outcomes for all students. **Accessibility is achieved through a total approach:** not only the accommodation, furnishing and equipment of the classrooms is optimised, but also the learning materials are developed differently, activities are planned and organized more meticulously, assignments are designed more thoughtfully... UDL takes a flexible approach to objectives, methods, materials and forms of evaluation, but continues to set the bar high for everyone. By taking the diversity of the classroom (including students with a mental disability) into account right from the creation, UDL works efficiently and cost-efficiently and avoids adjustments that are burdensome and stigmatising.



In order to achieve this, teachers are trained to work with individually-adapted curricula and learning pathways. They have a clear view on the learning objectives so that they can attune them to the different possibilities of their students. **Teachers do not do this alone.** They can turn to colleagues, supporters, parents, management or the student himself/herself in order to give this the best possible shape together.

UDL is mostly represented through the following scheme:

Universal Design for Learning Guidelines



© 2011 by CAST. All rights reserved. www.cast.org, www.udlcenter.org
 APA Citation: CAST (2011). *Universal design for learning guidelines version 2.0*. Wakefield, MA: Author.

UDL is defined within the literature as a form of proactive differentiation, which contrasts with retrospective forms of adjustments. Within the traditional lesson planning paradigm, a classroom teacher refers first to the curriculum when making decisions; if a student does not make progress, then retrospective adjustments are made. Within the UDL paradigm, the student is of primary concern. As such, it is fundamentally about valuing diversity. It advocates that a classroom teacher first thinks of the needs of the students within the classroom, then goes to the curriculum. This process leads to success for all as the teacher proactively plans to the edges of the classroom, rather than waiting for students to fail. (Capp, 2017, 793 [45])

When Miss Ann prepares her schedule for math, she thinks about what the students in her class need to participate in the fracture exercise. She sees a number of children who are still going to work with concrete material: they are going to divide cakes, they are going to divide ballpoint



pens in a container with four equal sliders... Other pupils get to work on paper and practice with the verbal pronunciation: one of the ... equal parts. It's a question of imprinting how a fracture really works. Another group is already working with the concepts of 'counter' and 'denominator' and is able to recognise the different fractions and write them correctly. Miss Ann foresees several possibilities to work with the same material. By planning this in advance, she does not experience any students who cannot participate at the moment, and Lester can start working with the very concrete material as well.

It is important to understand that working with the basics of Universal Design for Learning AND the rights to get “**reasonable accommodations**” is in perfect harmony with art 24 of the UNCRPD.

Reasonable accommodations are **concrete measures** that a pupil with specific educational needs to be able to learn in regular school. They eliminate the limiting influence of an inappropriate (school) environment on a pupil's participation. The school has the duty to include reasonable accommodations in its care policy. Reasonable accommodations in the educational context are measures in which the educational needs of the pupil are central, but in which the care of the educational professionals are the starting point. Reasonable accommodations are always made to measure. These can be compensatory, remedial, differentiating or dispensatory measures.

Emir needs extra instruction in between. It is ensured that he is close to the teacher. From time to time he can use a buddy in the class who can give him some extra explanations, or he can do the first two exercises together with him. Emir, together with a number of other students, also receives extra instruction about things that were not clear when the support person comes out of the support network.

Legally, one understands “reasonable accommodations”:

- Are necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments.
- Are not disproportionate and do not impose an unnecessary burden.
- Ensure that the right to participate in school and in society is guaranteed.

How can one know whether an adaptation is a good adaptation?

- Effectiveness: is there really participation?
- Equivalence: is participation equivalent?
- Independence: can the pupil participate independently?
- Safety: is the safety of the pupil with specific educational needs guaranteed?

Tina has a severe form of epilepsy. Sometimes she can only participate in the morning because fatigue threatens to provoke seizures. In such a period, it is ensured that every now and then a WO lesson and/or musical education is planned in the morning. This way Tina also gets the opportunity to participate in these lessons.



When formulating reasonable accommodations, you always start **from the what the general curriculum has to offer to all students**. A teacher wants to achieve maximum learning efficiency for all students, while taking into account their possibilities and limitations. A teacher starts from the possibilities of his/her students and the communalities they always share. The focus can not only be on what a student does not (yet) succeed in: teachers and educational professionals try to look at what is possible. It is important to have clear expectations, even with reasonable accommodations. A teacher also wants to teach a student with an intellectual disability something and make sure he/she makes progress. A teacher does not only use the common curriculum as a checklist of what each student has to achieve. There is flexibility in the learning goals and activities according to the capacities of each student. **Reasonable accommodations can be made to ensure that the student can be involved in a meaningful way but does not have to achieve the same curriculum in the same way and at the same pace as the other students in the class.**

For both primary and secondary education this means that there is always a focus on differentiating and remedying and only in the second instance on compensating and dispensing. Within an Individually Adapted Curriculum (which most students with an intellectual disability need), alternatives are sought in the first place before deleting a goal or a number of goals for a student. **Participation within the classroom is paramount**. There is always a search for how the student can connect to the lessons and activities of his/her class. How can the student participate in his/her own way? What contributions can the student make within the classroom? This requires looking with an open mind at the possibilities of students. Every contribution, however limited, can be seen as a valuable and indispensable contribution.

If reasonable accommodations are used during teaching, the pupil also has the right to use these adjustments for **tests and/or evaluations**. If reasonable adjustments have been recognised for a particular student, then this should be followed by fellow teachers in successive years. Reasonable accommodations do not take into account whether the teacher is happy with them or not, whether they want to use it or not. However, the support needs of a teacher are looked at in order to respond to them. What does this teacher need to apply this adaptation to this pupil, in this classroom?

Teachers in regular education have a central role as the final managers of each pupil's learning process, but at the same time they also have many questions and uncertainties about their pupil with specific educational needs. The image of the classroom teacher on his/her island who wants or has to grub up the classroom with all pupils on his/her own remains very persistent. It is up to the professionals who work with the pupils to find creative ways to give all pupils the opportunity to participate, to experience appreciation and success, to see their contribution acknowledged and to let them grow. In order to achieve this, **collaborative teaming** is needed between the different parties involved: care coordinator/pupil counsellor, supporters, therapists, parents, pupils themselves... Together they think about how reasonable accommodations can be made to maximise participation in the classroom. At the same time,



they also think about how the support can be used in the best possible way depending on the pupil and the teacher in the classroom. This is not an obvious task. We see that up to now the main focus has been on pupil-oriented support. The mindshift in thinking and acting requires much more cooperation between the teacher and the supporter(s) within the possibilities and limits of the regular classroom context. It is important that the supporter, together with the teacher, looks for what he or she needs and in this way addresses the action embarrassment from teachers to pupils with specific educational needs. This does not mean that they can solve everything immediately. It takes time to find out what really works for the pupil, for the teacher, in the classroom... It often comes down to putting the teacher in his/her power. Confirmation is needed: am I doing well? It is about appreciating what they are doing and at the same time confronting them from time to time with what can be adjusted.

Jason finds it hard to concentrate. He is allowed to sit at the front close to the board and to the teacher. The teacher often offers him visual support. He has headphones to shut out some stimuli. If it is difficult to work in the classroom, he can work in the hallway. The teacher offers him the exercises in pieces, which makes him progress faster and less likely to lose himself in the assignment. Jason gets the schedule printed out on his couch and follows it with a whistle pen, while the teacher applies it to the group at the front.

Highlights:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) promotes a set of principles for **designing and delivering flexible approaches to teaching and learning**, that address student diversity within the classroom context.
- The UDL Guidelines underline the need for learning opportunities to provide **multiple means of representation, action and expression and engagement**.
- Working with the basics of UDL as well as the rights to get “**reasonable accommodations**” is key to realising art 24 of the UNCRPD.

5. Evidence-based practices connected to inclusive education

Inclusive education is based on a human rights framework. In some countries and environments citizens stay suspicious about the question if (especially for children with intellectual disabilities) the regular school is the best option.

Instead of getting into a neverending discussion about “what is best” based on ideological principles, more and more scholars try to build a positive perspective by bringing in “the



evidence-based” way of thinking about good practices to the field of inclusive education. (Nelson and Campbell, 2017 [46])

The evidence discussed above can be situated on two different levels: a practice level (looking for the best teaching methods to work with a diverse student group) and a system level (trying to get evidence about the outcomes of certain ways of organising school systems). We will discuss them both.

Evidence informed methods of teaching that can be used in practice were collected by David Mitchell who gathered (2014 [47]) 27 strategies available for a teacher or a school team. In his book the following strategies are discussed and illustrated with necessary research evidence.¹

Each chapter provides strategies based on evidence from the most recent studies in the field, with the aim of facilitating high-quality learning and social outcomes for all learners in schools. Chapter topics include, Parent involvement and support, Review and practice, Assistive technology, Quality of indoor physical environment, Classroom climate and School-wide strategies.²

Research about the possible effects of inclusive education is scarce and inconclusive till now. We could gather some examples of research reviews that bring first attempts to bridge ideology with empirical evidence.

1. European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2018. Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: A Review of the Literature. (S. Symeonidou, ed.). Odense, Denmark [48]

Concerning education this reports concludes (p.14): ...

Research indicates that:

- Inclusive education increases the **opportunities for peer interactions and for close friendships** between learners with and without disabilities.
- For social interactions and friendships to take place in inclusive settings, due consideration needs to be given to several elements that **promote learners’ participation** (i.e. access, collaboration, recognition and acceptance).
- Learners with disabilities educated in inclusive settings may **perform academically and socially better** than learners educated in segregated settings.
- Attending and receiving **support within inclusive education** settings increases the likelihood of enrolling in higher education.

¹ For a first introduction to this book go to:

https://www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/_author/mitchell-9780415623230/

² To view all the chapters in full visit:

https://www.routledgetextbooks.com/textbooks/_author/mitchell-9780415623230/students.php



2. Hehir, T., Grindal, T. Et. al. (2016). A summary of the evidence on Inclusive Education [49]

(p.26) ...In this report we have reviewed evidence from more than 280 research studies conducted in 25 countries. We find consistent evidence that inclusive educational settings—those in which children with disabilities are educated alongside their non-disabled peers—can confer **substantial short- and long-term benefits for children’s cognitive and social development**. This issue has been studied in many ways with many different populations of students. The magnitude of the benefits of inclusive education may vary from one study to another, but the overwhelming majority either report **significant benefits for students who are educated alongside their non-disabled peers**.

The research evidence also suggests that in most cases, being educated alongside a student with a disability does **not lead to negative consequences for non-disabled students**. In fact, research on effective inclusive schools indicates that inclusion can have important positive benefits for all students. What these effective inclusive schools have discovered, is that inclusion is not just about locating disabled and non-disabled students in the same classrooms. Effectively including a student with a disability requires teachers and school administrators to develop a better understanding of the individual strengths and needs of every student, not just those students with disabilities. Teachers in inclusive classrooms **cannot simply target the curriculum toward the average student**. This means providing students with multiple ways to engage with classroom material, multiple representations of curricular concepts, and multiple means for students to express what they have learned. This type of thoughtful, universally designed approach to learning benefits disabled and non-disabled students alike.

Yet, despite this evidence, students with disabilities **continue to face challenges** in accessing high quality education. Long-standing misconceptions regarding the capacities of children with intellectual, physical, sensory, and learning disabilities to benefit from formal education have, for generations, led educators to deny these students access to formal schooling. Even in countries where laws guarantee the educational rights of these students, educational options are sometimes limited, and services are provided through separate programmes that segregate disabled and non-disabled students.

3. Camila Brorup Dyssegaard & Michael Sogaard Larsen (2013). Evidence on Inclusion. Danish Clearinghouse for Educational Research. [50]

The outcome of the synthesis (p.45) thus suggests that it is possible to include special needs pupils in mainstream education and that inclusion can have a **positive effect on all the pupils’ scholastic and social development**. Based on the presented study results we can generally summarise that successful inclusion **requires instruction/in-service training of teachers** in intervention initiatives that target pupils with special needs, access to resource persons who can supervise and offer direct support during teaching and knowledge of evidence-based teaching methods and intervention initiatives that target special needs pupils.



4. A meta-review was organised and is reported in the following article: Aster Van Mieghem, Karine Verschueren, Katja Petry & Elke Struyf (2018) An analysis of research on inclusive education: a systematic search and meta review, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2018.1482012 [51]

On page 10-11 we can find five different themes that have been studied already in review studies trying to connect inclusive education with evidence from research projects.

Five main themes were abstracted from the selected reviews, four are about substantive aspects of the implementation of IE: (1) attitudes towards IE; (2) teachers' professional development fostering IE; (3) practices enhancing IE and (4) participation of students with SEN. (5) The last theme refers to aspects of conducting research into IE.

The results relating to the first main theme show that in general the **attitudes of teachers towards IE are rather negative**, in contrast with the attitudes of parents and peers (Bates et al. 2015 [52]; de Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert 2010 [53], 2011 [54], 2012 [55]). Teachers, however, play a key role in the implementation of IE, so it is vital to positively influence their attitudes. Positive attitudes of teachers, parents and typically developing students are related to their knowledge of disabilities and their experience of IE (de Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert 2010 [53], 2011 [54], 2012 [55]; Qi and Ha 2012 [56]). Teachers, parents and typically developing students are **less positive towards children with behavioural problems and severe intellectual disability**, compared with children with physical disabilities and sensory impairments (de Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert 2010 [53], 2011 [54], 2012 [55]; Qi and Ha 2012 [56]).

Professional development of teachers, the second main theme, is found to be more effective if it focusses on specific student needs or disabilities, rather than on IE in general (Kurniawati et al. 2014 [57]). Training programmes considering specific teachers' concerns and their teaching context are the most helpful in encouraging change in teachers' practice (Kurniawati et al. 2014 [57]; Roberts and Simpson 2016 [58]; Qi and Ha 2012 [56]).

The third main theme is **additional support for teachers and support from peers for SEN students** which are two types of practice that enhance IE, and which can be provided by other teachers (co-teaching) or teaching assistants (Fluijt, Bakker, and Struyf 2016 [59]; Giangreco, Suter, and Doyle 2010 [60]; Qi and Ha 2012 [56]). This additional support aims to help teachers create more opportunities to directly instruct SEN students and focus more directly on their learning goals (Fluijt, Bakker, and Struyf 2016 [59]; Giangreco, Suter, and Doyle 2010 [60]). Peer support practices (cooperative learning, peer tutoring) increase the social skills of students with emotional and behavioural disorders and enhance the reading comprehension and phonological skills of students with reading and/or moderate learning disabilities (Kaya, Blake, and Chan 2015 [61]; Reichrath, de Witte, and Winkens 2010 [62]; Watkins et al. 2015 [63]).



The fourth main theme, **student participation**, focuses on the social and academic participation of SEN students within mainstream education. Social participation refers to the presence of mutual positive social contact or interaction, acceptance and friendships between students and their SEN peers (Bossaert et al. 2013 [64]; Koster et al. 2009 [65]). In general, students are open to friendships with SEN peers, but barriers (e.g. “caretaking” roles) should be considered (Bates et al. 2015 [52]; Qi and Ha 2012 [56]). Mixed classes with a minority of SEN students and a larger number of typically developing peers, fosters positive relationships (Parker et al. 2015 [66]; Pijl, Skaalvik, and Skaalvik 2010 [67]). In addition, within the selected reviews, there were remarkably few results reported on the academic participation of students compared to their social participation. Nevertheless, the higher achievements of SEN students regarding academic and vocational skills have been described (De Vroey, Struyf, and Petry 2016 [68]).

Highlights:

- Evidence based practices provide strategies based on evidence from the most recent experiences in the field of inclusive education.
- The evidence discussed can be situated on two different levels: a practice level and a system level.
- Current research is now bridging ideology with empirical evidence.
- Evidence-based practices provide strategies based on evidence from the most recent experiences in the field of inclusive education.

The final theme reflects on the **methodological aspects regarding research into IE**. It is argued that an operative definition of IE should be included in each study because of the ambiguity of the concept (Göransson and Nilholm 2014 [69]). In addition, aspects to enhance the practical impact of IE research (e.g. responsiveness) must be considered when conducting IE research (Grima-Farrell, Bain, and McDonagh 2011 [70]). It is necessary to clarify what we mean by inclusive education and how we want to keep the options open for students with an intellectual disability in regular settings. The domination of segregation is still very available in education systems and in the attitudes of educational professionals.

6. Conclusions

Inclusive education is a part of a complex process which involves the changing of attitudes towards disability and inclusion. In this chapter we have provided three different elements of a broader paradigm shift, that aims to bring persons with a (intellectual) disability into a position of real citizens in our society. These three elements include the adoption of the socio-ecological approach, which introduces a multidimensional model of human functioning; Universal Design for Learning, which promotes proactive differentiation and evidence-based practices.



7. Summary

- Poor attitudes are a key barrier to the effective implementation of inclusive education.
- The socio-ecological model offers opportunities to capture the most essential characteristics of an individual person.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) promotes a set of principles for designing and delivering flexible approaches to teaching and learning, that addresses student diversity within the classroom context.



8. References

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