

Differentiating for the Non-Average

Inclusion

a law that gives students
with disabilities the right to
be in the same classroom
with non-disabled peers

Benefits of Inclusion for Students With Disabilities

Friendships

Increased social initiations, relationships and networks

Peer role models for academic, social and behavior skills

Increased achievement of IEP goals

Greater access to general curriculum

Enhance skill acquisition and generalization

Increased inclusion in future environments

Greater opportunities for interactions

Higher expectations

Increased school staff collaboration

Increased parent participation

Families are more integrated into community

Benefits of Inclusive Education. (2010, June 29). Retrieved from <http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm>

Benefits of Inclusion for Students Without Disabilities

Meaningful friendships

Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences

Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity

Respect for all people

Prepares all students for adult life in an inclusive society

Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others

Greater academic outcomes

All students needs are better met, greater resources for everyone

There is not any research that shows any negative effects from inclusion done appropriately with the necessary supports and services for students to actively participate and achieve IEP goals.

How You Can Differentiate!

Content

Teachers can differentiate the content that is being taught

- Varying reading levels
- Audio text
- Varying levels of spelling or vocabulary
- Using visuals when possible
- Meet in small groups to re-teach or review

Process

The process of teaching content can be differentiated.

- Use tiered learning activities
- Independent work activities at various levels
- Hands-on learning materials
- Varying the length of time a student may take to complete an assignment
 - For a struggling learner, this may allow for additional support.
 - For an advanced learner, this can enable that student to pursue a topic in more depth.

Product

Teachers can differentiate the final product for each student. That is, how they will show what they have learned.

- Provide different options for student products (poster projects, art projects, skits, cartoons, etc.)
- Provide collaborative and independent learning opportunities

Learning Environment

- Provide quiet work spaces
- Provide collaborate work spaces
- Clear guidelines for both independent and group work
- Develop problem solving routine for when the teacher is busy helping other students...“I need help but the teacher is busy..”
- Examples: Buddy system, look something up on the computer/in a book, solve it on my own, etc.

What Do I Need to Know for Differentiation?

Student Expertise

- Teachers must have an expertise in the age group of their student population
- Meet developmental needs as well as academic needs

Subject Expertise

- Teacher must have expertise in their content area(s)
- Connections of content
- Find meaning in content

Subject Expertise

Example

Hypothetically speaking, you're teaching your students to memorize the following sequence.

cp rabc f bicc nmt v

Looks like jibberish and seems impossible and irrelevant.

A teacher with expertise in the subject may rearrange the content to look like this:

cpr abc fbi cnn mtv

Now it has some meaning

Cognitive Theory

Expertise

- Understanding how students' minds work
- Prior knowledge is necessary for long term retention
- Clear objectives of lessons and activities
- Content has a focus

Differentiated Instruction Expertise

- Scaffolding
- Tiered lessons
- Structured lessons
- Instruction based on student needs
- Small groups
- Opportunities for advanced learners

What Can I Do For My Struggling Students?

Accommodations

- “Levels the playing field”
- Do not alter what is being taught or assessed
- Must be closely monitored and evaluated for efficiency

Modifications

- “On a whole different field”
- Alters the curriculum itself
- Examples: assignment/test reduction, lowered vocabulary, alternate grading procedures

IEPs and 504s

- All accommodations and modifications must be documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan
- An IEP is the student's Individualized Education Program. It is a written document that describes the strengths, weaknesses, progress, goals, and present levels of each student receiving special education services.
- A 504 Plan is for students who require accommodations to address learning needs but who are not eligible for an IEP.

Collaboration is the Key

IEPs and 504 Plans are comprised of TEAMS

If you feel that one of your students may have a learning disability, discuss your concerns with a special education teacher and your administrator

References

- Benefits of Inclusive Education. (2010, June 29). Retrieved from <http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm>
- Tomlinson, C.A. (August, 2000). Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades. ERIC Digest. ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Retrieved from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/what-differentiated-instruction>
- Wormeli, R. (2003). Differentiating Instruction: A Modified Concerto in Four Movements. Retrieved from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/5679>