### Assignment template

**Semester**: SUMMER SEMESTER  
**Unit Code**: ETL414  
**Unit Name**: PRODUCTIVE LEARNING IN DIVERSE CLASSROOMS  
**Assignment Title**: Assignment 2  
**Date Due**: 14/01/2013  
**Submission Date**: 14/01/2013  
**Lecturer’s Name**: Dr June Slee  
**Student’s Full Name**: Simone Danielle Richardson  
**Student No**: s225752  
**Student’s Email**: s225752@students.cdu.edu.au  
**Student’s Phone No**: 03 56281634  

I declare that all material in this assessment is my own work except where there is a clear acknowledgement and reference to the work of others. I have read the University’s Academic and Scientific Misconduct Policy and understand its implications.*  
I agree ☑️ I do not agree ☐  

*Double click on the square check box to mark as checked.*

### CHECKLIST

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<td>2 My CDU email address is activated*</td>
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<td>3 I have read and understood the important information on this form*</td>
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<td>4 I have kept a copy of my assignment*</td>
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<td>5 I have acknowledged and referenced the work of others*</td>
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<td>6 I have filled in the footer page and indentified my file correctly*</td>
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<td>7 I have saved the assignment in a compatible format e.g. .Microsoft word doc or txt*</td>
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<td>8 My assignment file size does not exceed 2MB*</td>
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Introduction

Every child is special, each having a unique combination of abilities and needs that affect their individual learning. The opportunity to learn in ways that are appropriate and meaningful is something that all children deserve. In my future role as a teacher, it will be my job to support and encourage children to reach their full potential within a positive and inclusive learning environment. My teaching practices, classroom management skills and teacher-student relationships are the building blocks to an inclusive classroom where students can feel a sense of belonging, purpose and a desire to achieve their very best. In this paper I will identify Foreman’s (2011) key principles of inclusion and describe how these principles underpin teaching practice in an inclusive classroom.

Principles of social justice and human rights

Social justice and human rights maintain the fair and equitable treatment of all people and aim to protect them from discrimination or disadvantage as a consequence of race, gender, age and ability etc (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006). All students have the right to fulfil their own learning potential via an appropriate publicly-funded education (Foreman 2011), meaning that today’s teacher should expect a wide range of abilities within their classroom. All learners, regardless of their ability or background, should be considered as ‘people first’, with the right to make their own choices and not to have decisions forced upon them on the basis of their disability (Foreman 2011). Fostering an inclusive learning environment will involve educating students about social justice and human rights, helping them to respect alternate values, beliefs and abilities, together with individual students, their families and their cultures (Orza & Medina 2008). Teachers must ensure all students have equal opportunities to participate, make choices, and to interact with their peers, and that minority students receive an education matching that of their classmates (Gale & Densmore 2000).
All children can learn

Today, it is widely accepted that all children are capable of learning. However, this does not mean that the knowledge and skills learned, or the way in which this information is acquired and utilised is the same for all learners (Foreman 2011). Typically, students with disabilities or behavioural problems will need to have their learning goals altered (Kaplan, Gheen & Midgley 2002). These goals must be relevant to the individual and delivered using techniques favourable to their learning styles (Kaplan, Carter & Cross 1995). Teaching methods will need to be adapted to accommodate student diversity (Halvorsen & Neary 2009) and rules must be established early with the input of the student body thus enabling them to understand the behavioural boundaries of the classroom (Slee 2012). Using direct instruction, appropriate forms of assessment, developing partnerships with parents/caregivers and adequate behaviour management strategies will be key in maximising ‘on-task’ behaviour (Fraser, Moltzen & Ryba 2005).

Normalisation

Foreman’s principle of normalisation proposes that all students, regardless of background or ability should be able to choose which school they attend (Foreman, 2011). This choice is the first step towards this principle, while inclusion in the classroom is seen as the next (Foreman, 2011). This does not mean that all learners should have the same learning expectations; instead, teachers will need to cater to individual difference to make learning possible (Halvorsen & Neary 2009). As well as assigning a relevant curriculum, teachers should encourage the student to discuss their differences, as this has been shown to increase the acceptance all students have of the diversity amongst themselves (Orza & Medina 2008). In addition, when unwanted behaviour does occur, the teacher must ensure they focus on the behaviour, not the ‘behaver’ (Slee 2012).

The least restrictive environment

Often, students with disabilities or behavioural differences do not have the same level of access to school areas or are unable to participate in the same activities as their classmates. This principle is based on the belief that students feel more included in less restrictive school environments (Foreman, 2011). For schools to achieve a non-restrictive, inclusive environment, they may require only minimal adjustments, such as changes to teaching strategies or behaviour management plans. Alternatively, depending on the students needs,
they may be required to provide extensive support such as building alterations, specialist equipment or additional teaching staff (Foreman, 2011). Extensive support such as this is not always available immediately, therefore, in order for students to feel included, teachers must ensure that they offer an adaptable and supportive classroom environment that stimulates and challenges the student (Kaplan, Carter & Cross, 1995). Teachers need to provide instruction targeted to the specific needs of the child with diverse abilities, while also ensuring that they are included in the regular program as much as possible (Loreman, Deppeler & Harvey 2005).

Age-appropriate behaviour

This principle is based on the belief that students need to be seen by their peers and themselves to be performing roles that are positive and valued (Foreman, 2011). Some would argue that learners should be free to choose their own preferred activities, regardless of how they may be perceived as a result of those choices. However, a child’s early development of self-concept is based on immediate behaviours and appearances (Woolfolk & Margetts 2007). Therefore, positive reactions from other students can promote confidence in the learner by giving them a constructive view of their own activities (Woolfolk & Margetts 2007). In addition, by promoting age-appropriate behaviour, the teacher can prevent the student from becoming an unnecessary target for teasing and also lay guidelines for behavioural expectations and therefore overall classroom management.

Conclusion

Placing previously excluded children within mainstream classrooms does not in itself achieve inclusion. An inclusive classroom is one that ensures that all children are able to learn and participate. By utilising Foreman’s (2011) key principles of inclusion, teachers are able to accommodate the diverse needs of their students while providing a rich and relevant curriculum. In addition, unwanted behaviours can be minimised, thus allowing all learners to be included in all aspects of school-life.

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References


