

# INCLUSIVE LEARNING PRACTICE AND DESIGN ANALYSIS

## Defining 'Inclusivity'

"Inclusivity is the belief that all children, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, religion, language, ability or disability, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation have the same right to participate in all aspects of education" (Westwood, 2013; 3).

## Defining 'Inclusive learning'

Inclusive education is about responding to diversity and it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all diversity; it is about celebrating "difference" in dignified ways. From this perspective, the goal is not to leave anyone out of school (Barton, 1997: 233).

## Critical Friend Feedback of Resources

Provided by Andrew Bending (20.12.2021).

**IMPACT OF COVID 19** – The ongoing concerns regarding Covid 19 and the uncertainty around not only where education goes but also how it has changed during the pandemic. As a consequence of this, the education sector across the UK, in particular has become even more pressured to accommodate and tackle. The amount of uncertainty surrounding what education will look like, how it will effect not only the interactions between teachers and students, but also how this will effect the students mental health and wellbeing, personal and social development and their access to education. For some of my students, going to school or college and interacting with others is vital, as their home environment may not be suitable for conducive learning.

### RANGE OF FACTORS –

**Behavioural/Emotional:** It is important for teachers to have an awareness of behavioural signs and strategies that can be used to promote positive inclusivity. Consequently, left unnoticed this can further impact an individual's social, academic achievement, health, and social relationships (Axford et al., 2018). This may result in students experiencing reduced social participation within the classroom (Zhu, 2017). As a consequence, they may also become more withdrawn and disruptive during lessons. This can be managed by developing student centred pedagogies (De Leeuw et al., 2017); offering more supervision to minimise isolation and setting more manageable tasks, by providing students with a small amount of information at a time and chunking lessons to minimise withdrawal. Incorporating these strategies and creating content that is exciting, as well as relevant for students can ultimately aid in removing barriers and promote social inclusion within a classroom. Additionally, tailoring the delivery of content and resources to meet the students' needs, will encourage them to actively participate and interact with others.

**Autism:** According to Lai et al., (2014) Autism can be defined as a set of heterogeneous neurodevelopmental conditions, characterised by early-onset difficulties in social communication and unusually restricted, repetitive behaviour and interests.

With each student in the classroom presenting different challenges for educators, the most common strategies used to aid students with Autism are behaviour plans and seating plans creating familiarity and comfortable environment. This identifies how the individual student learns. However, Nunes and Schmidt (2020), highlighted that other barriers are also identified even when specific strategies are applied, such as inadequate teacher training, sensory overload and anxiety.

**Cognition and learning:** Students may learn at a slower pace due to lower level cognitive abilities. Typically students experience difficulty in basic literacy and numeracy, but this can also vary from a very small minority who are hyperlexic, reading fluently with students to prepare ahead encourages independent study, which is essential in further education (McMurray and Thompson, 2016). Many institutions provide teachers with support assistants who give more attention to the individuals with learning difficulties but there are strategies that can be applied to create an inclusive environment. For example, breaking information into small chunks, whether this be instructions or learning material, is important as students will take a longer time to process the information. Providing regular and quality feedback will allow students to reflect on their learning and to see how they are progressing throughout their studies. Additionally, other prompts can be incorporated, using visual aids to help students understand concepts independently. This allows them to feel a sense of responsibility, which consequently will reduce the chance of the students becoming isolated during lessons. Further strategies that can be applied are seating plans and introducing class routines, this can also be further encouraged by creating manageable and accessible differentiation through personalised learning aims and objectives.

### (A.)

- This begins with a good explanation of what is expected – such as being practical, no bullying and the productive use concerning mobile phones.
- Maybe word the two final pointers differently – "This class aims to challenge..." instead of "I hope..."
- There is good explanation of the linear structure and the non-linear and then superimposing this knowledge by showing them separately and on the same slide. This can encourage inclusion by indicating how different students learn. For example showing how both processes are different through a visual explanation as well as it being explained in text. This is enforced through providing handouts. Using time restrictions allows students clearly see how long they have for each task.
- Chuck Close is a good encouragement tool for determination due to his disability- taking positives from negatives seems to be a theme here.
- This is a very simple but affective resource.
- Grammar needs revising at times.

### (B.)

- Simple and effective aims and objectives
- It is a good idea to lead on from one lesson onto
- Maybe make slide four a little more engaging.
- By stating "What I want us to do..." shows that the teacher is being inclusive and also taking part. This prompts the class to get involved.
- There is a basic plenary at the conclusion of the lesson.

To conclude, both resources take the simple approach. Nevertheless, "A" is more straightforward in its teaching style, regardless of it having group activities, whereas "B" is more practical. Both resources prove the teacher's knowledge and dedication to the subject being taught and are eloquent tools in encouraging inclusivity and positive learning. The negatives for both are; grammatical errors and visual explanation in regards to text. Both resources prove the teacher's knowledge and dedication to the subject being taught and are eloquent tools in encouraging inclusivity and positive learning in the classroom.

## Barriers to Inclusive Learning

Florian and Hegarty (2004) state that a major barrier for inclusivity, is deciding who should take responsibility for ensuring that all students learning needs are met. Furthermore, Florian and Hegarty (2004) then suggest that a teacher can always do something to support the learner. This indicates that even though the attention may be on the support worker or special needs department, there are always areas that the teacher can maintain to ensure that the students feel included within the learning process specifically. This also links to another barrier to learning, with how the recent and ongoing pandemic has not only affected the teachers ability to teach the students, but also for the students to be supported appropriately in remote environments.

At any time an individual learner may experience one or many barriers to learning. As teachers and educators they have a duty of care to aid and support the students, ensuring that the students feel safe and ready to learn. However, with the current and ongoing effects of the pandemic, not only affecting the students motivation to learn but also impacting the way in which individual students can access their individual support.

For Fuller et al., (2004) another barrier to inclusivity is staff attitudes towards disability. By teachers and other educators not accommodating for student's disability and other SEN or Mental Health needs, this confirms that there is a lack of awareness and duty of care. As a consequence to this, Fuller et al., (2004) further explains that, it means that students with these disabilities specifically, may result in having limited information provided and that their educational needs will not be met appropriately. This is where effective differentiation is needed to distinguish how best to support individual and specific learners.

Armstrong and Moore (2004) have claimed that one of the biggest barriers to learning is challenging behaviour. This suggests that if staff are not trained appropriately, the inclusivity bracket widens which has an effect on the whole class, individual students, teachers and the classroom environment. By being aware of the signs and the appropriate measures to take, it will enforce a positive environment where clear boundaries are set and if appropriately enforced, and that the teachers and students feel safe. Challenging behaviour appropriately and in a timely manner means that the teacher is in control and that the students who are displaying the challenging behaviour can calmly return to a learning mindset.

## Curriculum models impact upon inclusivity

The primary purpose of curriculum development is to ensure that students receive integrated and relevant learning experiences that contribute towards their learning, growth and development (Cruikshank, 2018). An inclusive curriculum design will benefit the students and staff, as it is one that considers and incorporates the students educational, social, and any cultural background and experiences. By embedding inclusivity into any teaching ethos, style and approach to learning creates a holistic inclusive learning environment. The way in which teachers communicate and deliver will become more accessible and not only for the students who have Special Educational Needs, but also for other students. This is why it is essential not only in this climate but also as a way to become and develop as an affective teacher. Creating content that is tailored and inclusive for all types of learners will not only benefit the students, but will also help teachers to fundamentally understand what is being taught and why it is important for learners to do this.

From the research and reflecting on experiences whilst being on placement, it can be argued that due to the ongoing pandemic the curriculum needs to be reformed to include the expanding rise in Mental Health and Special Education Needs support. With the uncertainties that the pandemic raises, it needs to not only adapt for the current climate but also put things in place for the future. With restructuring and redesigning of how teachers will teach and more specifically will teach Art, more virtual and distance learning will be introduced.

Under normal circumstances the physical environment of the Art classroom is a great platform to promote positive attitudes towards inclusivity. Valuing diversity, differences and life experiences. Experience on my placement has enabled teaching across different levels and ages, to create content that is inclusive and accessible, using effective differentiation to promote positive attitudes towards inclusivity and diversity. This has helped the students to develop at their own level within a safe learning environment.

### Curriculum model

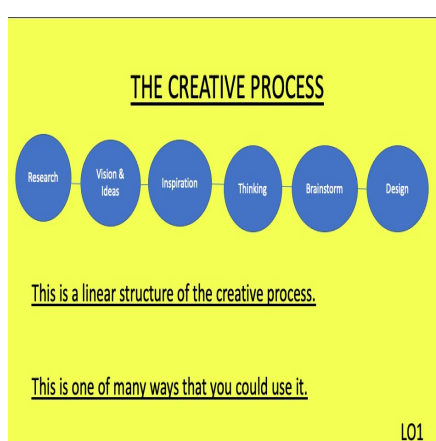
Both of the resources that have been created are formed by using a process model, this model is one which emphasises individual self-development (Scale, 2017). The resource allows me as a teacher to keep the focus on developing the understanding of my pupils (Kelly, 2009: 96) but also with how my students learn (Scale, 2017). It is very common for schools in England to follow a product model which focuses more on meeting targets and objectives (Kelly, 2009: 67) than ensuring that their students understand what they are learning. When schools follow a product model, they tend to leave children with special needs or learning difficulties behind (Kelly, 2009, pp.74). This is because the schools focus more on modifying their behaviour and improving their performance in exams (Kelly, 2009: 74) than they do ensuring the students are getting the quality of education they deserve and that they understand the work. In addition, due to being on placement teaching students who fall into this category and are also faced with further uncertainties around the ongoing pandemic, I want to ensure that I am helping them develop not just academically, but also personally. Therefore, the process model gives the students the best opportunity to develop key transferrable skills transcending outside of the classroom.

## Evaluation

Through the feedback provided I have made appropriate changes to my resources that will improve how inclusive they are. The areas which I have made specific changes to them are on Resource 1, checking that the resource has the correct grammar and punctuation when appropriate, as it is important to make sure that this is done correctly, because as teachers we lead by example. With Resource 2 to reconsider how much text I use on each slide, as this may discourage the students to engage. With this in mind, I have re-evaluated how much text I have used and how can I further simplify it not only for Resource 2 but also for Resource 1.

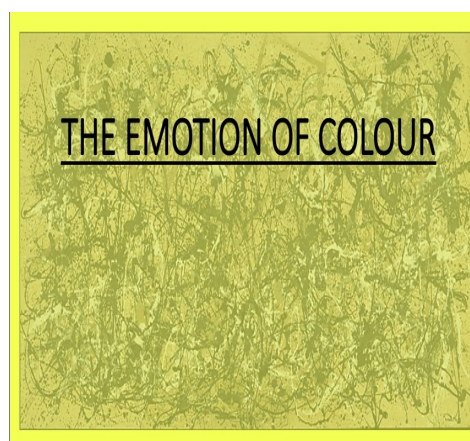
Throughout the assignment, I have come to understand that the reason why there is not a definitive definition of inclusivity and, more widely, what inclusive learning is because the variables that need to be considered are personal and individualised to the situation. Therefore, when considering inclusivity in the context of planning, teaching and learning, there is no pre-prescribed right or wrong answer, but rather what works for your classroom and students.

## Resources



1

(IMAGES TAKEN PRIOR TO FEEDBACK)



2

### Introduction –

A dyslexic myself, I wanted to tackle the resources from the point of view of a student with learning difficulties, which is a large majority of the students that I have been teaching on placement. Students with Dyslexia, Autism, as well physical and visual impairments are the ones who need extra support and consideration. After conversations with other teachers who also teach my students, they have suggested to consider; large scale text and spacing in between lines and for the text to be underlined so that students with visual impairments and dyslexia in particular, can follow more easily, simplified, clear and concise language for dyslexic and autistic students, A4 scale and layout to accommodate any students who are using a virtual visualiser and coloured paper which is dyslexic and autistic friendly.

**Resource 1** – This resource is tailored to be used as an online learning environment. It is designed for a U.A.L Level 2 class. It encourages collaborative and independent learning through the design of the resource. The students will not only be developing these for their education inside of the classroom but also the skills learnt from the resource can be further applied and developed for life outside of the classroom. The resource itself is a PowerPoint, which is also used as a handout for the students to have and follow at their own pace and time during the lesson. This is something that I have been using as a strategy on my placement and it has been very successful in supporting students of all ages and levels to extract the relevant information from the content of the lesson. The resource is focused on giving the students a framework to better understand and access their own individualised creative process. This is not only an important structure to learn in the context of an Art education but something that will also be useful in their everyday life. Learning about the creative process also teaches the students about how to organise, structure and tackle their life and work commitments. As a Dyslexic myself, being able to organise my time more has been very beneficial to me, not only so I can visually see what I need to focus on that day for example, but also as a way to keep in control of my stress levels, as different challenges may influence the plan. To conclude, this resource has been created to encourage all students to expand their knowledge and understanding of the universal creative process and to develop from it their own creative process. For the students, this is vital for their personal and educational development not only in an Art context, as it will give them a framework for how they construct, create and complete projects and briefs for example. Consequently, this will also give them a key transferrable skill to organise, tackle and complete commitments in their personal and work life.

**Resource 2** – This resource was created to accommodate a classroom setting. The specific resource was designed for an Access to Higher Education class. It encourages a hands on approach to learning, embedding a balance between theoretical and practical applications, through the guise of the theme of "The Emotion of Colour".

The resource is presented as a PowerPoint but is also used as a handout for the students to have and follow at their own pace and time during the lesson. Due to the variety of levels and needs that the classroom has, this resource presented as a handout provides support to those students who have Dyslexia and Autism, specifically by creating a way for those students to access and follow at their own level and pace. I have used coloured paper, spacing and simplified language where appropriate to communicate the content easily by highlighting the key information. Through this specific resource the students will be introduced to the Action Painting technique, by exploring a variety of artists who have used it. Once they have been introduced to this, the lesson will turn into a practical, utilising the action painting technique used by Jackson Pollock to create their own responses. In conclusion, this resource has been created and designed to embed a theoretical and practical foundation through the exploration of the theme of "Emotion Of Colour" and in this lesson and resource action painting. The challenge faced with resource 2 was how to maintain inclusivity when the content of the lesson is more heavier than with resource 1. When tackling this, I experimented how I could develop a resource that allowed practical exploration without losing its inclusive structure. I believe that resource 2 has achieved this, enabling the students to be challenged and stretched at any level and ability through allowing them to take ownership and at the same time feel supported and included in the planning, creating and delivering process.