

Equipping Teachers with Inclusive Education skills:

Aavesh to Samavesh in 2015+ schools

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Abstract

A major illusion on which school system rests is that most learning is result of teaching. Schools have admitted students of different capacities and abilities as a result of above directives. Schools have also moved from integrated schools to inclusive schools. Integrated schools viewed student as a problem whereas the inclusive education views system as a problem. The system is ill equipped to cater to the needs of children. What are the bottleneck and issues in the efficient functioning of the schools to help these children? What are the causes of exclusion? What are the reasons that lead teachers to aavesh (anger)? The capacity of not being able to deal with **some kinds** of children leads to frustration and anger. The teachers in the 2015+ schools will have to be equipped with skills, strategies and assessment processes of these children. The schools have become systems of selection as against systems for nurture of everyone. Ahmed (1975) argued, “what is learning regardless of where, when, and how it occurs. There exists wide latitude in sources, location, times and tools of learning. Speaking about formal education he continues, “Formal schools have served as a gigantic sorting machine selecting a very small fraction of their clientele for entrance into progressively higher levels of formal education and dumping the vast majority by the wayside...It is coming to be recognized that education need not be equated with schooling and measured by years of exposure to schooling... the schools importance in relation to other means of education is not increasing, but diminishing.” Inability to cope with the system, for whatever reason, leads to exclusion from it. If the schools as a system, for whatever reason, leads to exclusion of the students, then an understanding of the nature of these students; the nature of students’ inabilities need attention. The next step would be how these inabilities can be handled and; how these students can be helped. In this paper the authors would like to address some of the above issues. The focus would be mainly on equipping teachers to be able to address the process of “samavesh”.

Background:

'When good inclusion is in place, the child who needs the inclusion does not stand out. The inclusive curriculum includes strong parental involvement, students making choices, and a lot of hands-on and heads-on involvement.' (Dr. Melissa Heston, Associate Professor of Education, University of Northern Iowa)

India is a signatory to or participated in the United Nations Rights of the Child, United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities, the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action.

"... Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions." (Article 3, Salamanca Framework for Action)

"Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system." (Article 2, Salamanca Statement)

This framework stems from the messages of the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (1990) and was reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework for Action (2000):

'... In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly... Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners...' (Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, Para 33)

Rule 6 of the UN Standard Rules for Persons with Disabilities states:

'States should recognize the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities in integrated settings. They should ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the educational system. General education authorities are responsible for the education of persons with disabilities in integrated settings. Education for persons with disabilities should form an integral part of national educational planning, curriculum development and school organization.'

The Indian 'Equal Opportunities and Rights of Persons with Disabilities ACT' 1995, rule 26, speak about the ' education of children with disabilities up to the age of 18 years in an appropriate environment'

Introduction:

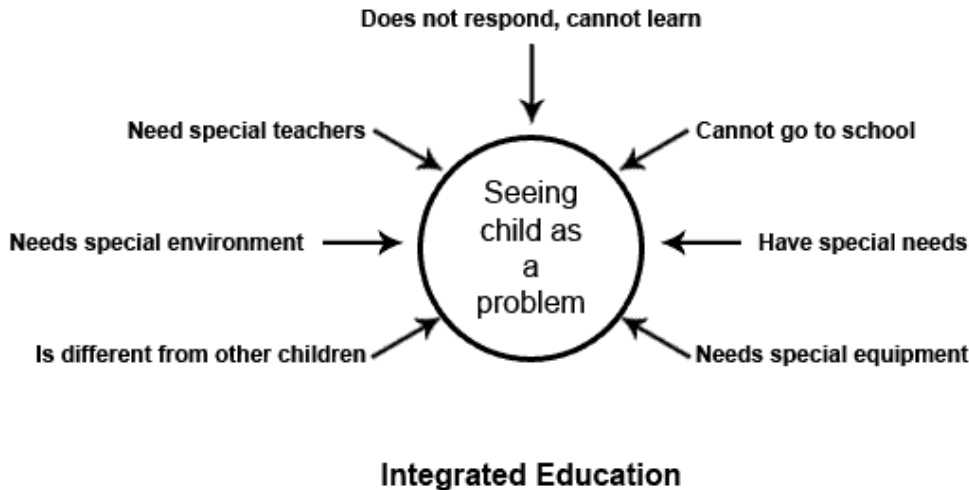
A major illusion on which school system rests in that most learning is result of teaching. Schools have admitted students of different capacities and abilities as a result of above directives. Schools have also moved from integrated schools to inclusive schools. Integrated schools viewed student as a problem whereas the inclusive education views system as a problem. The system is ill equipped to cater to the needs of children. What are the bottleneck and issues in the efficient functioning of the schools to help these children? What are the causes of exclusion? What are the reasons that lead teachers to aavesh (anger)? The capacity of not being able to deal with **some kinds** of children leads to frustration and anger. The teachers in the 2015+ schools will have to be equipped with skills, strategies and assessment processes of these children. The schools have become systems of selection as against systems for nurture of everyone. Ahmed (1975) argued, "what is learning regardless of where, when, and how it occurs. There exists wide latitude in sources, location,, times and tools of learning. Speaking about formal education he continues, "Formal schools have served as a gigantic sorting machine selecting a very small

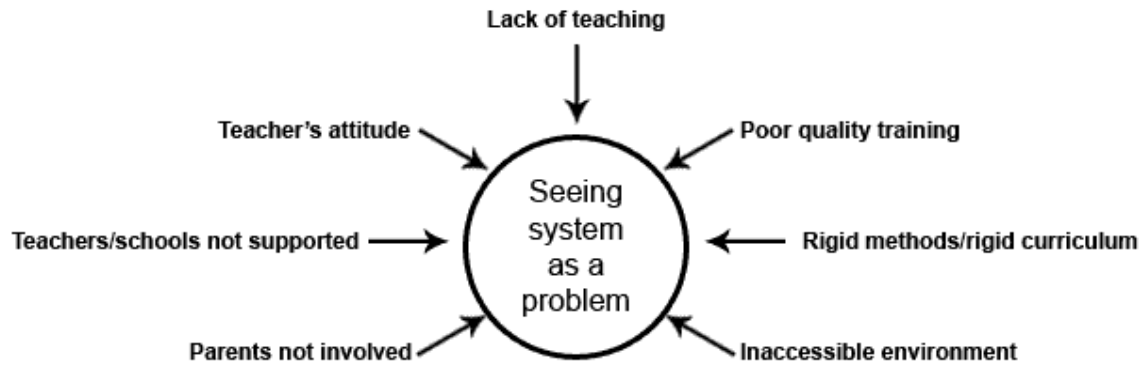
fraction of their clientele for entrance into progressively higher levels of formal education and dumping the vast majority by the wayside...It is coming to be recognized that education need not be equated with schooling and measured by years of exposure to schooling,... the schools importance in relation to other means of education is not increasing, but diminishing.” Inability to cope with the system, for whatever reason, leads to exclusion from it. If the schools as a system, for whatever reason, leads to exclusion of the students, then an understanding of the nature of these students; the nature of students’ inabilities need attention. The next step would be how these inabilities can be handled and; how these students can be helped. In this paper the authors would like to address some of the above issues. The focus would be mainly on equipping teachers to be able to address the process of “samavesh”.

We have admitted children to school, these children may have a variety of issues which will have to be addressed. Earlier we had this concept of integrated school and now we are moving on to inclusive schools. These inclusive schools can be any school any where in any location.

Difference between integrated and inclusive education:

What is the difference between integrated education and inclusive education can be understood by the two following diagrams.





Inclusive Education

Having understanding of inclusive education it is imperative to understand who the people who need inclusion and treatment are. It can be seen from the above diagram that system is the problem. The system is unable to cope with the people needing help. The attitude of teacher is such that we need to cater to the majority. Let us look at it from other angle majority is all capable and can take care of themselves. The rest of the children require attention and help from the teachers. How can the teachers help them, the teachers are not equipped with the necessary tools and skills necessary to primarily identify and then support these children.

Who needs inclusion?

As used by UNESCO, inclusion refers to far more than students with special educational needs. It is centered on the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as religious, racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities, immigrants, girls, the poor, students with disabilities, HIV/AIDS patients, remote populations, and more. In some places, these people are not actively included in education and learning processes. In the U.S. this broader definition is also known as "culturally responsive" education. Culturally responsive know how to base learning experiences on the cultural realities of the child (e.g. home life, community experiences, language background, belief systems). Not all the children need help at all the times some children need help temporarily, some may need for longer time, some may have physical, emotional or physiological problem and may need help. So, inclusion according to the authors may be needed by any child at any point of time.

Preparing Teachers for inclusion/ "samavesh":

Teachers will have to be sensitized to believe and understand that their effort can and will bring substantial amount of change in the minds of children to fight the situation they are in. the teachers will have to understand, firstly, that help in terms of "samavesh" may be needed by any child at any point of time. Secondly, we don't need extra funding and manpower to support at all times. Parents and peer group can also support, if appropriately sensitized to understand the issues at hand.

Some strategies that can help teachers:

Some of the strategies that we have collated from various sources could be as follows, teachers will have to closely work with the students to chart out the maps, gaps and path for their future. After that some direct teaching strategies are listed followed by a customized way of adapting curriculum to the needs of the students. Apart from teaching strategies we are also emphasizing on assessment using MI. We do believe strategies alone will not help support will be needed from administration and school principal.

1.MAPS -- Making Action Plans -- is a planning process for people and organizations that begins with a story - the history. Maps has a series of empty container questions that ask a person/organization to tell us some of the milestones on their journey, so we can get to know them, dream with them, and begin to build a plan to move in the direction of their dreams.

MAPS is a wonderful way to 'get to know' someone, in schools, in communities, in life. It is powerful and requires skilled facilitation by two facilitators - in order to make it safe for the MAP finder. A simple guideline: do no harm. Although MAPS originated in the 'disability' sector, its applications cover the full spectrum of life situations.

2.PATH is a creative planning tool which starts in the future and works backwards to an outcome of first (beginning) steps that are possible and positive. It is excellent for team building. It has been used to mediate conflicts. It is loved by people who actually want to change the ways we currently work.

PATH is a powerful planning process that was developed by Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien and Marscha Forrest in the beginning of the 1990s. PATH uses like MAPS a graphic process in a meeting where the main person has invited people that they have chosen. It is important that the person and their support circle are well supported and prepared for the meeting.

PATH uses a graphic process where the people planning with the person support them to share their dreams for the future then to set positive and possible targets to move towards that dream. PATH is comprised by eight steps (O'Brien, Pearpoint & Kahn 2010, 63):

1. Locate the North Star
2. Generate a Vision of a positive possible future
3. Describe the Now
4. Invite Enrollment
5. Decide to Get Stronger
6. Identify Bold Steps
7. Organise the month's work
8. Agree to Next Steps

So, the PATH group process enables “discovering a way to move toward a positive and possible goal, which is rooted in life purpose, by enrolling others, building strength, and finding a

Person-Centered Planning: Maps and Paths to the Future. For example, what kind of job would the person like to have? How can the person gain experience now that could lead to a job in the future? Who on the team will take responsibility for making arrangements for the person to gain this experience? This process results in a strong commitment on the part of the team members to take specific actions now to help the individual progress along his\her path to the future.

3.Strategies for Direct Instruction

- Specify clear lesson objectives
- Teach directly to those objectives
- Make learning as concrete and meaningful as possible
- Provide relevant guided practice
- Provide independent practice
- Provide transfer practice activities

Instructional Methods

- Teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to select and adapt curricula and instructional methods according to individual student needs.
- A variety of instructional arrangements are available (e.g., team teaching, cross-grade grouping, peer tutoring, teacher assistance teams).
- Teachers foster a cooperative learning environment and promote socialization.

4.Adapting Learning designs as per the needs of the learners:

- **Sequence** – Break down the task, step by step prompts.
- **Drill-repetition and practice-review** – Daily testing of skills, repeated practice, daily feedback.
- **Segment** – Break down targeted skill into smaller units and then synthesize the parts into a whole.
- **Direct question and response** – Teacher asks process-related questions and/or content-related questions.
- **Control the difficulty or processing demands of a task** – Task is sequenced from easy to difficult and only necessary hints or probes are provided.
- **Technology** – Use a computer, structured text, flow charts to facilitate presentation, emphasis is on pictorial representations.
- **Group Instruction** – Instruction occurs in a small group, students and/or teacher interact with the group.
- **Supplement teacher and peer involvement** – Use homework, parents, or others to assist in instruction.
- **Strategy clues** – Reminders to use strategies or multi-steps, the teacher verbalizes problem solving or procedures to solve, instruction uses think-aloud models.

- Most teachers have to adapt instruction for their students and usually don't have a say in choosing the curriculum or designing the materials before they are expected to use them. If the developers of curricular materials anticipated some of the needs that teachers face in inclusive classrooms, such as students who read below grade level or who have organizational or attention-deficit problems, and if they then designed accommodations for these needs into the materials, that would free up teachers to devote more time to teaching and less to adapting the curriculum.
- While this may sound like an ideal situation, actually it is neither unrealistic nor far in the future of public school classrooms. Over the past few years, there has been a concerted effort in special education to promote curricular materials with built-in adaptations, particularly in digital media, that are flexible and customizable. Known as **universal design for learning**, the movement is based on the principles behind the universal design movement for access to products and environments for all users. The educational strategies behind universal design for learning basically underlie any sort of classroom adaptations. When a teacher adapts a curriculum, she or he works to accommodate as many student needs as possible by developing an array of potential supports. An unadapted curriculum generally is one-size-fits-all, but adapted materials can be tailored to the students.
- In this way, universally designed materials can accommodate students where they need it, but those supports are incorporated during the development phase, rather than having to be added after the fact. The same strategies that teachers use to adapt inefficient or inconsiderate materials go into universally designed curricular materials.
- A history text, for example, is written to include graphic organizers and strategic questions to help students who would find a typical text inaccessible but also to provide a challenge for those who would otherwise find it boring or unengaging. A digital reading program can highlight the text word for word or sentence by sentence for students who have difficulty following along by themselves, or it can say the words out loud for those who need more familiarity with the sounds of what they read. Such adaptations could be designed and provided by teachers, but the more resources that come packaged with the curriculum, the greater its flexibility and the less it has to be modified by the teacher.

5. Using Multiple Intelligences in Testing and Assessment

Although Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (MI) is over a decade old, teachers are still trying to find the best way to use this theory to assess students with different styles of learning and varied academic strengths. Multiple Intelligences shape the way students understand, process, and use information.

Gardner groups student capabilities into eight broad categories (each student's unique learning style is a combination of these intelligences):

- **Logical/mathematical** (uses numbers effectively)
- **Visual/spatial** (is artistically or spatially perceptive)
- **Bodily/kinesthetic** (excels at tasks that require physical movement)
- **Musical** (perceives and/or expresses musical forms and patterns)
- **Linguistic** (uses words effectively)

- **Interpersonal** (responds well to others)
- **Intrapersonal** (is reflective and inner-directed)
- **Naturalist** (makes distinctions in the natural world)

Since no single approach to teaching and assessment can possibly work best for every student, teachers face a challenge. What's the best way to match assessments to students' learning styles?

Assessing Multiple Intelligences

Of course, assessment should reflect the diversity of intelligences and learning styles in your classroom. For example, students who are good at spatial learning might not display the full range of their knowledge on an essay test. In fact, traditional testing methods are inherently biased in favor of students with strong linguistic and mathematical skills. Advocates of MI theory suggest that teachers supplement their traditional assessment methods with assessment strategies that evaluate student progress in an inclusive, meaningful way.

So, how can you use the theory of multiple intelligences to assess student achievement in your classroom? The MI approach to testing is closely related to authentic assessment. This approach enables students to demonstrate the depth of their understanding, connect their classwork to real-life experiences, and apply their knowledge to new situations.

MI theorists offer the following tips:

- Emphasize ongoing assessment and progress. Continue to ask if and how students have improved their skills.
- Introduce assessment to your students as a regular part of classroom life. Make assessment a part of the learning process, not a stressful, intimidating "event."
- Try to use instruments, tools, and procedures that embrace some, if not all, of the multiple intelligences.
- Use a wide range of assessment tools to measure students' skills and abilities.
- Give lots of feedback!

Build Your Own Assessment Repertoire

To create successful assessment strategies, familiarize yourself with your students' individual learning styles. Knowing how your students learn best can help you choose approaches that will reach them most effectively. Here are some specific strategies that can make assessment productive and fun:

Linguistic

- Ask students to write in a journal regularly.
- Give oral exams and/or essay tests.
- Emphasize creative writing – have students write poems, plays, and stories.

Logical/Mathematical

- Assign science labs and experiments.
- Have students complete logic problems and games.

Bodily/Kinesthetic

- Challenge students to write and perform plays.
- Have students build models or use other hands-on techniques to show what they learned.

Visual/Spatial

- Invite students to create collages, murals, and posters.
- Encourage students to illustrate their ideas using maps, charts, and graphs.
- Help students use school equipment to make a video or slide show.

Interpersonal

- Stage a classroom debate.
- Have students work collaboratively to brainstorm and prepare a project.

Intrapersonal

- Ask students to identify their own academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Have students think of personal goals and give progress reports.

Musical

- Challenge students to identify and explain patterns in music or poetry.
- Ask students to write new lyrics to familiar melodies or to compose a new song.

Naturalist

- Ask students to keep environmental journals and to share their observations.
- Invite students to lead classmates on a nature walk to point out interesting plants and animals they found during independent study.

Note that many of these assessment strategies evaluate more than one kind of intelligence. You can use strategies like these and other combinations of projects, performances, and portfolios to assess students' progress.

There is no "right" way to use multiple intelligences in testing and assessment. You don't have to overhaul your whole curriculum. But you can make an effort to address each student's strengths and weaknesses by using creative alternatives to traditional testing in your classroom.

Needed Support:

Teaching strategies listed above can have substantial impact if supported by other departments. Some special services may be required from time to time. The school plant/building/ infrastructure should also support the children and the building also needs to be inclusive. Support may also be needed in terms of collaboration by various people, NGOs, parents and community.

Services and Physical Accommodations

- Services needed by the student are available (e.g., health, physical, occupational, or speech therapy).
- Accommodations to the physical plant and equipment are adequate to meet the student's needs (e.g., toys, building and playground facilities, learning materials, assistive devices).

School Support

- The principal understands the needs of students with disabilities.
- Adequate numbers of personnel, including aides and support personnel, are available.
- Adequate staff development and technical assistance, based on the needs of the school personnel, are being provided (e.g., information on disabilities, instructional methods, awareness and acceptance activities for students, and team-building skills).
- Appropriate policies and procedures for monitoring individual student progress, including grading and testing, are in place.

Collaboration

- Special educators are part of the instructional or planning team.
- Teaming approaches are used for problem-solving and program implementation.
- Regular teachers, special education teachers, and other specialists collaborate (e.g., co-teaching, team teaching, teacher assistance teams).

Conclusion:

Teachers will have to be prepared to deal with all kind of children. Teachers need support in attending to different kinds of issues not just in terms of teaching but also in terms of assessing children. The inability to attend to and help children leads to avesh in teachers. So, the two year B.Ed program that is envisaged to begin from 2015-16 academic year can look into nitty gritty of training teachers to become inclusive teachers with the help of strategies given in this paper teachers can move from aavesh to samavesh with the much needed support from principal, parents and peer group.

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