BRITISH COUNCIL

TeachingEnglish

**British Council:
TeachingEnglish**

A podcast series for teachers
of English

Episode 3: How can I ensure my teaching is inclusive?

Show notes

Episode overview

All children have the right to learn, but often they are not given the opportunity to do so. Even when they are present in the classroom, they are not fully included in the learning. In this episode, teachers involved in the British Council's innovative *Teaching for All* programme in South Africa will share approaches which can promote inclusivity, particularly in diverse classrooms communities. Then leading inclusivity expert Anne Margaret Smith will then share her ideas about how these strategies can be adapted and adopted in your teaching context.

In this episode

I'm often reminded of the African concept of Ubuntu, where I am, who I am, because of you.

Teachers are key change agents in mainstreaming inclusion in the school system.

You can't have inclusion just in one classroom. If the rest of the school is not inclusive, that's going to be really tricky, and not just a school but the whole community.

Language of instruction is one specific area which has been a significant barrier to inclusivity in South Africa

Having positive expectations of every student is important

I also try and find opportunity for the students to get to know each other as well so that they understand what every one of their classmates is contributing to their learning environment

Classroom application

Think about how you could use the ideas in this episode in your own teaching.

Think about your own practice

- What do you understand by the word 'inclusion?' What do your students understand by it?

- To what extent is your classroom an inclusive place? Do all students have equal opportunity to participate in the lesson?

- Do you differentiate the way you teach, according to different student needs? If not, what could you do differently?

- Do you have a class contract, or class norms? If not, do you think one would be beneficial?

- Are all students able to do homework? Are there barriers stopping them from this? Do they need particular support?

- Is assessment fair for all students? Do they all have equal opportunity? Are there things which you could do to make this process fairer?

- Do you know the names of all your students?

Try this classroom activity
Create a class contract, or a list of class norms which both students and the teacher are expected to follow. With school-age students, you might call these *golden rules*. Depending on your context, this could even be expanded to the institutional level.

The document should contain a set of guidelines related to how people should behave in the class, as well as the responsibilities which people have to each other.

It should be created jointly by teacher and students, in a language (or languages) which ensures that nobody is excluded. It is a useful way of anonymising some of the challenges. The actual process of creating the document (and the discussions which take place) is extremely valuable, and to make it even more powerful and 'official', you and your students should sign it. A copy should be placed on the classroom wall for all to see.

> A class contract, which promotes positive behaviour, is very different from a list of school rules, which generally punish negative behaviour.
>
> It's important that the requirements of the contract are explained and justified, so that students understand the reasons for them, for example that students should not run into the classroom because this might put some students in danger or be frightening. The requirements for the teacher should also be very clear, for example: *the teacher should listen carefully to the students' answers.*

Social media

Please share your views about this episode, and the series as a whole, on social media using the hashtag #TEBC. Let us know your thoughts, reflections, comments and whether you have been able to use any of the ideas in your teaching.

Detailed notes

Use these notes to find out more about the contents of Episode 3.

Phrase	Explanation and further information
Field Report: Inclusivity and Language Education	
Ubuntu	"The word ubuntu comes from the Zulu and Xhola languages, and can be roughly translated as "humanity towards others." Ubuntu embodies all those virtues that maintain harmony and the spirit of sharing among the members of a society. It implies an appreciation of traditional beliefs, and a constant awareness that an individual's actions today are a reflection on the past, and will have far-reaching consequences for the future." Click here for more information.
In South Africa we have eleven official languages, with many more spoken across the country.	Eleven languages (Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu) hold official status under the 1996 constitution.
Extract from YouTube video	Click here to see the full video where this extract comes from: *Teaching For All - lecture by Nareadi Phasha on Inclusive Education in South Africa*
Extract from YouTube video	Click here to see the full video where this extract comes from: *Teaching For All - Inclusive Education concepts 3 - learner diversity*
Extract from YouTube video	Click here to see the full video where this extract comes from *Teaching for All - the next generation of teachers and inclusive education*
Extract from YouTube video	Click here to see the full video where this extract comes from: *Building South African inclusive school communities*

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Extract from YouTube video	[Click here](#) to see the full video where this extract comes from: *Learning in South Africa's multilingual classrooms*
Scaffolding strategies	
Extract from YouTube video	[Click here](#) to see the full video where this extract comes from: *Teaching for All: mainstreaming inclusive education in South Africa*
Interview with Anne Margaret Smith	
Anne Margaret Smith	Find out more about Margaret at her website [ELT Well](#).
Very large classes are often in the lowest resourced contexts	Specific materials about working in low-resource contexts from the British Council can be accessed [here](#).
Larger classes can be split into smaller groups	Some ideas about how to do this can be seen [in this article](#).
Students thrive when they feel safe in a classroom environment	As [this article](#) shows, "Feeling safe and valued is vital to a child's development. Learning suffers when students fear for their safety, worry about being bullied, or don't sense their teachers have high expectations for their success. In a healthy, supportive climate, students are engaged and take intellectual risks. They follow well-established rules and norms for behavior that their teachers and school leaders model and maintain. Such a community is characterized by positive relationships between teachers and students, a place where genuine respect is the norm, and where all students feel they belong."
Special educational needs	The term 'Special Educational Needs' (SEN) covers a wide range of needs. These include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability and autism.
ESOL	ESOL = English for Speakers of Other Languages. It refers to learning English as a new resident in a English-speaking country.

EAP	EAP = English for Academic Purposes. EAP consists of training students, usually in a higher education setting, to use language appropriate for study.
Neurodivergent	Neurodivergence is the term for people whose brains function differently in one or more ways than is considered standard or typical.
Narcolepsy	Narcolepsy is a rare long-term brain condition that causes a person to suddenly fall asleep at inappropriate times. The brain is unable to regulate sleeping and waking patterns normally

Useful links

- Summary sheet of the British Council *Teaching for All* programme
- South Africa Education White paper 6 – Special Needs Education
- How to Create an Inclusive Classroom: 12 Tips for Teachers
- What does an inclusive classroom look like?

Glossary

The following words at the B2, C1 and C2 level (according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) are used in this episode.

B2 words
academic
accessing
actual
adapt
adapted
additional
affecting
agents
ambitious
aspects assessment
assessments
aware
barrier
barriers
belonging
bond
capacity
citizens
closely
come to
comes down
commitment
community
concept
context
contexts contributing
council
creativity
crucial
denied
devices
didn't
disabilities
disability
disrupt
diverse
educational effective
effectively elsewhere
ensure

episode
episodes
estate
expectations
express
expression
formal
freely
governing
harmony
host
human rights
identified
identity
impact
implement
individuals
informal
input
institutions
interacting
it seemed
justice
learner
learners
left out
looking at
loss
made a
manner
motivation
native
necessarily
occasionally
official
outer
overcome
pace
participate
participating
personality
physical
point of view
policy

positively
potential
practical
process
publication
refugees
relatively
relevant
researchers
resource
resources
respond
responded
responsibility
script
senior
sexual
significant
similarities
simply
specific
split
strategies
strategy
to do with
transforming
tricky
try out
trying out
tutors
unique
valid
valued
vision
whoever
working at

C1 words
acceptance
alongside
boundaries
convention
disadvantaged
discriminating

diversity
duration
embrace
envisaged
facilitate
facilitating
fulfil
inclusion
inclusive
interactions
know what
make it
negotiated
notions
obstacles
outcomes
perceive
relate to
related to
thrive

C2 words
advocates
aspiration
chronic
combat
comes down to
concealing
core
counsellors
diagnosed
dignity
eccentric
interventions
irrespective
orientation
practitioner
provincial
reconcile
resistance
retention
shaped
talking about
weary