

Developing Character by Means of Inclusive Strategies and Practices

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Development of a person is an on-going process that needs patience, respect, responsibility, honesty, determination and trust. There are a wide range of pedagogical theories on how to teach values, morals, ethics, and educate a person, capable of having an active social position and empathy, willing to support and help others. Parents as well as educators study popular and special literature on child's psychology, effective communication, leadership, art schools cater for aesthetic education, sports clubs aim at developing will and motivation, religious communities and organizations introduce spiritual and human values in children – the children's character determines the past, present and future of humanity.

The qualities of character develop through the child's individual temperament, experiences, and choices and an interplay of family, church, community and school influences. Preschool and elementary education in many aspects become key factors for building children's character both formally and informally. Parents, who expect their children to be educated in a culture of respect, integrity and self-control, welcome the efforts to strengthen children's character through school-based programs; at the same time, some parents allow their children to have everything without any responsibilities on their part.

Character is who we are! A quality that distinguishes an individual. We demonstrate it in the way we relate to others (Landreth, 2018, p. 17). Character is a combination of all human persons derived from genes (innate), environment (family and social), and time. Early childhood schools have an important role in building the human personality to evoke a positive personality that exists within the human being (Gunawan, 2017, p. 23).

Inclusive education combines the principles of respect, tolerance, diversity, empathy and other positive qualities of a character, therefore it is necessary to develop these in children as well as prevent bullying, empower students with disabilities, teach them skills of self-advocacy. There are still difficulties within the theoretical and practical context of forming character through inclusion practices in Ukraine. Society should take into consideration

interests and needs of persons with disabilities as well as representatives of socially vulnerable groups (neglected and adopted children, students, whose parents have disabilities, migrants and displaced persons, students from disadvantaged social backgrounds). Inclusion of students with disabilities and their relationships with their peers without disabilities can serve to enhance character education efforts by providing opportunities for and creating a climate of personal responsibility, kind acceptance, and thoughtful citizenship. Comprehensive curriculum planning in character education must take into consideration inclusion of specific goals and objectives for students with disabilities, including those with the most severe disabilities for whom “character education” may not ever have been an articulated priority (Lehr et al., 2006, p. 71).

Modern education needs to reflect demands of social justice and develop benchmarks for formation of character, differentiation of teaching and individualized social and pedagogical programs. This includes revising and updating regulatory framework for general, special and inclusive education, developing educational and methodological support, applying principles of universal design to infrastructure and learning environment of educational institutions, allocating funding for social initiatives for people with disabilities, teaching pre-and in-service teachers skills and competences to develop character in inclusive environment, working with parents and so on.

1 There Are Strategies for Developing Character that Can Help in Organizing an Inclusive Environment

Direct Instruction to Build Character. Direct instruction about a rule and the underlying value helps a child learn from consequences and discipline. Choosing an appropriate consequence is a good tool to teach the value. Discipline strategies are important when using teachable moments to build character. An educator should seek the opportunity to explain why a child’s behavior is wrong while correcting him/her.

Social learning: culture of character. When children feel that they others understand and appreciate them, they have the intrinsic motivation to learn the lessons of love and character. They see it in everyday actions and choices; it brings a sense of joy, satisfaction, and peace to their life and motivates them to behave accordingly.

Experiential learning: practicing qualities of character. According to education models, one must practice what one learns before it is absorbed naturally.

An educator can use opportunities for decision-making to help a child take ethical action and see the positive results in his/her daily life. It also helps to be involved in social and community action that is accessible to children and find ways to learn altruism through good deeds of peers and adults.

Storytelling and learning qualities of character from literature, visuals and life. Children's literature abounds with great books that illustrate important values. Great books are able to reach the inner world of a child and teach lessons without the parent's interpretation or instruction. Sharing real-life stories from the news and the Internet with children to teach moral lessons is a great ethical tool. Discussions about the stories on TV are opportunities to reinforce values. Listening and responding to children's stories about school and peers, an educator can help them think through the right thing to do. The posters illustrating principles of inclusion via text and pictures that children can see in the classroom can inspire and guide their creativity in the right channel (Kimberly, 2019).

Critical storytelling is an effective tool to enable university students and pre-service teachers to speak about negative issues that they experience in high school: discrimination, bullying, harassment, and other forms of power abuse. These stories can be told on behalf of a victim, a perpetrator, or a witness and explore either individual experiences or underlying institutional structures. The academic world presents many obstacles to sharing such experiences, but telling a story is a subtle way to raise a collective resistance to the system of power abuse (Hansen & Nilsson, 2022). Solidarity and cooperativeness are traits of character with the help of which a teacher can empower students and sustain inclusiveness in school.

When a classroom is inclusive, a teacher and students share common values and cooperate rather than abuse power. Internationally there has been a steady shift from a medical (segregated) to a social (inclusive) view on disability. According to the latter model, disabilities are not viewed as "defects" that define a person, quite contrary – every individual has an inborn right to be in society that provides amendments and facilities to his/her uniqueness. In terms of policy and research, it would be mistaken to treat people with disabilities as a homogeneous group and not pay attention to their other social features such as social class, ethnicity, religion, and geographic location (Stepaniuk, 2019, p. 20).

Every student should receive necessary support and training to be able to study, engage in societal and professional activities and practice independent living. A person-centered approach in inclusive education helps to form and develop character in children. Numerous studies demonstrate that mutual communication and interaction between children with special educational

needs and their healthy peers promote effective socialization in the educational environment. Children with disabilities establish and maintain social contacts and form cognitive, emotional and behavioral skills. The presence of students with disabilities in mainstream schools has a positive effect on cherishing human values: mutual empathy, kindness and compassion (Blyznyuk & Sydoriv, 2017, p. 42). The ability to interact and be understanding of others, developing and cherishing empathy for a student's perspective and world is essential in a person-centered approach. In order to be able to teach anything, one must find out how they learn. In the history of special and inclusive education, there has been focus on teaching interpersonal skills in order to improve relationships with peers and family members (Walker, 2010, p. 127).

The international experience of good practices in inclusion and character building is valuable for Ukrainian and East European educators, but it is worth mentioning that just copying the theory and methodology without taking into account multiple regional factors and making amends is insufficient and unproductive.

Among practices of inclusion that can support character building and socialization of students, we can name the response to intervention and inclusive service learning. Implementation of these practices must address the need to provide students with SEN with the opportunity to develop social networks and build social capital. It, along with capital in other forms, contributes to a person's symbolic and material wealth, status, and power. Results indicate that students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participate in above practices increase the level of emotional closeness they have with existing friends and make greater numbers of new friends.

2 Teaching Inclusion in English Classes: A Case Study from Ukraine

While training pre-service teachers we aim at developing positive character features such as empathy, respect and positive attitude towards children with disabilities, so we introduce principles of inclusive education in the lessons of the English language by means of teaching materials. Social emotional learning involves processes by which individuals learn to understand and moderate their own feelings, understand the feelings of others, communicate, resolve conflicts effectively, respect others, and develop healthy relationships. These skills are important to both children with disabilities and to those without, in terms of overall social development, perceptions of belonging, and promotion of overall mental wellness (Sokal, 2017). We produced a set of inclusive graphic posters for teaching English at elementary school aiming at developing

communicative and socio-cultural competence, grammar and vocabulary “Modal Verbs”, “To Be in the Zones of Regulations”, “The Present Continuous Tense”, “About My Friends”, “Present Continuous”, “Holidays and Celebrations”, “What’s the time?”, “Past Simple”, “Present Continuous” (Figure 22.1).

While developing teaching aids, the following factors were taken into account: compliance with sanitary and hygienic standards; dimensions of posters; fonts and font size; color gamut (optimal combination of colors for students with amblyopia: red – yellow, with myopia: blue – white, yellow – black, green – white); elements of augmentative and alternative communication and Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), core and fringe vocabulary.


These teaching resources are useful for training educators to organize an inclusive learning environment in their schools. Visual images of persons with disabilities in the process of positive educational and social interaction with healthy peers and the descriptive sentences help to reach the goal: *You may read my book. You have my permission, but do not tear it. | May I help and hold a door for you? | We must stop people who bully others. | Must I respect the rights of people whom I do not understand? | Kids can study together. | Were the children having fun during the break? | Nazar may not break things of other children. | Mike cannot play tennis; he can play basketball. | We are different – we are friends. We do not tolerate bullying. | We support and help each other. | Can Olya read ordinary printed books? No, she has a visual disability. She can read braille books and listen to an audio text on her iPad.*

During the experiment, we used the idea of Zones of Regulations (Kuypers, 2011) that help students recognize and deal effectively with uncontrolled and unproductive emotional states. Using the certain evidence-based practices: visual supports, positive behavioral interventions, Picture Exchange Communication System as well as Emojis system created by the students and children’s naive drawings, we have developed a table of zones of emotional regulation incorporated into the study of conjugation of the infinitive “to be” in the Present Simple Tense.

Using certain evidence-based practices: visual supports, positive behavioral interventions, story-telling techniques, Picture Exchange Communication and children’s naive drawings, we have developed posters incorporating enforcing emotional self-regulation and positive personal and social skills.


Thus, the introduction of the proposed methodological tools in school should serve the purpose of spreading ideas of inclusive education and facilitate effective socialization of students with SEND as their number in inclusive classrooms of Ukraine has tripled since 2016.

Inclusive education is a global trend, having local peculiarities and challenges. Each country has its unique and valuable experience. By sharing it



МОНТРОУАНГЛАНД
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2018. Фундаментальні знання та навички для майбутнього
Івано-Франківський коледж
Окремі моменти з життя і творчості дітей, які навчаються в коледжі
КУРСОВИЙ ПРОЄКТ З МЕТОДИКИ ВИКАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ
Формування комунікативних компетентостей вчителів
у відповідності з вимогами інклюзивної освіти





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My Friends and Me / Мої друзі та я

Hello! Please, meet my wonderful friends!


Vika is my friend. She is beautiful.
Vika is not very tall. Her mouth is red.
She has blue eyes and small ears. Her head is round.
Vika is nice, cheerful and clever. She is good at Math.
Vika can swim and ride a bike.
Sometimes she falls and hurts her knees.
She likes ice-cream, milk-shakes, fashion and the nature.
Vika's brother is Bohdan. They have a pet. It is a hamster.
Her dream is to learn English very well and visit many countries.
She wants to meet the Royal Family, go to the Legoland and have fun.






Vlad is my friend. He is quite tall and handsome.
He has dark eyes, short hair and a charming smile.
His arms and shoulders are very strong.
He is a champion in arm-wrestling of our class.
Vlad is very kind and smart.
He is good at drawing and playing games on a tablet.
He likes to read a lot and writes funny stories about animals.
Vlad cannot walk, he has a disability.
He is a wheelchair user.
Vlad moves very cool and fast in it.
His dream is to jump with a parachute.

Yevhen is my pet. It is a spider.
It is very small and has eight thin legs.
It has no toes. I am not afraid of it.
It lives under a bookshelf.
Yevhen cannot read. It is very calm.
It is not bad and dangerous.
Yevhen is happy, because it has a name and we are friends.







I am Anna. I have big grey eyes and dark hair.
My nose is small. My lips are red. I am not very tall.
I'm not slim but I'm not fat either.
I can climb trees and play hide and seek.
I am good at Arts. I like to sing and dance.
My dad is a teacher in Ivano-Frankivsk college.
My dream is to swim with dolphins and visit the USA.
I want to fly to the Twin Cities, see the Mississippi river
and meet Bob Dylan in the Mall of America. He is cool.

WE LIKE TO WALK TOGETHER.
VLAD READS HIS FUNNY STORIES,
VIKA TELLS ABOUT HER DREAMS,
I TAKE PHOTOS OF THEM AND SHOW MY ART OBJECTS.
SOMETIMES WE GO TO SEE CARTOONS.
WE OFTEN DANCE TOGETHER.
VLAD IS A GOOD DANCER,
HE MOVES REALLY GOOD IN HIS WHEELCHAIR.
WE ARE DIFFERENT. WE ARE FRIENDS.
WE DO NOT TOLERATE BULLYING.
WE SUPPORT AND HELP EACH OTHER.

ТАКЦІ





www.facebook.com/groups/teachersUA/

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FIGURE 22.1 My friends and me poster (Source: Text and drawing by Sergiy Sydoriv & Marta Sydoriv)

humanity moves towards just and equal society, assisting and empowering every member.

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