The ABC of Inclusion in Education

WHAT IS INCLUSION?

Persons with disabilities access the world and function independently by using alternate senses to do the same tasks that they would have done with their non-functioning sense.

Inclusion entails accepting that different ways exist of doing the same thing, recognizing whether one perceives the “different” to be less or the same, and acknowledging that it is perhaps one’s own perception rather than facts that will either create inclusion or create barriers.

WHY IS INCLUSION IMPORTANT?

In the absence of inclusion, persons with disabilities are deprived of independent dignified living.

Laws Mandate Inclusion Social Fabric has Denied Inclusion

FACT: Persons with Disabilities have the same variety of interest, aptitude and skills as their able bodied counterparts to live a complete, independent and fulfilling life.
To create inclusion, the following 10 Principles of Inclusion need to be kept in mind.

1. **Accepting Differences: Accepts the uniqueness of each student**
   No two students are the same. In the same way, no two blind students will ever be the same.
   E.g. One may be a genius, another a trouble maker. One may prefer Braille, another Audio.

2. **Sensory Substitution: Replacing the use of one sense with another**
   There are different ways of doing the same thing to achieve the same goal.
   E.g. Reading can be achieved through: Sighted Print, Braille, Audio...

3. **Multi-Sensory Approach**
   The same things can be accessed through multiple senses and when a combination of senses is used over a single one, the experience is always richer.
   E.g. Using activities in class over merely lecturing enhances learning.

4. **Learning by Doing & Experience-Rich Environment**
   Hands on and experiential learning is proven to be an effective teaching learning technique, more so for inclusive classrooms.

5. **Equal Opportunities**
   Inclusion is about making complete education accessible not about making it concessionary.

6. **No Sixth Sense / Special Abilities / Special or Defective Cognition**
   In the absence of a functioning sense, other senses sharpen only with practice not as a gift!
   E.g. A blind student may have sharper hearing simply because he uses it more, just as a right handed student with a right hand fracture starts using his left hand better.

7. **No Clutter: Clutter confuses**
   Clean and non-cluttered presentation of information aids everyone.
   E.g. A tactile diagram that replicates everything from its sighted counterpart v/s a cleanly drawn and labeled tactile diagram.

8. **Universal Design for Environment: Usable by all**
   Inclusion is for all not only for person with disabilities.
   E.g. Keeping things in their place, Doors and Windows open or shut, Bright and clear lighting. Enriched Classrooms.

9. **Communication: Clear and Verbal (More applicable to persons with blindness)**
   A strict no to “this”, “that” without any accompanying verbal clear message.
   Remember (s)he is not “seeing”. No concern with saying “I will see you tomorrow”. Difference in literal non-meaningful communication, and well-intentioned meaningful communication.

10. **Orientation and Mobility: Based on Facts v/s Myths**
    Blind persons and students live independently. Dependence gets created with fears and myths not facts. Hence it is to be discouraged.

**THE HOW OF INCLUSION**

**WHAT REMAINS THE SAME?**

You teach; the student learns.
You explain; the student understands.
Intelligence is not affected by lack of sight.
The student can read, write, solve problems, access graphics, follow instructions, be creative.

**WHAT IS DIFFERENT?**

The only thing that is **different is ADAPTATIONS OF VISUALS**

4 Key Visuals:
The Written Word, Graphics & Pictures, Visual Activity & Outdoor Visuals