

MODULE 4

EMBRACING THE DIFFERENCES: PEDAGOGIC APPROACHES TO DIVERSITY, HETEROGENEITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS

4.3 DIVERSITY-SENSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

**Embracing the Differences: Pedagogic Approaches to Diversity, Heterogeneity and Special Needs.
Diversity-Sensitive Classroom Management.**

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Introduction

What is the CONTESSA course?

The CONTESSA course is one of the results of the “Contemporary Teaching Skills for South Asia” project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. Its aim is to be a contribution to establishing successful teacher education programs for primary teachers, particularly in Cambodia and Sri Lanka, which will create a long-lasting positive impact on the overall educational systems.

It is increasingly important for successful educators to stay up-to-date with contemporary skills and methods to use inside and outside of the classroom. The CONTESSA course therefore offers five carefully selected modules, each of which contain three focuses aimed at the development of contemporary teaching skills. The modules and their focuses are as follows:

Module 1. Building Blocks of Primary Education

1. Twenty-First Century Teaching and Learning
2. Lesson Planning and Methodological Skills: Concepts, Tools and Application
3. Designing Learning Environments

Module 2. Excellence in Teaching: Profession-Specific Competences of Primary School Teachers

1. Teaching Comprehension: Roles, Tasks and Functions
2. Assessing Learning Results
3. Pedagogical Professionalization

Module 3: Learner-Centered Primary Education: Enhancing Co-Created Learning Processes

1. Individual Development and Problem-Solving Skills
2. Lifeworld-References and Future Prospect
3. Self-Determination, Empowerment and Self-Efficacy

Module 4: Embracing the Differences: Pedagogic Approaches to Diversity, Heterogeneity, Special Needs

1. Inclusive Pedagogy: Approaches and Strategies
2. Teaching and Learning in Diversity: Preparation, Realization, Assessment
3. Diversity-Sensitive Classroom Management

Module 5: Digital Teaching and Learning

1. E-Pedagogy and Digitally Enhanced Learning Environments
2. Digital Media and Technology: Tools and Formats for Educational Purposes
3. Online-Based Lesson Preparation and Conduction

Upon completion of this course, participants will be able to implement newly acquired contemporary teaching skills, engage all students in classroom activities and learn new ways to help students reach their full potential.

Who is the CONTESSA course for?

The “Contemporary Teaching Skills for South Asia” project aims at promoting contemporary teaching skills for pre-service and in-service teachers working in primary schools. The following document is specifically adapted for pre-service teachers.

Furthermore, the CONTESSA course is available for anyone interested in staying up-to-date with contemporary teaching skills.

This is the English version of the CONTESSA course. Material is also available in Khmer, Sinhala and Tamil.

What is the structure of the CONTESSA course?

As mentioned before, the CONTESSA course consists of five modules, each worth the equivalent of 3 ECTS. Ideally, the modules are all used together since individual modules refer to other modules, but they are also designed in a way that each one can be used on its own.

Each module contains three thematic focuses and documents are available for each focus. This makes a total of 15 documents available in the CONTESSA course. Each document contains a theoretical introduction to the focus, followed by practice exercises based on the theory.

STEP 1 – THEORY – is meant as a revision of what has been read in the theoretical introduction. Practice exercises check the comprehension of the text to make sure that the underlying theory has been understood. **STEP 2 – EXPERIENCE** – offers examples of real teachers and how they practically implement the theory explained in the theoretical introduction. These examples are again connected to practice exercises which are meant to allow for the application of the previously learned theoretical knowledge. **STEP 3 – (SELF-)REFLECTION** – includes reflection questions based on each focus. **STEP 4 – PRACTICE** – is the final STEP where a teaching project is created based on what has been seen before in STEPs 1 and 2.

The practice exercises in STEPs 1 and 2 can be directly completed in this document. STEPs 3 and 4 are part of a separate portfolio document which has to be created by each individual. A template for this portfolio is available as a separate document.

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1 THE IMPORTANCE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

The term classroom management refers to all teaching activities and teacher behaviors including the planning, facilitating and monitoring of in-classroom activities. This guidance and support of a class requires a variety of skills on the part of the teacher: Verbal and non-verbal communication with the students, the design of the physical learning environment and effective time management are just as important as the development of rules and rituals. The goal of successful classroom management is to increase student motivation and learning performance by structuring the lesson in a comprehensive way. (Kratowill, DeRoos, & Blair, 2014)

In the context of the diverse school, the teacher acknowledges that “[when] students come to class, they bring with them their own personalities and their own learning expectations” (Harmer, 2015, p. 168).



Their diverse backgrounds and needs call for ¹classroom management which creates a learning environment where a wide variety of students feel accepted and are intellectually stimulated. With the move towards inclusive education, children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) have also become part of one classroom together with their peers:

Most classrooms of today are inclusion classrooms which have a blend of students with special needs and general education students. The students with special needs in inclusive classrooms often present with mild to moderate learning and/or behavioral challenges. For students who might be identified as having learning disabilities, 45% of the time they also have an attention deficit and struggle with organization and executive function [...]. Creating a learning environment for inclusive classrooms that is well managed with clear structures and routines is of the utmost importance for student success [...]. (Polirstok, 2015, p. 928)

¹ Picture source: Open source from pixabay.com

In the inclusive classroom, SEN students are **empowered** ➔ to strengthen their autonomy and self-determination. The teacher supports them in this process of gaining the necessary competences to progress in areas that they deem important to themselves. It is thus the SEN students' decision as to what they consider to be valuable to strive for and not the teacher's or parents' or anyone else's decision: The aim of empowerment is to determine and shape one's own life according to one's own ideas. Even though this approach is particularly important for SEN students, it applies to all children in the inclusive classroom.

2 STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE DIVERSITY SENSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

2.1 Creating the Physical Learning Environment

The physical learning environment includes classroom layout, positioning of the furniture, seating arrangements, location of special areas for specific activities and arrangement of display, among others. ➔ The physical setting of the classroom should be intentionally designed to meet the behavioral, social and emotional needs of all students (Shepherd & Linn, 2015). Since the classroom is ever changing depending upon the diversity of the students, teachers should regularly review and evaluate their classroom's physical design and make necessary adaptations to fulfill the needs of students (Rose & Howley, 2007). Seating students in rows facing the teacher, for example, might seem necessary when the teacher explains or shows information to the whole class. However, "[it] favours the group rather than the individual. Everyone is forced to do the same thing at the same time and at the same pace" (Harmer, 2015, p. 178). To foster individualized learning, students could sit in small groups of separate tables where they are given the opportunity to work on exercises on their own. Such a seating arrangement also allows students to face each other, which is an important aspect when

Empowerment: The capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives. (Adams, 2008, p. 17)

➔ See also
Module 3
"Learner-Centered
Primary
Education"

➔ See also
Module 1,
Focus 3
"Designing
Learning
Environments"

working in groups. If the teacher wants to avoid being in a superior position in front of the whole class but still wants to be on one level with the students, a seating arrangement in the form of a circle or horseshoe can be envisioned (Harmer, 2015). Annedore Prengel (2013) sees the circle as the place for all topics of class life: It allows for an exchange of experience, presentation of work results, playing, singing, celebrating as well as conflict resolution. Since the work in circles can be either teacher- or student-driven, it allows for a high level of participation on the part of the student and supports interaction and respect between everyone involved.

When designing the physical set-up of the classroom, teachers should employ principles of **Universal Design (UD)**, which emphasize the importance of making “activities, materials, and equipment [...] physically accessible and usable [...] [to] all students” (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009, p. 3). According to Shepherd and Linn (2015), there are four factors that support teachers in designing the spatial layout of a diversity-sensitive classroom, namely visibility, movement, minimization of distraction and personal space. Movement within the class will matter for students with physical disabilities who use wheelchairs and students with visual impairment. Minimization of distraction in the classroom is vital for children with autism who may have sensory hypersensitivity and children with ADHD or with learning difficulties (Rose & Howley, 2007) who are easily distracted by various environmental stimuli. Moreover, lighting, temperature and acoustic level of the classroom matter for the participation of some children with SEN.

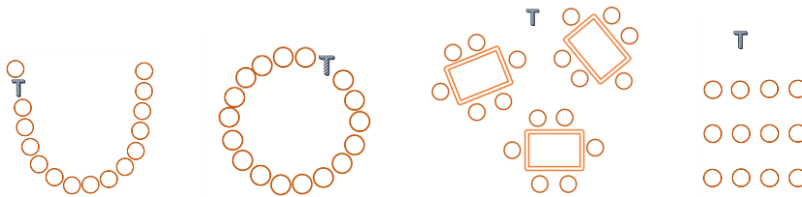
Consider the following suggestion for creating the physical learning environment:

- Keep routes of travel free.
- Make sure every student can see visuals.
- Use signs in large, high-contrast print.

(Burgstahler *Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction*, n.d.)

The term **Universal Design (UD)** was coined by the architect Ronald Mace, who challenged the conventional approach of designing for the average user and provided a design foundation for more accessible and usable products and environments. (Burgstahler *Universal Design in Education: Principles and Applications*, n.d., online)

- Make learning material for the contents of the core curriculum in the most important learning areas accessible to the children with the help of a shelving system. (Prenzel, 2013)
- Students with hearing or visual impairment might need to sit close to the board or teacher. (Gould & Vaughn, 2000)
- Students with ADHD might need to sit farthest away from distracting noises. (Gould & Vaughn, 2000)
- “[Use] a world map highlighting students’ country of origin.” (Uddin & Johnson, 2018, p. 3)
- “[Use] a sign or banner welcoming students in the different languages they speak.” (Uddin & Johnson, 2018, p. 3)
- Introduce a variety of seating arrangements according to the learning activity.



- When children are working on activities or projects (whether on their own, in pairs, or in groups), move throughout the classroom. Make yourself available for answering questions and guiding learners in overcoming obstacles. Use this time also for assessment; for instance, assess how well children are concentrating and the ways that they are interacting. (UNESCO/Booklet Five, 2015, p. 37)

2.2 Developing a Caring and Inclusive Learning Environment

Strong relationships between students are created through living and learning together, especially at the beginning of a new school year. As seen before, the inclusive school acknowledges the diversity in students without sorting them according to their diverse characters and needs. Everyone is welcome and everyone contributes with their strengths to the successful teaching-learning process. The teacher functions as a role model of

friendliness, respect and an open attitude towards diversity. On the one hand, the inclusive teacher wants “to establish [...] caring, respectful relationships with students”, on the other, s/he also wants “to create a sense of community” (Uddin & Johnson, 2018, p. 5).

It is therefore important to convey that the classroom is a safe space where every student is welcome, and every student is accepted with his/her needs. The teacher should signal that students can take risks by responding to challenging questions or assignments without being judged or harshly criticized. Failing is part of the learning process and no one has to fear negative consequences if questions cannot be answered or tasks cannot be completed. (Polirstok, 2015)

- Express admiration for a student’s particular strength, for example, when they are bilingual. (Uddin & Johnson, 2018)
- Comment enthusiastically about the diversity represented in class. (Uddin & Johnson, 2018)
- “Incorporate multiple examples and perspectives to make specific concepts relevant to individuals with diverse characteristics such as age, ability, gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and interests.” (Burgstahler *Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction*, n.d., online)
- You may have a child arriving in your class who cannot speak the language of the classroom. In this case, it is very important to find out what this child can do. It is useful if you can speak to the child individually, using his or her name, and in their own language. If this is not possible, seek out other children or even others in the community who can help you to communicate and to make the links between his or her language and your classroom activities. For instance, can you use a song in the child’s native language to teach the child new words that are used in your classroom’s language of instruction? The words to the song that the child already knows in her or his native language can be substituted gradually with those of your classroom’s language. Can you use this song

to teach all of your children about the value of different languages?
(UNESCO/Booklet Four, 2015, p. 14)

- Listen carefully when students ask you a question and take them seriously. Your answer should be as honest as possible and at their level.
(UNESCO/Booklet Four, 2015)

2.3 Establishing of Rules

As seen before, classroom management is crucial in maximizing active student participation, which in turn improves the learning outcomes (Jordan & McGhie-Richmond, 2014). Creating an inclusive learning environment enables all students to actively participate and thus fulfill their maximum learning potential. The establishment of clear, simply stated and positive **rules** and expected behaviors is an equally integral component of well managed inclusive classrooms as they offer the potential of preventing and minimizing behavioral problems. These classroom expectations provide the guidelines for the students' behavior and should therefore be developed well in advance with the agreement of the students and regularly be reconsidered.

Participation on the part of the students can only be fully realized if they are allowed to live participation and democracy. To do this, they must be, to the extent possible, involved in decision making processes. Participation - and thus inclusive education - can only succeed if the power gap between adults and children is, to the extent possible, neutralized and if children are regarded as equals with rights of their own. (Hansen, 2015) The joint establishment of classroom rules thus enables the development of a social learning environment where students and teachers work together and respect each other. The expectations expressed through the rules "are realistic, taking the child as he or she is, and not on what he or she should be" (UNESCO/Specialized Booklet One, 2015, p. 34). Less constructive behavior is an integral part of a learning situation and a legitimate aspect to be acknowledged in a student's learning acquisition process; it is "not a threat to a teacher's authority" (UNESCO/Specialized Booklet One, 2015,

Possible **classroom rules** are:
Listen actively and attentively.
Ask for clarification if you are confused.
Do not interrupt one another.
Critique ideas, not people.
Arrive on time.
Try not to distract or annoy your classmates.
(Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010, p. 249)

Participation refers to that part of the continuum of involvement where people play a more active part, have a greater choice, exercise more power and contribute significantly to

p. 34). A social learning environment conducive to learning accepts disturbances or distractions as sometimes necessary to identify gaps in the learning support and, therefore, should not be crushed immediately. Restructuring, regrouping, sending signals, offering concrete help, voluntary time out and clear return planning are ways of defusing conflict situations. The more clearly the consequences are clarified in advance, the faster the teacher can return to class. For individual students, binding contracts of conduct or documented success feedback such as smiley lists or individual feedback sheets might make sense.

The jointly developed rules should be visibly displayed in the classroom (Weinstein, Curran, & Clarke, 2003). Visualizations of these rules with the help of symbols or images can be especially helpful for SEN students in understanding and remembering them. When changing a seating arrangement, for example, pictures of the different arrangements can be shown so that students know what is expected of them.

- “Be clear in giving directions in the classroom. Organize older children to help younger children understand the directions that you give.” (UNESCO/Booklet Four, 2015, p.14)
- Behaviours aimed at attention getting, and do not spread or interfere with safety or class functioning, are most effectively stopped through planned ignoring [...] This technique should never be used with aggressive behaviours. The class may need to be taught to do this as well, since peer attention can be even more powerful than adult attention for some students. If a student is calm enough to respond, has a positive relationship with the teacher, and is free from uncontrollable pathological impulses, a non-verbal signal may be all that is necessary to assist him or her in regaining focus. Change the seating arrangement or the small-group assignments of students to avoid specific problems. Do this in a non-punitive and, if possible, undetectable way. If an activity is not successful, change it as quickly as possible. It is important to always have a backup plan. Sometimes it is best to move from an interactive game to one that

decision-making and management. (Adams, 2008, p. 31)

requires no interaction. This can be done smoothly and non-punitively when a group is becoming over-stimulated. At other times, offering a choice might be more effective. Students could choose to cover information orally through discussion or copy notes from an overhead, for example. (UNESCO/Specialized Booklet One, 2015, p.102f.)

2.4 Establishing of Routines and Routings

Routines are especially important for SEN students. Due to their specific needs, they might be more sensitive to unexpected situations or unfamiliar challenges. Routines will help them navigate their learning. (Harmer, 2015) This also explains the need for SEN students to be prepared in advance for possible changes in their daily schedule or routine, which sometimes have to be regularly repeated over the course of several days.

For students with anxiety or memory problems, repetition and rehearsal are especially important. It makes sense to have them practise the same routines, dialogues, etc. in a number of lessons so they have a better chance of transferring things to their long-term memory. In the same way, revisiting the same classroom routines [...] can help students remember what they have to do and what they have done. (Harmer, 2015, p. 150)

Consider the following examples for establishing routines:

- Signal transitional periods through gestures and/or picture communication (Rose & Howley, 2007).
- Give students an outline of the lesson.
- Offer a summary of what has been taught at the end of a lesson.
- Give an outlook of what students will learn in the next lesson.

When it comes to routings, teachers can develop general daily and weekly schedules which are again visibly displayed and enhanced with symbols, drawings or pictures. These general schedules should leave enough flexibility to allow for students to finish tasks on their own time.

- “Create a weekly plan scheduling classroom activities. Indicate whether children will be working independently, in groups, or as a whole class. In a multigrade classroom, each group may be working on a different activity.” (UNESCO/Booklet Five, 2015, p. 36)
- Pair verbal directions with visual supports (e.g., an ear for exercises where students have to listen or a book where students have to read). (Harmer, 2015)
- Use color coding to identify different tasks. (Harmer, 2015)

3 COMMUNICATING WITH A CHILD WHO HAS DIFFICULTY HEARING

Some children who are born without hearing may not learn to speak. They [...] [require] other ways to express their thoughts, needs, and feelings, such as artistically or through movement and gestures. If there is a child in your class who cannot hear or speak, use different communication methods with this child, such as speaking; hand, face, or body movements; or writing. Teach the other children to use different ways to communicate with the child.

Before speaking to the child, get the child’s attention, so he or she will know that you are speaking. Make sure that the child can see you clearly. [...]

Children who have difficulty hearing or speaking are sometimes irritable. They may pay attention, [...] *but they may need to concentrate harder to understand what is being said, which in turn makes it more difficult for them to pay attention over a longer period of time.* Observe them carefully. If they do not pay attention, find ways to make them interested in what you are saying. For example, seat yourself and your children in a circle so everyone can see each other’s faces. This will help listening and understanding. Use visual clues to introduce the lesson, such as a picture, object, or key word.

Some children who have difficulty hearing can hear more clearly if others speak close to their ear. Find out if this helps the child you teach. If so, speak

close to the child's ear when you communicate with him or her. Tell other children to do the same.

When you communicate with the child give him or her time to listen and to think. If the child responds by making sounds that are not proper words, repeat correctly and slowly the words the child has tried to say. Make sure that the child can see your face as you [...] [pronounce the words].

When you speak, move parts of your body to make what you say clearer to the child who has difficulty hearing. Also use your hands when you speak; for example, you may use your hands to show the size of objects.

Use movements and expressions as often as possible whenever you are with the child who has difficulty hearing. The child will then learn what these mean. Teach the other children to use expressions and movements to communicate with the child who has difficulty hearing.

Try to understand the different ways in which the child expresses himself or herself. Also continue using different methods of communication with the child to make him or her understand what you want.

Children who can hear [...] [to some extent] should be taught to speak [at their possible level of language development]. [...] You may be able to get some help in developing sign language skills from non-governmental organizations, foundations, or educational institutions that specialize in assisting children with hearing impairments.

If hearing-aids are used, be aware that they amplify all sounds including background noise. It can also be hard to distinguish between voices if several people speak at the same time.²

3.1 The Situationa in Cambodia

The Special Education Division is in charge of education for children with disabilities. Originally, it handled only education in elementary school. However, as of December 2016, its scope of responsibility expanded to



² Taken from UNESCO/ Booklet Four (2015, p. 42ff.). CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO. Changes made to all CC BY texts used in this document are indicated in italics or square brackets.

include early childhood and junior high school education. Currently, it is operated by four offices including the department in charge of planning. In Cambodia, disabilities are classified into nine categories: visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech impediment, movement disorder, behavioral disorder, learning disability, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, and others.

[...]

In Cambodia, the private sector has been responsible for educating all children with disabilities. However, [...] [since] 2020 the education of children with visual and hearing impairments [...] [has been] moved to the public education sector. [...] [Before that] the Krousar Thmey Foundation (an NGO founded in 1991 with the aim of educating children from refugee camps) operate[d] schools for students with visual and hearing impairments in four cities: Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham, Battambang, and Siem Reap. [...] [These schools were] shifted to the public sector in 2020.³

The Krousar Thmey Foundation has also been involved in the documentation of a system for Cambodian Sign Language (existing since 1997) together with the Deaf Development Programme. However, its dissemination and consequent consistent use “in inclusive education classrooms will take some time to implement” (Kuroda, Kartika, & Kitamura, 2017, p. 42).

3.2 The Situation in Sri Lanka

The hearing-impaired community of Sri Lanka mainly uses sign language for communication in and outside of the classroom. Sign language in Sri Lanka comes in many different dialects, with each dialect usually corresponding to the sign system used at the nearest school for the deaf. Each school for the deaf has a different culture and different signs for communication. There is no standard for sign language across Sri Lanka, which poses a problem for deaf education.



³ Taken from Nishio (2019, p. 1754ff.). CC BY 4.0.

At present, particularly considering the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the emphasis in Sri Lanka has been on inclusive education. In line with the UN convention, children with hearing impairments are educated in government or private schools either through inclusion in the general classroom or in special education units attached to general schools. However, there is still a number of students with hearing impairments who continue to attend special schools because, due to their level of communication, they cannot be accommodated in either of the above-mentioned settings. (Weerakkody, 2015)

Teachers who teach in special schools for the deaf are fluent in the sign language of their respective schools. Teachers who teach in inclusive and integrated settings mostly use total communication including lip reading. Most of the children taught in those settings have hearing aids. In private schools, helper teachers are available.

4 HELPING CHILDREN WHO DO NOT SEE WELL

When a child who has difficulty seeing first comes to the school, meet the child and the parents alone. Let the child know who you are by talking with the child and explaining what you are doing. Let the child touch you.

Next, introduce the child to his or her classmates. Explain that this child goes to school like everyone else, and he or she can do many things using their other senses, such as touch, hearing, and smelling. Suggest that while the child may need some help with specific tasks, they can all learn from each other.

Introduce the classmates to the child. If the child cannot see them, tell the child the names of some of the children. Let the child speak with each one of them until the child remembers their voices and names. Let the child touch them. Then tell the child the names of the other children so the child will begin to know all the children in the class.

Children with difficulty seeing usually do not know when people are near them. They cannot see which person they have met. When you are with a child who cannot see well, speak to him or her, so the child will know that you are there. Tell the children in your classroom to do the same.

Write on the blackboard using large letters, and teach your [...] [students] to write in this way. Read out instructions; never assume that everyone can read them from the blackboard. Specify what is shown on visual aids (such as “on the left side is ...”). Allow children to feel teaching aids if they cannot see them; for example, maps can be outlines with string. Each child who has difficulty seeing needs a reader to help him or her. The reader will read and explain books to the child and help the child to learn. The reader can be a classmate, an older child, a friend, or a volunteer teacher.

A child who can partially see may be able to learn to read and write in the same ways that other children learn. Teach the child first to write letters and numbers. You can start to teach the child to write with chalk on a slate. Fix pieces of string across the slate so that the child can touch and use them as guidelines while writing. When a child begins writing on paper, fix the strings in the same way on a piece of wood. Teach the child to place the paper under the strings. *This way the child can use both sight as well as touch to guide the writing process.*⁴

4.1 The Situation in Cambodia

A study conducted by Kuroda, Kartika and Kitamura (2017) showed that the majority of teachers in Cambodia have no training for teaching students with disabilities, “including knowledge of disabilities, their respective needs, and how to address such needs at the classroom level” (p. 31). The teachers were aware of this lack of training and were interested in developing teaching skills necessary for teaching SEN students.

In regard to visually impaired students, the study found out that a lot of teachers had never heard of Cambodian Braille before, but “when told about



⁴ Taken from UNESCO/ Booklet Four (2015, p. 41). CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO.

it, many expressed that they would want to learn so that they can communicate with their students” (Kuroda et al., 2017, p. 32). However, the majority of teachers also declared their doubts about successfully integrating blind students into their class since they neither had the teachers nor the resources to support them in their learning process.

4.2 The Situation in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, blind students use Braille for their reading and writing and abacus for basic maths. They are educated in either special education schools, integrated units in regular schools or in inclusive setups. In special education schools, all teachers are well versed in Braille reading and writing and using the abacus.

Itinerant teachers have been appointed by the government of Sri Lanka to teach Braille to students with visual impairments who are in an inclusive setup. The National Institute of Education has established a Braille press which provides a Braille version of textbooks for all subjects (Weerakkody, 2015) from grade 1-11. Moreover, the government provides enlarged print books for mathematics and Sinhala for children with low vision who are in grades 2 and 3.

Regular education teachers in the inclusive setup are not adequately trained to cater to the needs of children with visual impairment. The support of children with visual impairment by the regular education teachers depends on a number of factors such as the performance of the child, the amount of support received by others, the number of students in the classroom and the nature of the education system. However, teachers use a number of accommodation strategies for visually impaired students in the teaching/learning process such as changing seating arrangements, appointing peer buddies, or giving verbal answers and instructions to questions (Anuruddhika, 2018). When it comes to national level examination accommodations (such as Braille question papers translated one hour before



the examination, readers of question papers and time accommodation), it is the Sri Lankan Department of Examination who provides these.

5 KEY POINTS

- ✓ The term ‘classroom management’ refers to all teaching activities and teacher behaviors, including the planning, facilitating and monitoring of in-classroom activities, as well as the use of the physical environment.
- ✓ (SEN) students should be empowered to strengthen their autonomy and self-determination.
- ✓ The physical learning environment includes the classroom layout, positioning of the furniture, seating arrangements, location of special areas for specific activities and arrangement of display, among others.
- ✓ The physical learning environment in an inclusive setting should be designed in a way that activities, materials and equipment are physically accessible and usable to all students.
- ✓ It is important to convey that the classroom is a safe space where every student is welcome, and every student is accepted with his/her needs.
- ✓ The joint establishment of clear, simply stated and positive rules and expected behaviors by the whole class is an integral component of well managed inclusive classrooms as they offer the potential of preventing and minimizing behavioral problems.
- ✓ Routines are especially important for SEN students since, due to their specific needs, they might be more sensitive to unexpected situations or unfamiliar challenges, and routines will help them navigate their learning.
- ✓ Children who cannot speak or hear need different communication methods than speaking, such as gestures, facial or body expressions.
- ✓ Children who are visually impaired need other methods to read and write, such as material which they can touch attached to their slate.

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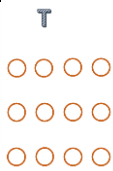



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STEP 1 PRACTICE EXERCISES



- A Drag and drop the following characteristics into the appropriate category in the chart below. Characteristics can be assigned to MULTIPLE categories, but not all categories will have disadvantages.**

teacher is not in a superior position¹ – everyone can see what the teacher demonstrates² – it favors the group rather than the individual³ – everyone is forced to do the same thing at the same time and the same pace⁴ – teacher is positioned on one level with the students⁵ – it allows for the exchange of experience, presentation of work results, playing, singing, celebrating, as well as conflict resolution⁶ – fosters individualized learning⁷ – students can work on exercises on their own⁸ – students can face each other⁹

| | Advantage | Disadvantage |
|---|-----------|--------------|
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |



B Consider restraints SEN students might face in a classroom. How can the physical environment be adapted to create an inclusive setting? Complete the following table:

| | Difficulties faced by SEN students | Suggestions for adaptations with suitable examples |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Visibility | | |
| Movement | | |
| Minimization of Distraction | | |
| Seating Arrangement | | |



C Drag and drop the following characteristics into the appropriate category in the chart below:

Giving clear instructions¹ – Expressing admiration for students' strengths² – Incorporating multiple examples and perspectives³ – Keeping routes of travel free⁴ – Providing summary of lesson⁵ – Shelving system⁶ – Positive attitude towards diversity⁷ – Jointly developing classroom rules⁸ – Seating arrangements/considerations⁹ – Providing outline of lesson¹⁰ – Visibly displaying classroom rules¹¹ – Weekly classroom activities plan¹²

| Physical Learning Environment | Caring Learning Environment | Rules | Routines |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |



D Indicate if the following statements are true or false:

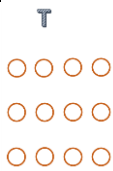



1. Inclusive education demands classroom management which creates a learning environment where a wide variety of students feel accepted and are intellectually stimulated. T/F
2. Inclusive education empowers students to decide themselves what they consider valuable to learn. T/F
3. Once the physical learning environment is designed in a way that it caters for a variety of needs, it never has to be reconsidered, adapted or changed. T/F
4. Classroom rules in the inclusive setting should only be developed by the teacher alone. T/F
5. Routines are especially important for SEN students since they might be more sensitive to unexpected situations or unfamiliar challenges. T/F
6. Hearing-aids might amplify all sounds including background noise, which might make it more difficult to distinguish between the different sounds. T/F
7. Children who have difficulty seeing always know when people are near them. T/F

STEP 1 PRACTICE EXERCISES - SOLUTIONS



A Drag and drop the following characteristics into the appropriate category in the chart below. Characteristics can be assigned to MULTIPLE categories, but not all categories will have disadvantages.

teacher is not in a superior position¹ – everyone can see what the teacher demonstrates² – it favors the group rather than the individual³ – everyone is forced to do the same thing at the same time and the same pace⁴ – teacher is positioned on one level with the students⁵ – it allows for the exchange of experience, presentation of work results, playing, singing, celebrating, as well as conflict resolution⁶ – fosters individualized learning⁷ – students can work on exercises on their own⁸ – students can face each other⁹

| | Advantage | Disadvantage |
|---|---------------|--------------|
|  | 2 | 3, 4 |
|  | 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 | |
|  | 1, 2, 5, 6, 9 | |
|  | 7, 8, 9 | |



B Consider restraints SEN students might face in a classroom. How can the physical environment be adapted to create an inclusive setting? Complete the following table:

| | Difficulties faced by SEN students | Suggestions for adaptations with suitable examples |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Visibility | movement for students with visual impairment; identifying visuals or written information on the blackboard | keep routes of travel free, e.g. have nothing lying on the floor so that students with visual impairment do not trip over these objects; use signs in large, high-contrast print and let students with visual impairment sit close to the blackboard |
| Movement | movement for students who use wheelchairs; access to material for students who use wheelchairs | keep routes of travel free, e.g. have desks far enough apart so that students who use wheelchairs can move without a problem; make learning material for the contents of the core curriculum in the most important learning areas accessible to the children with the help of a shelving system that is within reach of students who use wheelchairs |
| Minimization of Distraction | students with ADHD are easily distracted by various environmental stimuli; students with Autism have sensory hypersensitivity | have students with ADHD or Autism sit farthest away from distracting noises |
| Seating Arrangement | movement for students who use wheelchairs | use a seating arrangement that allows students who use wheelchairs to easily integrate into the seating arrangement, e.g. use a circle where chairs can easily be removed |



C Drag and drop the following characteristics into the appropriate category in the chart below:

Giving clear instructions¹ – Expressing admiration for students' strengths² – Incorporating multiple examples and perspectives³ – Keeping routes of travel free⁴ – Providing summary of lesson⁵ – Shelving system⁶ – Positive attitude towards diversity⁷ – Jointly developing classroom rules⁸ – Seating arrangements/considerations⁹ – Providing outline of lesson¹⁰ – Visibly displaying classroom rules¹¹ – Weekly classroom activities plan¹²

| Physical Learning Environment | Caring Learning Environment | Rules | Routines |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|----------|
| 4 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| 6 | 3 | 8 | 10 |
| 9 | 7 | 11 | 12 |



D Indicate if the following statements are true or false:

- Inclusive education demands classroom management which creates a learning environment where a wide variety of students feel accepted and are intellectually stimulated. **T/F**
- Inclusive education empowers students to decide themselves what they consider valuable to learn. **T/F**
- Once the physical learning environment is designed in a way that it caters for a variety of needs, it never has to be reconsidered, adapted or changed. **T/F** (Correct Answer: Teachers should regularly review and evaluate their classroom's physical design and make necessary adaptations to fulfill the needs of students.)
- Classroom rules in the inclusive setting should only be developed by the teacher alone. **T/F** (Correct Answer: Classroom rules should be developed together with the students.)
- Routines are especially important for SEN students since they might be more sensitive to unexpected situations or unfamiliar challenges. **T/F**
- Hearing-aids might amplify all sounds including background noise, which might make it more difficult to distinguish between the different sounds. **T/F**
- Children who have difficulty seeing always know when people are near them. **T/F** (Correct Answer: Children with difficulty seeing usually do not know when people are near them.)

STEP 2 PRACTICE EXERCISES



A Read the following case studies and fill in the table below:

Case study 1

School A uses a metal chest to store books since termites and other insects easily destroy these materials for learning.

Case Study 2

Several chalkboards may be found around the classroom at the children's level in school B so that they can sit in a group and use the chalkboard for planning, discussing ideas, problem-solving, etc. In some classrooms, the lack of desks and chairs is beneficial. A large learning space, covered with a clean, locally made carpet, can be easily changed from a science investigation space to a drama space, and groups can easily be formed and reformed without disturbing the classes.

Case Study 3

In school C, the lower wall space of classes is painted black and children use it as their own writing space, drawing and writing with chalk. The school buildings have been specially designed and constructed with child-friendly elements like the above-mentioned children's chalkboard.

Case Study 4

In school D, parents weave baskets that are stacked on the floor, full of shells, stones, seeds, and anything else that can be used in science and mathematics lessons. The important thing with all of these learning materials is that they are used by the children.

Case Study 5

In school E, teachers use broken umbrellas as a framework for mobiles, with letters of the alphabet, pictures, etc., for reinforcing language activities. String for hanging visual aids is made from woven palm or banana leaves. Traditional glue comes from a fruit. Parents and other caregivers have helped to provide these local materials, and they have found out more about teaching and learning in the process. They are now better able to talk to their children about their learning at school.⁵

| | Ideas for Physical Learning Environment |
|--------------|---|
| Case Study 1 | |
| Case Study 2 | |
| Case Study 3 | |
| Case Study 4 | |
| Case Study 5 | |

⁵ Adapted from UNESCO/Booklet Five (2015, p. 11ff.). CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO.



B Listen to this teacher talk about how she teaches in an inclusive learning environment (Audio File 4.3.1; audio transcription can be found in the appendix of this document). Answer the following question:

1. How does the teacher ensure that the teaching environment and teaching materials are appropriate for an inclusive setting?



C Read the following case studies and complete the table below:

Case Study 1

Sandun is 8 years old and has been going to school for years. He was taught in the regular curriculum, but had weaker learning results in comparison to his peers. When I took over the class, I soon realized that Sandun had special educational needs but that no one had ever identified or addressed them. I contacted a local NGO who paid for Sandun to see a doctor. The doctor discovered that Sandun had difficulty hearing high or low pitched sounds especially when he could not see the person or thing that was making the noise. The doctor prescribed a hearing aid, which helped Sandun's hearing a great deal.

However, our school is by a busy road and the classroom is very noisy. The hearing aid made every sound louder and Sandun found it too noisy to wear his hearing aid all the time at school. I therefore make sure that Sandun always sits at the front of the class and I use a lot of gestures when explaining things. I also write down instructions on the board. Since Sandun was not able to follow the teaching in the years before, I took time to find out what exactly Sandun already knew and in which areas he needed additional support. I focused on Sandun's strengths to overcome his difficulties. I've also assigned other students to support Sandun, and during lunchtime, I spend time with Sandun in a quiet place where I can check if he has understood everything we worked on in class.

Case Study 2

Namita is 8 years old and blind. In class she sits near the front so that she can clearly hear the teacher. Her teachers have also adapted teaching aids to help Namita. They have stuck pieces of string onto a wooden protractor so that Namita can feel the angles in maths. In geography, the teacher has stuck string over all the lines on the map and used buttons to mark the cities. Now Namita can get an impression of what Sri Lanka looks like.

Outside of class, the other children help Namita to make sure that she does not fall down when moving around the school. They have also learned that it is important for them to touch her gently when they start to speak to her and to say their name. If they do this, Namita knows who is talking to her and she can look at them.⁶

| | Difficulty | Cause of Difficulty | Pedagogical Support |
|---------------|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Sandun | | | |
| Namita | | | |

⁶ Adapted from Disability Action Council Cambodia (n.d., p. 49ff.).



D Look at the following picture and complete the table below:



Picture Source: Own Pictures

| Difficulty | Cause of Difficulty | Pedagogical Support |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | | |

References

Disability Action Council Cambodia. (n.d.). *Children with Special Needs in the Classroom: In-Service Teacher Training Course*.

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STEP 2 PRACTICE EXERCISES - SOLUTIONS



A Read the following case studies and fill in the table below:

Case study 1

School A uses a metal chest to store books since termites and other insects easily destroy these materials for learning.

Case Study 2

Several chalkboards may be found around the classroom at the children's level in school B so that they can sit in a group and use the chalkboard for planning, discussing ideas, problem-solving, etc. In some classrooms, the lack of desks and chairs is beneficial. A large learning space, covered with a clean, locally made carpet, can be easily changed from a science investigation space to a drama space, and groups can easily be formed and reformed without disturbing the classes.

Case Study 3

In school C, the lower wall space of classes is painted black and children use it as their own writing space, drawing and writing with chalk. The school buildings have been specially designed and constructed with child-friendly elements like the above-mentioned children's chalkboard.

Case Study 4

In school D, parents weave baskets that are stacked on the floor, full of shells, stones, seeds, and anything else that can be used in science and mathematics lessons. The important thing with all of these learning materials is that they are used by the children.

Case Study 5

In school E, teachers use broken umbrellas as a framework for mobiles, with letters of the alphabet, pictures, etc., for reinforcing language activities. String for hanging visual aids is made from woven palm or banana leaves. Traditional glue comes from a fruit. Parents and other caregivers have helped to provide these local materials, and they have found out more about teaching and learning in the process. They are now better able to talk to their children about their learning at school.⁵

| | Ideas for Physical Learning Environment |
|---------------------|--|
| Case Study 1 | using a metal chest to store school material |
| Case Study 2 | chalkboards are at the children's level; a large learning space can offer multiple ways of use |
| Case Study 3 | the lower wall space of classes is painted black so that children can write and draw on it |
| Case Study 4 | baskets, accessible to the students, are filled with diverse materials |
| Case Study 5 | broken umbrellas are used as a framework for mobiles |



B Listen to this teacher talk about how she teaches in an inclusive learning environment (Audio File 4.3.1; audio transcription can be found in the appendix of this document). Answer the following question:

1. How does the teacher ensure that the teaching environment and teaching materials are appropriate for an inclusive setting?
 - First of all, they check the accessibility in all presentations (i.e., Word document, PDF, PowerPoint) before they go to the students. SEN students can customize their lesson plan to their needs.



C Read the following case studies and complete the table below:

Case Study 1

Sandun is 8 years old and has been going to school for years. He was taught in the regular curriculum, but had weaker learning results in comparison to his peers. When I took over the class, I soon realized that Sandun had special educational needs but that no one had ever identified or addressed them. I contacted a local NGO who paid for Sandun to see a doctor. The doctor discovered that Sandun had difficulty hearing high or low pitched sounds especially when he could not see the person or thing that was making the noise. The doctor prescribed a hearing aid, which helped Sandun's hearing a great deal.

However, our school is by a busy road and the classroom is very noisy. The hearing aid made every sound louder and Sandun found it too noisy to wear his hearing aid all the time at school. I therefore make sure that Sandun always sits at the front of the class and I use a lot of gestures when explaining things. I also write down instructions on the board. Since Sandun was not able to follow the teaching in the years before, I took time to find out what exactly Sandun already knew and in which areas he needed additional support. I focused on Sandun's strengths to overcome his difficulties. I've also assigned other students to support Sandun and during lunchtime, I spend time with Sandun in a quiet place where I can check if he has understood everything we worked on in class.

Case Study 2

Namita is 8 years old and blind. In class she sits near the front so that she can clearly hear the teacher. Her teachers have also adapted teaching aids to help Namita. They have stuck pieces of string onto a wooden protractor so that Namita can feel the angles in maths. In geography, the teacher has stuck string over all the lines on the map and used buttons to mark the cities. Now Namita can get an impression of what Sri Lanka looks like.

Outside of class, the other children help Namita to make sure that she does not fall down when moving around the school. They have also learned that it is important for them to touch her gently when they start to speak to her and to say their name. If they do this, Namita knows who is talking to her and she can look at them.⁶

| | Difficulty | Cause of Difficulty | Pedagogical Support |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Sandun | hearing high or low pitched sounds | hearing impairment | sitting close to the teacher, using a lot of gestures when explaining, writing down instructions, spending extra time on identifying difficulties |
| Namita | seeing | blindness | sitting close to the teacher, teaching aids (e.g., pieces of string stuck onto a wooden protractor to feel the angles in maths, string stuck over all the lines on the map and buttons to mark the cities |



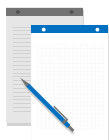
D Look at the following picture and complete the table below:



Picture Source: Own Pictures

| Difficulty | Cause of Difficulty | Pedagogical Support |
|------------|---------------------|--|
| hearing | probably deafness | teacher sitting close to the student, teacher uses sign language for communication |

STEP 3 PORTFOLIO TASK – SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS



Write essay answers to each of the following self-reflection questions. Each essay answer should be approximately 300-500 words long and answered in a coherent text with full sentences. THESE ESSAY ANSWERS GO INTO YOUR PERSONAL PORTFOLIO!

1. In your opinion, which factors should be considered in managing classrooms with diverse needs of students including children with special educational needs?
2. How do you think you can facilitate the development of a socially and emotionally supportive environment for children with diverse needs in the classroom?

STEP 4 PORTFOLIO TASK – TEACHING PROJECT



Create your own personal teaching project. Use the description of your learning environment from Module 2.3 to describe how to adapt this learning environment so that it includes a variety of different students, especially students with special educational needs. This portfolio task should be approximately 800-1000 words long. THE TEACHING PROJECT GOES INTO YOUR PERSONAL PORTFOLIO!

APPENDIX

Transcript: Audio File 4.3.1

Teacher: And one advanced thing at the school what we try to do we try to check the accessibility in all the presentations, be it a Word document, a PDF or a presentation, we check the accessibility before it goes to the students. So whoever, even the special education kids, kids with special educational needs or dyslexia, anything, any student who find things difficult can sort of customize their lesson plan according to their needs and then go through it at their pace.

Successful educators take diversity and individual needs into consideration when planning their teaching and ensure equal opportunities and inclusion for every student. Regardless of their personal or socio-economic life circumstances, all students need and are entitled to have a safe and productive learning environment. In this module, you will explore how diversity affects the classroom and receive practical tips for promoting an inclusive environment to enable all learners to acquire skills for their future lives.



Enjoy!

