

## Inclusive Pedagogy

### A Conceptual Framework for Educating Students of Diversity

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The aim of Inclusive Pedagogy is to advance the education of all students, particularly those who are culturally, linguistically, and cognitively learning diverse, through teacher development coupled with teachers' analysis of their thinking and practice in relationship to all students in their classrooms and schools.

The framework is initiated by the question "*Who is this child?*" Thus, we will begin with that question and explain what is initially entailed in answering that question. In unpacking the other elements of the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework we will next examine the *rationale*, *goal*, and *definitions* of the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework. Next, we will explore the *framework and characteristics* articulating the elements of the chart that need to be explored and explained for each of the four main questions that should be pursued in considering a child. We will then consider each of the main *questions* ending by examining the characteristic of Collaboration for United Advocacy which is animated by the initial question "*Who is this child?*"

## COLLABORATION FOR UNITED ADVOCACY:

### Who is this child?

In considering how to respond to students and support them in reaching their potential to contribute to society and progress in their learning and schooling, educators begin by developing knowledge and understanding of the child. Educators can gather information about their student(s) through observing at recess, during class, after school, or in other settings. Educators can gather information by interviewing former teachers, parents and others. Teachers can examine student work, access student records, learn about the student(s)' life story or their community, culture, and heritage and seek out the extra-curricular participation and talents and abilities of the child beyond the school. In order to hold high expectations and take multiple perspectives, use knowledge based-practices and hold themselves accountable in teaching students, educators need to uncover as much information about the child as possible. By gaining knowledge of and information about the child the educator is then poised to support the child in their learning and development within the classroom and school. The educator will be able to build on student strengths and access resources that can support the child and themselves in this effort.

### Rationale

Across the world, the composition of school and classroom populations is becoming increasingly diverse. Thoughtful educators recognize that considered collectively the diverse student populations (talented and gifted, multicultural,

learning disabled, and speakers of other language) make up a majority rather than a minority of the students they teach. Even teachers in predominantly white, middle-class and upper-class communities are confronted by increasing diversity. This presents teachers with both challenges and opportunities. The challenge occurs when teachers ask themselves, “How can I learn and grow as a professional in order to meet the needs of the students under my charge?” The challenge, thus, becomes an opportunity for improvement. Teachers who respond to this challenge see students in their classroom not as a problem for them to fix but as a resource for their professional growth and development as a teacher.

Unfortunately, most teacher development targeted toward meeting the diverse needs of students is fragmented. Teachers are given specific strategies for particular types of students, but they are not presented with a coherent framework that enables them to systematically and comprehensively attend to the commonalities across these diverse populations as well as adjust for the unique needs of particular kinds of students. Multicultural programs often provide strategies and lists to guide teachers for each different kind of culture. Courses which teach about learning disabled students discuss not strategies for teaching all learning disabled, but particular and specific strategies for each type of learning difference. Talented and gifted course work often gets so entangled in definitions of giftedness that teachers may not have clear ideas about how to proceed with students who they perceive as gifted but may not be formally identified in that way. District policies and the number of ways that the teacher might respond may discourage rather than support teachers as they struggle to meet the needs of second language learners and other students.

Teachers are left to find a way to resolve the competing and often particularistic demands offered by this kind of fragmented professional development since each day they must simultaneously meet the needs of all students within the constraints of classroom instruction.

Inclusive Pedagogy is a coherent and comprehensive framework which begins with a careful analysis of the child or children to be taught. This can support teachers in developing common understandings for teaching all of their students. In addition, it prepares teachers to work in their classroom and with others to both refine and adjust their instruction and to collectively advocate for their students. A feature of this framework is that it guides teachers to respond in educationally appropriate ways to the diversity in their classrooms. It helps teachers understand unique differences among these populations, but more importantly, it promotes common understandings that can guide their classroom practices and advocacy efforts. Using the Inclusive Pedagogy framework enables teachers to develop increasingly sophisticated skills for paying attention to and meeting the needs of learners as they think about the students and critique and improve their current teaching practice

## **Goal**

Each teacher who embraces the Inclusive Pedagogy framework as a tool to guide their teaching and help them develop as professionals already lives a story of professional development. Underlying the story is their desire to become more capable and more competent and able to act in more caring ways. Using Inclusive Pedagogy as a framework to consider your practice and your students enables you to create “living educational theory” that meets the needs of your students and builds on their students. As you respond both physically and mentally to the issues that the Inclusive Pedagogy framework helps you identify, you will grow professionally and be able to enact your best-loved self in your practice. We ask that teachers reframe their practice by learning about new theory and practice, but more importantly, we expect that they will embrace, create and implement new theory and practices. The theory they create is living because it lives in their practice. It is also living because the teachers’ theories about teaching and learning will grow and change from both what they learn about their students and what they learn as they implement practices.

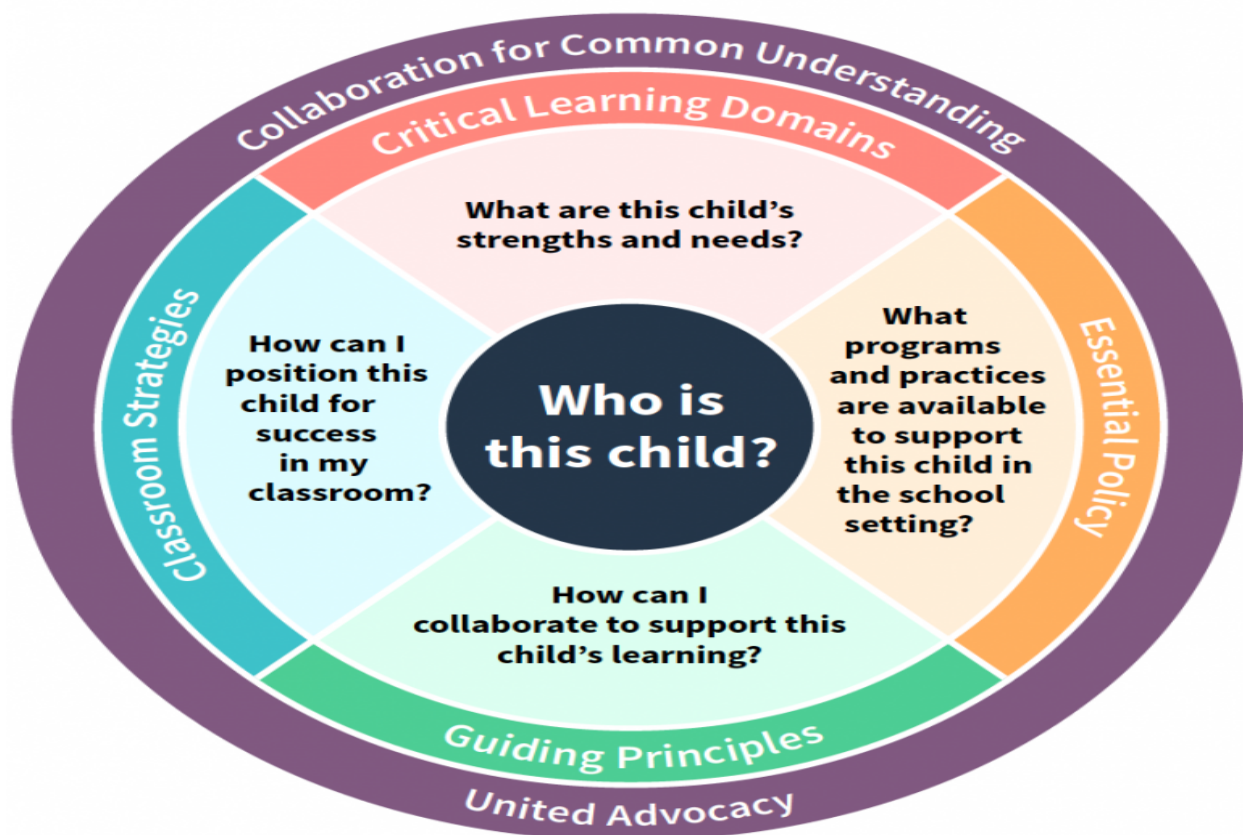
## **Definition**

Inclusive Pedagogy, as a conceptual framework for professional growth, enables teachers to develop common understandings and participate in united advocacy for their students. Inclusive Pedagogy begins with an overarching question (*Who is this child?*) to uncover who the child is and how the teacher or school might respond, the teacher’s inquiry is guided by four main questions that represent characteristics and a standard:

- What are this child's needs and strengths? (Critical Learning Domains)
- What programs and practices are available to support this child in the school setting? (Essential Policy)
- How can collaborate to support this child's learning? (Guiding Principles)
- How can I position this child for success in my classroom? (Classroom Strategies)

## Framework and Characteristics

Inclusive Pedagogy is graphically represented as a wheel. *Who is this child?* is positioned at the center of the wheel reminding the educator that the child—the learner—is the focus. Each spoke represents a different avenue for uncovering who the child is and the potential avenues of response for promoting the child's learning. Each spoke is represented by a different question and labeled with a different characteristic and standard. The spokes represent advocacy, the structural response that keeps the framework a viable action in the lives of diverse learners. The outer rim encompasses the whole and reminds us that through common understandings, which unite advocacy, we can meet the needs of all learners in each school and classroom.



The main questions and accompanying characteristics are defined by a *standard* and a set of *guiding questions* that enable the educator to gather information and reflect on the child and the institutional practice, policies, and programs that can enable the development of the child. Finally, each of the main questions has a *reflection question* to push educators to more deeply query their own beliefs and practices in terms of their work with students.

### 1. Standard

The standard, generally phrased in everyday language, outlines the professional responsibility of teachers in meeting the needs of the student(s). The standard delineates the boundaries, or definition of the characteristic and suggests how an educator could respond.

## 2. Guiding Questions

Grounded in the main question, the guiding questions support educators in examining what they know about a child, their practice and other resources. As educators respond to these questions, they develop new ways of thinking about their practice and their interaction with and teaching of their students. The questions help them more critically analyze the educational context and learning of the student(s). This analysis pushes educators to consider what they know, what they do and what they could learn and try, which leads to new knowledge, ideas, and skills for teaching. Common understandings both theoretic and practical will emerge and can be utilized continuously as educators examine and refine their practice.

## 3. Reflection for Change

Like the guiding questions, the reflection for change question guides educators to query their beliefs and actions. Unlike the guiding questions, the reflection for change question invites action. The question requires that educators critique their own practice, and it encourages educators to work for changes in their curriculum, in their classrooms, in their schools, or in their communities.

As educators utilize the Inclusive Pedagogy Framework, the main questions and individual characteristics with their standard, guiding questions, and reflection for change will enable educators to develop and diversify their skills for meeting student needs. Educators will grow and develop in ways that advance the education of their students. In analyzing their practice and the student or students about which they hold concerns, across a day the educator (seeking to support the learning of all students) may begin or end with any of the main questions since all of the issues coexist simultaneously in the daily life of educators as they seek to provide optimal learning experiences for students.

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## CRITICAL LEARNING DOMAINS:

### What are this child's strengths and needs?

The main question that animates this characteristic of Inclusive Pedagogy asks that the educator first consider the strengths students bring to the learning situation. It is easy for educators to begin consideration of how to support a child's learning by focusing on the deficits the child brings. Therefore, starting with strengths and considering how what a teacher might perceive as a need could indeed be a strength that can be capitalized on in the child's education. To explore further who a child is as a learner, teachers need to examine where the child is in terms of the domains of development and learning. The name for this characteristic of Inclusive Pedagogy is labeled with three terms that are important in this regard. The first is *critical*, which implies attention to what is essential. It is first and foremost an acknowledgment that teachers must educate the whole child and not individual components; yet understanding where the child is in terms of each learning domain is important as educators plan how to respond to support the child's learning and growth. The second word is *learning*, which immediately implies two different but related tensions. One is the tension between teaching and learning. These terms are definitely not synonyms, are also not antonyms. The role of the teacher is to teach the child in ways that support learning. Focusing on learning means the educator focuses there first moving away from the needs and strengths of the teacher to those of the learner. The second tension is between learning and development. Here we focus on learning not as a way to ignore development but as an indication that like Vygotsky we recognize one of the purposes of good teaching is to promote learning which can lead development. Finally, the term *domains* acknowledges that the individual categories considered as essential to a child's growth and change are merely fields of influence on the child's education (the cognitive, the social/affective, and the linguistic). While inextricably linked, they can be considered individually as part of a holistic process. As teachers gather knowledge about student prowess and potential in each area, they are better positioned to support the learning, growth and future success of the child.

## Critical Learning Domains Standard

Learning involves cognitive, social/ affective, and linguistic development.

Any kind of significant learning is a complex matter. All of us use what we learn, know, and believe to act on the world around us and to develop new knowledge and skills. Significant learning emerges from some combination of our cognitive, social/affective and linguistic skills. As a result, teachers should explore where a student is developmentally in regard to each domain. Further, the teacher should also recognize the range of aspects of each domain. This allows educators to garner insights and have more than one interpretation of a child's performance or avenues for progress. Secondly, holding such knowledge enables teachers to hold high expectations for students as they act on their knowledge that all children can learn and the three learning domains can be enlisted in promoting a child's success. Research in teaching and learning affords teachers who keep current to develop new practices that embrace the whole child and engage him or her more completely in learning and push their development. As teachers learn new things, they become more willing to hold themselves accountable for using what they know and learn in their teaching.

### Guiding Questions

#### 1. Cognitive

How can I support my students learning by building on their previous knowledge and encourage use of appropriate strategies and skills?

Research demonstrates that beginning with what students know and already know about a concept or process immediately expands their ability to learn the new things being taught. Teachers need to provide and engage students in a wide variety of experiences to build strong background knowledge and then build on that knowledge to push student learning. Research in literacy and cognition reveals that students are most likely to learn and use strategies when teachers model those new strategies and prompt them when to use these skills and strategies.

#### 2. Social/Affective

How can I help students' ability to recognize, participate in, and master playing the school game?

The school game includes the social rules, the memory, the thinking skills, and the cognitive development that are needed in order for a student to learn from the experience of schooling. The three verbs—recognize, participate, and master—represent the students' possible levels of engagement in schooling in order to benefit from it and reach their cognitive, social/affective, and linguistic potential.

### 3. Linguistic

How do I teach in ways that support the language development of students?

This question asks a teacher to be simultaneously aware of the language used in the classroom by the teacher and by the student in order to support not only the language development of students but also the opportunity of the student to act competently in using language. Further, teachers should build on all the elements of literacy: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teacher can use whatever literacy and language skills students have to push their learning forward.

### Critical Learning Domains Reflection for Change

How can my teaching embody my understanding of diverse learners' commonalities and uniqueness?

Teachers who take this reflection for change question seriously seek to ensure that anyone who observes their teaching has visual evidence of what they know and understand about supporting the development of all student. They use what they know about children's learning and development to interrogate their educational practices. They use what they know to decide what knowledge, skills, dispositions, and potential will form the nexus of their curriculum. Once having decided what to teach, they develop learning activities that engage the whole child in the learning process. Next, they critique the activities to make sure that the curriculum they have planned does indeed attend to the critical learning domains. Such teachers observe students while they learn using what they know to intervene during the learning. Finally, these teachers use what they learn by observing to inform future decisions about and plans for teaching.

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## ESSENTIAL POLICY:

### **What programs and practices are available to support this child in the school setting?**

Public education always occurs in a context. One of the factors that impact that context is the policy that guides, directs or constrains it. Educational policies from the national, local and state levels can affect the everyday life of classrooms. This characteristic of Inclusive Pedagogy, Essential Policy, focuses attention on the ways that rules, procedures, routines, and mandates shape the context and even in some cases the content of instruction. The word *essential* reminds teachers that policy is necessary in maintaining an appropriate learning environment to meet the needs of special population students. *Essential* also reminds teachers that certain mandates, rules, and policies must be in place, and teachers must be willing to advocate to support the development and application of those policies.

## Essential Policy Standard

Essential policy must be an integral part of advocacy for special population students.

The standard guiding this characteristic points out clearly the political nature of public education. Teachers often consider themselves apolitical, yet teaching is at its core a political act. Each instructional plan, decision, or curricular adjustment determines what concepts, ideas, and experiences students in your classroom and school will have. Such decisions can enable special population students either to contribute to or to be alienated from the larger society. One of the purposes of schooling is, indeed, enculturation of the young into a democracy. The quality and efficacy of such enculturation is indeed a teacher's private and public act of student advocacy.

## Guiding Questions

### 1. Standards

How do I attend to the standards for teaching and learning for all students?

This question calls attention to the plethora of standards available to guide educational programs and practices. Professional organizations representing academic disciplines, professional development, parental involvement, and special population students have developed standards to guide action for education. These standards are based on best practices in each of these areas. When considered individually and separately, the standards lists can be confounding and overwhelming, but through developing common understandings concerning the standards that should be played out in her own classroom, a teacher brings this complexity under control. Such control provides coherence for classroom practice. It ensures that a teacher has a sure foundation from which she can advocate for resources to support needed educational programs and practices. The theme for this goal question is standards.

### 2. Classification Issues

How do classifications both expand and limit my ability to advocate for special population students?

This question reminds us that by classifying students, we are able to provide them with special services and unique educational opportunities. Classifying students translates into labels for identifying, assessing, and placing them in appropriate learning environments. Local, state, and national policies guide, constrain, and enable teachers in their effort to provide students with the best educational setting, support, and experience possible. Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about these policies and processes are vital if they are to maintain high expectations for student learning. Multiple perspectives applied to classifications can help teachers reconceptualize what others may consider as restrictions to be viewed as opportunities. For example, assessment of students for placement can be thought of as either a gatekeeper or a gateway. The theme of this question is classifications.



### 3. Legalities

How do policies, programs, and legislation impact the students' school environment?

This question invites teachers to consider the way in which programs for meeting student needs develop out of educational policy; such policy is shaped by Congress, the courts, state legislatures, and school boards. It exists at the federal, state, and local levels. All programs, good or bad, are shaped by the usual components—political, social, economic, and pedagogic. While all of these components interact, it is the political component that can give teachers the legal protection and support needed to ensure that all of their students will be prepared to fully participate as citizens in a democracy. When teachers examine past and current legalities carefully, they understand the historical legacies that are played out in their classroom, and they can target which of those legacies need to be altered. Engagement in politics can be uncomfortable for teachers but understanding policy and legislation can give them new power for creating the kinds of educational contexts they would most like to work within. The theme of this question is legalities.

### Essential Policy Reflection for Change Question

What are my moral obligations toward special population students?

Once teachers understand essential policies, they can begin to determine what actions they can take to fulfill the moral obligations they have for providing appropriate and liberating educational opportunities for special population students. The decisions teachers make as professionals are moral decisions. Moral commitment to right action generates power and vigor for teacher advocacy. This commitment may give teachers not only the impetus to advocate for students at the local level but the courage to advocate in all political arenas necessary to ensure excellence and equity in the education of their students.

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## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

### How can I collaborate to support this child's learning?

The second characteristic of Inclusive Pedagogy, Guiding Principles, rests on the assumption that teachers are intentional beings: Purposes, ideals, points of view guide teaching practice. Our guiding principles become the benchmarks for excellence against which we evaluate our own performance. We understand that teaching practice is never completely under the control of the teacher but exists in the interaction between the teacher and the learner. Such recognition leads to committed and caring teachers to act in morally responsible ways while recognizing the individual agency of students to determine whether they will accept or reject the opportunity to learn. For such teachers to remain vibrant, vigorous and hopeful in their teaching, they need to be able to articulate the principles that guide their practice in order to evaluate their own actions independent of student response to that action.



## Guiding Principles Standard

Effective instruction for special population students must be guided by theoretical and moral principles.

As we begin to act on the reflection for change question from Collaboration, we find ourselves wondering what principles guide our practice and what criteria we are using in evaluating what are best practices. We soon recognize that student achievement gains alone are insufficient indicators of our own evaluation of what makes a particular practice or program best for students. As we more clearly understand our own beliefs about teaching, learning, and schooling, we have a firmer basis for student advocacy.

## Guiding Questions

### 1. Multiple Perspectives

How could I think about this differently?

This question asks teachers to recognize that a range of performances could be celebrated as student successes, and any student behavior might have more than a single interpretation. Student silence might result from a lack of language proficiency, cultural differences governing appropriate adult-child interchanges, deafness, or politeness rather than from belligerence or lack of knowledge. How we interpret a situation says as much about us, our cultural background, and our experiences as a member of a family or a society as it does about the student whose performance we evaluate. Allowing space for alternative interpretations of a behavior injects more room for student success. This question also guides teachers to think about using multiple sources, perspectives, and modalities in their teaching. This provides students with a plethora of ways to develop understanding of the concepts taught. The theme underlying this question is multiple perspectives.

### 2. High Expectations

How can I hold high expectations for all students?

This question asks teachers to examine the learning expectations they have for their special population students. High expectations for students rest in an assumption that regardless of current performance, knowledge, skill, or ability, each student has the potential to learn and grow. Teachers act on this belief by developing learning experiences that reveal to students their competence, intelligence, creativity, talent, potential, or social or linguistic prowess. Teachers carefully scaffold experiences so those students are supported and successful in learning new skills and ideas.

### 3. Knowledge-Based Practice

What do I already know and what do I need to learn to support the learning of all students?

Scholars do not know all there is to know about educating special population students, but what is known can be helpful in guiding teaching practice. In fact, knowledge-based practice supports teachers in developing multiple perspectives and maintaining high expectations. This question asks teachers to look beyond their own knowledge, understanding, and experience to learn about ways to teach students in their charge. It asks teachers not to merely develop a bag of tricks, but as they acquire skills and techniques to build theoretical understanding about how or why the skills and techniques work. Indeed, instructional decisions and classroom practice should be based on the best current, experiential, empirical, and theoretical knowledge available.

### 4. Accountability

How can I hold myself and my student accountable?

As a teacher, I am accountable for the learning and development of students under my charge. One aspect of this responsibility is holding students accountable for their own learning. A second, and just as important, feature is recognizing that the education of a student is the responsibility not just of your school and district, but of the entire community. Every teacher in a school has a responsibility for the education of special population students. While accountability can be merely a form of gatekeeping, it can just as well be an act of respect and a sign of value and dignity. When we hold others accountable for their actions, we communicate to them our belief that what we are asking is within their ability. This question highlights the need to hold our students and ourselves accountable for learning. The theme of this question is accountability.

### Guiding Principles Reflection for Change

How can I apply these guiding principles to my teaching?

Once teachers have developed multiple perspectives, studied how to maintain high expectations, explored knowledge-based practice, and evaluated their own accountability, they are prepared to determine what their own guiding principles are and to use them in guiding their own teaching and curriculum. Once they can clearly and cogently articulate their guiding principles and recognize when they act in concert with those beliefs and when their practice is in contradiction, then they are ready to act to change their practice. Thus developing an understanding of guiding principles can lead to action, which will increase the learning opportunities for special population students in their school. Changing practice to coincide with belief can be an act of advocacy for student learning and development.

## CLASSROOM STRATEGIES:

### How can I position this child for success in my classroom?

All that teachers learn about themselves as teachers and about teaching practice emerges in the planning, teaching and assessing of their students. This final characteristic of Inclusive Pedagogy, classroom strategies, recognizes and is informed by that fact. Each of the characteristics of Inclusive Pedagogy will inform classroom strategies. A clear understanding of students, their needs, and the resources available to serve them will inform classroom strategies. When teachers have clearly articulated the principles that form the moral and theoretical foundation for their practice, they develop clear guidelines for their practice. An understanding and development of policy to guide practice and political action for ensuring legal protection are moral obligations that teachers fulfill so that they can utilize best practices in their schools and classrooms. Teachers understand student development: cognitive, social, and linguistic. This understanding helps them select the instructional practices which hold the most promise for supporting student learning. Foundationally teachers come to understand that educating students to meet their full potential is a joint and shared responsibility of educators, parents, students, and other members of the community. Through the development of informed practice, teachers meet the needs of all students and are better prepared to advocate for their own students both within and beyond their classrooms.

#### Classroom Strategies Standard

Teachers know the what and the why of effective classroom strategies for all students.

This standard reminds teachers that having a bag of tricks for teaching, while helpful, is not the ultimate goal of an educator. Teachers do need to have multiple strategies in their repertoire in order to respond effectively and quickly to the learning needs and potential of their students. However, if their practice is to lead to maximum and powerful learning for students, teachers need to know not only how a strategy works and what they need to effectively implement it; but they also need to know why it works for particular student populations. Teachers who hold this kind of knowledge soon realize that the same strategy will indeed work in teaching different student populations but also that it is effective with these populations for different reasons. A teaching strategy that works for a second language learner can also support the learning of talented and gifted, culturally diverse, regular education students, or special populations. However, teachers practice and use of strategies become stronger and more sophisticated when they understand why it works for each population. When teachers hold this knowledge subtle differentiation and nuanced teaching that supports the learning of all students quickly emerge.

### Guiding Questions

#### 1. Planning

How can I adjust my planning to meet the needs and utilize the strengths of all students?

If teachers are to truly meet the needs of all students under their charge, they will need to intentionally and carefully plan their instruction. Such planning begins by developing deep understanding of the content to be taught which positions

them to ask “What is most essential? What is absolutely necessary for future learning and success? Where and how should I begin teaching about this content?” Such interrogation allows the teacher to identify the conceptual level of the content and maintain it. This allows the teacher to attend to the complexity and simplicity of what needs to be learned and modify and differentiate content to accommodate the learning of all students. This allows teachers to create a, more complex, and richer context for student learning. In this process, teachers will have considered what will be most difficult and how they can support each child in learning what is needed to be successful in the content being taught. Careful consideration of the content and attention to teaching it will reveal the hidden complexities in delivery method or strategy. In their response to these understandings, teachers will be better positioned to motivate and engage all students in learning. Teachers then become freed to select the best teaching practices for supporting student learning.

## 2. Teaching

How can my teaching accommodate all students?

Based in their planning, teachers develop curriculum that can most effectively engage students in learning. But during the teaching, teachers will be involved in scaffolding, adjusting, accommodating, and individualizing in moment-to-moment negotiation of classroom learning. The questions ask you to be thoughtful both during your teaching and as you reflect on it. In this way, you will develop increased sensitivity to the strengths, behavior patterns and needs of students in your classroom. When teachers plan carefully and are prepared for the lesson and have developed understanding of what strategies work and why, they are more likely to be present and flexible in the immediate context of a lesson. They will be able to adjust and modify as they observe and immediately respond to student misunderstanding, misbehavior, or confusion. They will continually push student learning. They will recognize when to pause, recycle, or push forward in the immediate context of a lesson. When teachers understand the *how, what, and why* behind the classroom strategies they employ, they develop excellence in teaching practice.

## 3. Assessment

How can I make sure that my assessment practice allows all students to demonstrate what they know?

A basic purpose of assessment is to enable all students who know the content or have the skill being evaluated to demonstrate that knowledge or skills. This question asks teachers to examine their assessment and evaluation practices. Assessment should provide teachers with clear insight and information about the current state of students’ knowledge and skills. Uncovering what students know and garnering evidence of their knowing is a challenge for teachers, particularly when teachers gather evidence of the learning of special population students. The challenge is to utilize assessment strategies and practices that allow you to distinguish between students understanding of content and ability with the skill being assessed and their general problems with learning, difficulties with language and issues related to cultural diversity. When teachers are clear and plan lessons that target what is essential for students to know and be able to do, it increased their ability to design assessments that accurately capture student knowledge, skills, and learning. In this way, teachers are positioned to use a wider array of testing strategies and formats, more frequently utilize authentic assessment experiences, and to provide a more accurate picture of students’ development, potential, and ability.

## Classroom Strategies Reflection for Change

Whats specific changes will I make in my own teaching to accommodate special population students?

When teachers understand teaching and learning better, they are more prepared to adjust their practice to meet the needs of culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse students. We ask teachers to seek out, learn, implement, and modify teaching practices. We ask teachers to develop an understanding of a practice so that they know how and why it will work for each of the special population students. The question asks teachers to make their teaching is an act of advocacy for student learning and success.

## Return to **COLLABORATION** for United Advocacy: Who is the child?

The Inclusive Pedagogy Framework enables teachers to effectively collaborate to design educational experiences that promote each student's learning and development. Creating and sustaining collaborative relationships is difficult under the best circumstances, but it is even more difficult when educators are focused merely on the act of collaborating rather than on the student(s) who are the real purpose for collaboration. The purpose of Inclusive Pedagogy generally is as a tool that can advance the education of all students, particularly those who are culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse. We recognize that it takes collaboration to educate such students. But teachers become adamant about collaboration when they see the ways in which it can help their own students learn and grow educationally. When teachers identify which students need educational support, what their specific needs are, how others in the school or community could engage with the teacher and students to promote learning, what programs and practices already exist, and what it means to be a successful student in this setting, their motivation for collaboration.

As teachers collaborate they collectively come to understand how systems, classrooms, practices or policies need to be altered to actually and effectively educate their children for who they hold responsibility. As a result, teachers begin to recognize that every decision they make is a political act and the way they teach is classroom policy. This animates teachers connects them to each other and leads them to advocate for their students, the families of those students, and the communities where they teach. Through using the Inclusive Pedagogy framework, teachers become better able to collaborate around the individual and collective needs of the students they educate (and their families). As they increase their capacity to collaborate they also increase their ability to advocate. They become knowledgeable about legalities and policies. They develop more creative ways to meet legalities and policies in ways that most support student learning and development. Collectively they develop understandings of which policies, practices, and legalities interfere with student learning and they are willing to individually and collectively advocate for change.





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