

Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment: Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education

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	Title	<i>Welcoming Diversity in the Learning Environment: Teachers' Handbook for Inclusive Education</i>
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	DOI	https://doi.org/10.54675/UHWS5380
	ISBN	978-92-9223-692-2
	Pages	198 pages (Open Access)
	Language	English
	Year of publication	2022
	Licence type	CC BY-SA 3.0 IGO

When global frameworks such as the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action affirm that “teachers are the key to achieving all of the SDG 4–Education 2030 agenda” (Kaplan & Bista, 2022, p. iv), a well-trained and professionally supported teaching cohort becomes mandatory for every country to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4. UNESCO’s handbook makes sure that this expectation is fulfilled by translating policy documents into a practical workbook for both teachers and teacher trainers. Many books and documents talk about inclusive education and international policies. However, this book is different because it focuses more on practical activities and real-life examples. Instead of only explaining policies and agreements, it shows teachers exactly how to make their classrooms more inclusive.

The nine modules of this handbook are constructed in such a way that a reader will learn the simple ideas first, then delve into more complex ones and finally understand the step-by-step strategies to connect them to the theories. All these nine modules can be easily comprehended under three interrelated themes.

The first theme is about the foundation of inclusive education, where major ideas of inclusion, exclusion, disability, and international policy frameworks are described. This is reflected in Module 1 that presents some concepts along with

reflection tasks and classroom activities for teachers. Additionally, Module 2 explains inclusive education as a shared global responsibility by aligning it with the international policy frameworks.

The second theme moves toward pedagogical practice, detailing how inclusion is implemented through curriculum adaptation, differentiated instruction, classroom management, and assessment techniques. In this regard, Module 3 discusses the twin-track approach, merging individual learner support with system-level assistance, followed by practical case studies. Module 4 then focuses on curriculum and learning materials, supported by multiple case studies. Next, Module 5 talks about how a teacher should act to ensure all types of learner diversity are addressed to make the classroom truly inclusive, applying differentiated instruction, and Module 6 emphasises the importance of flexible and inclusive assessment practices.

The third theme discusses how inclusion can be sustained through reflective teaching practice and crisis-responsive education during emergencies. This is further developed through Modules 7 and 8, which explain how reflective activities can improve teaching practices toward systemic collaboration and reflective practice, and why inclusive education is a shared responsibility among teachers, schools and communities. The final module focuses on education during emergencies and conflicts, showing how learning can be

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continued and adapted but never stopped. Case studies from Cambodia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Nepal demonstrate how education systems adapted rather than stopped during the pandemic.

This clear progression from theory to practice emphasises the practical relevance of the handbook for both pre-service and in-service teachers, particularly in the Indian context. For example, Module 3 mentions a task where teachers can identify why some students are left out in their classroom and come up with some practical solutions (Kaplan & Bista, 2022, p. 50). Additionally, Module 5 explains lesson planning ideas using diverse methods so that all learners in a classroom can understand and relate to them (Kaplan & Bista, 2022, p. 77). This differentiated instruction-based task is particularly relevant for addressing multilingualism in Indian contexts. Moreover, Module 7 has another activity on designing a school inclusion team plan to support at-risk learners (Kaplan & Bista, 2022, p. 122). This

task can help teachers work together to create a school-based support group that categorises learners' needs and manages support within and outside the school. More importantly, Module 8 provides us with an inclusive teaching checklist activity that helps teachers monitor and reflect on whether their classroom is truly inclusive (Kaplan & Bista, 2022, pp. 128–131).

Overall, Kaplan and Bista (2022) embraced a conceptual and policy-driven approach connecting inclusive education to global frameworks, teacher competencies, and systemic modification, supported by case studies across diverse contexts. It reaffirms that inclusive education needs theory along with practical teaching techniques. However, for these methods to work effectively in diverse and low-resource contexts, they simply need to be adapted and implemented carefully.

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