Project Inclusion | Projet sur l'inclusion

Educator modules on disability, accessibility, and inclusion

Module 4 Record

Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Module 4 Record: Participation in school life beyond academics

Learning outcomes

1. Describe the importance of extra-curricular activities for students, for parents/families, and for extending a shared knowledge of a student's strengths, interests, and areas of need.
2. Demonstrate understanding of inclusive environments that extend well beyond the classroom and school walls.
3. Define universal design in the context of extra-curricular activities and apply this approach through practical strategies.
4. Know where to find resources to support implementing strategies and further learning.

Key message 1: Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are a positive influence on childhood and adolescent development.

Lived experience: Yemina

Lived experience: Yemina	Comments
	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Effective planning = Successful field trips

Physical considerations

Research or visit the location for accessibility (e.g., washrooms, eating area, learning stations). Connect with onsite staff before the trip and share the class profile so the site is aware of any needs.

Plan well in advance

All students have a right to participate in field trips. For students with disabilities, advance planning can set the stage for success.

Other considerations

- learning activities
- sensory factors
- visual and auditory aids
- travel (ensure that everyone can travel on the same bus so that students with disability are part of the main group)
- equipment
- socio-economic factors

Positive impacts of activity

Activity participation within and outside the classroom can have a positive impact on:

1. self-identity
2. physical health
3. teamwork and sportsmanship skills
4. emotional and mental health
5. confidence and self-esteem
6. sense of belonging, social connections

Lived experience: Joel

Lived experience: Joel	Comments:
	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Lived experience: Sherron

Lived experience: Sherron	Comments:
	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Key Message 1 Summary

Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are a positive influence on childhood and adolescent development.

Activity participation within and outside the classroom can have a positive impact on

- self-identity
- physical health
- teamwork and sportsmanship skills
- emotional and mental health
- confidence and self-esteem
- sense of belonging and social connections

These benefits are often especially significant for students with disabilities.

Write your comments below:

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Key message 2: Creating an inclusive environment extends beyond the physical environment.

Lived experience: Ahsan

Lived experience: Ahsan	Comments:
	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Gathering information

One of the primary ways we can gather information about an individual is to speak with the student and with the student's parents/caregivers. In the case of a student like Ahsan, for example, learning about their aspirations can help to support them in achieving goals. Greater parental involvement adds to the sense of the school as a community and builds an inclusive environment.

Other ways to gather Information include

- service providers
- community members and leaders
- observation
- trying different activities/approaches

Creating an inclusive environment

Creating an inclusive environment extends beyond the physical environment.

It includes the following:

a. **Social environment**
- peers
- educators
- support staff
- other community members and partners, including healthcare providers

b. Attitude of others

To create an inclusive environment, the attitude of others should be

- considerate
- patient
- welcoming and open-minded
- willing to think beyond traditional ways
- able to value others and celebrate differences
- positive
- respectful
- compassionate
- responsible
- able to see people with all abilities as unique, whole, and contributors
- non-judgmental and non-assumption making

Self-reflection

- Self-reflection can be used as a tool to examine our own attitudes and contribution to an inclusive environment.
- Self-reflection benefits teachers, support staff, community partners, and students alike. Reflective practice can consist of self-assessments, examining practices, considering improvements, problem-solving, and developing analytical skills.

c. Policies, procedures, and practices
- Value equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Uphold opportunities for all to succeed
- Lead to personal and academic well-being

d. Deep knowledge of the individual

To create inclusive environments, we need to have a deep knowledge of the individual beyond their disability. It involves recognizing an individual's

- strengths/abilities
- cultural background
- motivation/interests
- goals/vision

e. Awareness and proactive measures to minimize barriers

We also need to develop awareness and proactive measures to minimize barriers an individual may face before they can have an inclusive experience:

- physical barriers
- cultural background

- language and communication barriers
- general support
- training and educational materials
- teaching methods
- accessibility
- fine motor/gross motor skills
- sensory challenges

Strategies to create an inclusive environment

1. Model inclusive behaviour and language

- Demonstrate positive values: respect, fairness, empowerment.
- Model strategies to support and highlight individual strengths.
- Consider the role of peers in modelling inclusive behaviour.
- Demonstrate what someone can do through play and natural interactions.
- Know when to step back and observe.
- Learn to include by including.

Modelling different strategies to support an individual and highlighting their strengths helps to create an inclusive environment.

2. Embrace diversity

- Pair or group participants with complementary abilities.
- Encourage creativity and sharing ideas for modifying activities.
- Use multiple examples, visuals, and materials that embrace and represent diversity.
- Consider using tools, like social stories, to help a student prepare for a learning event.

3. Nurture budding friendships

- **Observing**
  Who is comfortable and connected (peers)?
- **Acting**
  Support students who require encouragement, more experience, and mentoring.
- **Observing**
  Who needs more support to be inclusive?
- **Acting**
  Support students who require encouragement, more experience, mentoring.

4. Foster a group environment

- Provide opportunities for team-building activities.
- Group participants into sub-groups or teams with collective goals that stay together over time.

- Offer "lunch bunch" or small-group activities, open to all students.

5. Support increased participation and inclusion

- Give verbal and visual cues regarding directions and staying on task/activities.
- Reduce distractions.
- Provide calming, quiet areas and rest breaks.
- Provide positive reinforcement/social praise.
- Provide peer support and mentoring.
- Use specialized equipment (e.g., adapted play equipment, enlarged print, graphic materials, talk-to-text devices, audio recording).
- Extend time to complete tasks for students with fine-motor limitations, visual impairments, or learning disabilities.

Key Message 2 Summary

Individual approach

1. Social environment
2. Attitude of others and self-reflection of personal attitudes and beliefs
3. Policies, procedures, and practice
4. Deep knowledge of the individual
5. Awareness and proactive measures to minimize barriers

Broad-based community approach

1. Model inclusive behaviour and language
2. Embrace diversity
3. Nurture budding friendships
4. Foster a group environment
5. Support increased participation and inclusion

Write your comments below:

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Key message 3: Universal design for learning focuses on using teaching strategies or pedagogical materials designed to meet special needs to enhance learning for all students, regardless of age, skills, or situation.

Lived experience: Adam

Lived experience: Adam	Comments:
	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

UDL through a Learning for All lens

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) provides educators and related education and community partners with important principles for planning instruction/activities and designing learning environments for a diverse group of students.

[Learning for All – A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013 (ontario.ca)](#)

Content in this section reflects and contextualizes the broad learning principles of UDL and differentiated learning in *Learning for all* (pp. 12-21).

UDL promotes health and well-being

Access to physical activity and recreation through UDL

↓

Opportunities to develop skills and healthy attitudes beyond school settings and a sense of accomplishment

↓

Positive attitudes toward self, others, and healthy and active living

Planning for success

- Experiences are accessible and inclusive from the outset.
- The learning is designed to be USABLE by ALL students.
- Make inclusivity a priority from the start.
- Approach challenges with a "How" rather than "If" mindset:

How will I ensure this student is included and fully participates in the "end-of-year Sports Day"?

Know your learners

Discuss and collaborate with students:

1. Identify what is most important to them in an activity (best hopes).
2. Create goals for achievement using clear, friendly language.
3. Offer positive feedback and highlight strengths and ways to improve.
4. Gain an understanding of what has worked for them in other contexts.
5. Brainstorm how activities may be altered or adapted to help promote inclusion (e.g., sound, light, smell, touch, equipment).

What, why, and how of UDL

1. The "what" of learning – UDL strategies

- Present and instruct learning material and skills in a variety of ways (options) to support inclusion and different learning styles.
- Give instructions to everyone as a group (do not isolate anyone).
- Use different members of the group to help demonstrate activities and skills.
- Demonstrate variations that allow students to engage in the activity and show their learning.
- Videos, books, and posters can be used to show the concept or skill being learned.

2. The "why" of learning – UDL strategies

- UDL provides multiple means of engagement.
- Increase participant interest in activities that motivate them by providing multiple entry points and ways of engaging.

3. The "how" of learning – UDL strategies

- Give choices.
- Provide various ways to play to promote skill development.
- Use a variety of equipment to meet the needs of everyone.
- Offer tasks/activities that are meaningful and authentic.

Options and choices

Provide OPTIONS to practice and execute the skill by varying the following:

- Level of assistance
- Equipment
- Boundaries
- Skill level
- Rules

Strategies – Accessible sports

1. Try an inclusive sport like sitting volleyball. Make an environmental change by lowering the net that makes the sport challenging for all players.
2. Reach out to individuals or organizations that have knowledge/expertise related to both sport and athletes with disabilities, such as Special Olympics.
3. Integrate a variety of sports and games within extra-curricular activities/clubs (e.g., indoor curling, bowling, shuffleboard).
4. Encourage athletes to track personal milestones and allow activities to focus on personal best.

Summary of UDL features

Universal Design for Learning

- is immersed in the lesson or activity from the beginning and not something added after the lesson or activity was created.
- options are for every student/participant to access (e.g., bowling ramp, pool noodle, extra time, lowered target, safety zones in a tag game).
- entails having high expectations for all students/participants.
- finds creative ways to use space.
- reflects physical and emotional safety.

A supportive, inclusive, and safe environment is critical for learning and successful participation.

Reflection/Discussion

- Think of an experience you have had that brought one or more of the conditions illustrated in this module to life; for example, embracing diversity in the class. What enabled that to happen? What difference did it make?
- What is a small action you can take that will make a big difference to students with disabilities who are participating in extra-curricular activities?

Write your comments below:

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Thank you for engaging in this learning. We would like to know about your experience with the module. Please take 5 minutes to do a short survey.

https://redcap.link/projectinclusion

Credits

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Module 4 Links and resources

Links

Links are listed in the order in which they appear in the key messages. Where appropriate, we have included links to other resources mentioned in the module.

KM 1	Game on: Diminishing risks for depressive symptoms in early adolescence through positive involvement in team sports Extra-curricular sport participation: A potential buffer against social anxiety symptoms in primary school children
KM2	How teachers use self-reflection and evaluation in education Teacher self-assessment: A mechanism for facilitating professional growth
KM 3	Learning for all – A guide to effective assessment and instruction for all students, kindergarten to grade 12, 2013 (ontario.ca)

Resources

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