

Inclusive Classrooms: An Ecosystemic Perspective

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ABSTRACT This paper explores various aspects of learning in inclusive classrooms from an ecosystemic perspective. One purpose of including learners with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, as opposed to segregating them in special educational classrooms, is to help all learners (learners with and without disabilities) learn to live, work and play together, so that eventually they can successfully live, work and be together in the community as adults. Inclusion is a shift away from separate education that encouraged separate relations between people with and without disabilities. People with disabilities were viewed with contempt, but inclusive education encourages us to look beyond the disability and concentrate on who that person is and what they can do. Therefore, we argue that over and above the fact that inclusive education is about social justice where every individual is seen as an equal member and partner, individuals occupy spaces deserving of mutual and reciprocal co-existence in the creation and perpetuation of sustainable learning. Affording equal opportunities for everyone in society is seen as a moral right. Each person's potential has to be tapped into and developed, regardless of their disabilities or abilities. Differentiation in society should not be encouraged, but diversity has to be celebrated and accommodated. In this paper, we argue that learning in inclusive classrooms suggests the need for effective, collaborative, collegial, cohesive and well-coordinated partnerships.