

What Does an Inclusive Classroom Look Like?



INCLUSION CHECKLIST

Here are some suggestions for you to consider as you set up your classroom for the new year. Perhaps you are already doing these things, perhaps there are some new ideas that you could use as you prepare for a new start-up.

- 1 **PERSONAL STUDENT INFORMATION** – Offer students a chance to share information with you that is important, in a structured manner that is private (e.g. mental health concerns, physical challenges, dynamics with other students, special holidays that they celebrate – e.g. Ramadan) Everyone’s individual identity should be recognized and valued.
- 2 **TERRITORY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** – Find out the traditional Indigenous territories on which you are living and teaching on. Is this visible in your classroom? Explore ways to honour these cultures and perspectives in a meaningful way.
- 3 **VISUAL CUES** – Put up posters/stickers in your classroom that promote diversity. (e.g. Multiple languages and cultures, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, ability, religion, etc.)
- 4 **THOUGHTFUL LANGUAGE** – Ensure the language you use in your classroom is inclusive and respectful of all learners (e.g. friends, Grade X, humans, students, people, folks/folx, etc.). Remember, semantics matter.
- 5 **PRONOUNS** – Share yours with your students at the beginning of the year; add them to your email signature; ask students which pronouns they prefer to use.
- 6 **REPRESENTATION** - Examine the resources that you use. Are the texts, resources, handouts, articles, and other sources that you use representative of your audience and the world in general?
- 7 **FLEXIBLE AND CREATIVE PHYSICAL SPACES** – Do you have varied work spaces like vertical surfaces, wiggle cushions, or desks of differing heights? Can you incorporate multiple desk groupings or arrangements like circles? Is there space for students to move?
- 8 **MICRO-AGGRESSIONS** – Micro-aggressions are hurtful words and actions committed against marginalized groups by people in power. Though they are subtle and may be unintentional, they still cause harm. Learn about them so that you can recognize and stop these acts from occurring in your classroom space.
- 9 **COLLEGIAL CONNECTIONS** – Reach out to your colleagues who have expertise such as: Learning Support Services, Safe Schools Specialists, Counsellors, EAs, Indigenous Support, SOGI Support in your building and district. Collaborate with others and ask questions.
- 10 **MADE A MISTAKE? ACKNOWLEDGE AND APOLOGIZE** – It’s inevitable that at times we will make mistakes, offend others, or say the wrong thing. Stay in those difficult moments – acknowledge what happened, apologize and try to make amends, and then do better next time. Even better, model this process with your students and colleagues.



GOING DEEPER: REFLECTING ON THE BIGGER PICTURE OF INCLUSION

Beyond the checklist, here are some ongoing foundational pieces related to inclusion for you to reflect upon. It helps to understand the connections between theory and practice, and these are great starting places.

- 11 **STAY CURRENT** - Explore important concepts like intersectionality, ableism, heteronormativity, and/or new terms like neurotypical, privilege, decolonization, SOGI, and climate justice, to state a few.
- 12 **THINK ABOUT SPACE AND PLACE** – Think about the social context of where you’re teaching, the audience of who you are teaching to, and the physical location that you are teaching in. Allow this to inform your practice (e.g. Try starting units and topics from an Indigenous perspective first, and then moving outwards).
- 13 **LEARN ABOUT SYSTEMS AND CULTURES OF POWER** – We teach in political institutions with a long history of colonialism, and entrenched systems of power. Investigate how these cultures of power manifest themselves in our classroom, in the development of our curriculum, and in our relationships with our students.
- 14 **IDENTIFY OUR PERSONAL BIASES** – Our personal backgrounds and experiences shape the way we view the world, our views on education, and our relationships with others. Be cognizant of this in your practice.
- 15 **REFLECT & PREPARE** – Creating an inclusive space is an ongoing process of learning, taking risks, reflecting, and collaborating with others. It involves being vulnerable and uncomfortable; this is part of the process.