

## RECOMMENDATIONS ON COMPETENCES AND ATTITUDES OF AN INCLUSIVE TEACHER

An inclusive teacher is one that has the knowledge and skill to adapt to the needs of those students who face various difficulties and who need special attention. The university degree and the ability to teach do not actually recommend one for being an inclusive teacher. Like all our traits, also these regarding the relationship with special needs students, require a lot of work and continuous development. Solid psycho-pedagogical base on knowing the personality of students and differential teaching strategy for planning lessons/activities, teaching, evaluation and on characteristic of different type of handicap, disabilities, problems.

An inclusive teacher has to **value learner diversity** because differences should be considered as a resource and therefore effective teaching approaches should be used in heterogeneous classes. All students are enabled to progress along with their peers and to get the support they need to progress.

The skills and abilities of an inclusive teacher to be developed within the competence of valuing learners diversity include:

- learning how to learn from differences;
- identifying the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity in all situations;
- supporting all learners;
- addressing diversity in curriculum implementation;
- using diversity in learning approaches and styles as a resource for teaching;
- contributing to building schools as learning communities that respect, encourage and celebrate all learners' achievements.

An inclusive teacher has to have great **communication skills** and most of all, **empathy**, in order to get to know the student and understand his or her special needs. A teacher who lacks these skills has little chance of becoming an inclusive teacher. Communication skills and empathy can be gained by putting oneself in various situations in which one needs to speak and relate to others. Students often say that their teachers are not willing to listen to them in order to understand their behavior and sometimes they don't get the chance to explain why they acted in a certain way. **Listening** to one's students is very important.

The skills of an inclusive teacher to be developed within the communicative competence include:

- being an effective verbal and non-verbal communicator who can respond to the varied communication needs of learners, parents and other professionals;
- supporting the development of learners' communication skills and possibilities;
- assessing and then developing 'learning to learn skills' in learners through effective communication;
- facilitating co-operative learning approaches;
- implementing positive behaviour management approaches that support learner's social development and interactions;
- knowing how to prevent / mediate / solve conflicts and how to help his/her students to overcome conflicts among themselves.

**Volunteering** in different NGOs which develop different projects for people with special needs can contribute to developing those skills. One who wants to be a teacher should consider volunteering.

An inclusive teacher needs **good organisational skills** so he/she can organise all work in class and outside class so that every student can fit in. Every teacher should follow professional development classes focused on class management, as part as their continuous career development. **Dedication for work, care, understanding, equality treatment** for all students/parents/teachers.

A serious issue is the **relationship between the teacher and the families** of his/her special needs students. This should be an open relationship, based on good communication from both sides, because the attitude of the family towards their children's education is critical for the management of each case. **Interrelation** for making a team with other teachers, parents, community members in helping students

The skills and abilities of an inclusive teacher to be developed within the area of interrelation competence include:

- actively engaging parents and families in supporting their child's learning;
- communicating effectively with parents and family members of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds;
- acceptance and respect

All inclusive teacher should learn how to **understand and work with special needs students**. There are also classes that teach teachers how to do that. An inclusive teacher is one that knows how to balance his/her subject for the special needs students, with an adapted curricula and adapted evaluation methods. In Romania, teachers lack these basic skills on inclusion, and therefore they can take continuous career development classes on the subject.

**Collaboration and teamwork** with other inclusive teachers are essential approaches for all teachers as inclusive education requires all teachers to work in teams. Collaborative teamwork supports professional learning with and from other professionals. Schools need to have **support system and structures** available for further help, input and advice.

The skills and abilities of an inclusive teacher to be developed within the area of collaboration and team work competence include:

- implementing classroom leadership and management skills that facilitate effective working;
- co-teaching and working in flexible teaching teams;
- working as part of a school community and drawing on the support of school internal and external resources;
- collaboratively problem solving with other professionals;
- contributing to wider school partnerships with other schools, community organisations and other educational organisations;
- drawing on a range of verbal and non-verbal communication skills to facilitate working co-operatively with other professionals.

Also, teachers can relate better to students if they **work with students outside class**, for example if they make trips together or if they develop different outdoor activities. Thus, the teacher can be seen by the students in a complete different way than in the classroom and also, the teacher will get to know better his or her students, will get to see different sides of his or her students.

An inclusive teacher is one who is willing to take a chance with his/her students and who shows them that he/she trusts them. The students need to know that their teacher trusts them and their efforts. **Trust** is a key attitude, on both sides.

Main attitudes of an inclusive teacher:

- Positive thinking
- Constructive approach
- Focus on finding solutions
- Base on practical activity
- Reflection

**Continuing personal professional development** – teaching is a learning activity and teachers take responsibility for their own lifelong learning.