



# 1. How to create an inclusive school culture

## 1.1.1. Best practices for social inclusion

Creating an inclusive school culture begins with a clear commitment to equity, empathy, and respect for diversity at all levels of the school community. This involves embedding inclusive values into school policies, classroom practices, and everyday interactions. Best practices for social inclusion include promoting cooperative learning, using culturally responsive teaching methods, and fostering a sense of belonging among all students—especially those from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds. It is essential to engage families and communities as partners, provide professional development for staff on inclusive education, and ensure that the school environment celebrates differences rather than simply tolerating them. Ultimately, inclusion is not a one-time effort but an ongoing process of reflection, action, and adaptation.

This chapter illustrates how thoughtfully chosen and applied digital tools can transform classrooms into inclusive, creative, and emotionally supportive learning environments. By integrating these best practices, schools can empower every child—especially the youngest—to feel seen, heard, and capable.

### Best Practices for Social Inclusion Through Digital Tools

Creating an inclusive learning environment goes beyond physical access to education—it requires thoughtful adaptation of resources, teaching strategies, and digital tools to meet the diverse needs of all learners. Digital platforms and applications, when used intentionally, can play a crucial role in supporting social inclusion in the classroom. Below are best practices grounded in real-world applications, illustrated by examples that highlight how these tools foster inclusion, engagement, and emotional growth among young learners.

#### 1. Adapting Visual Content for Accessibility: *iloveimg*

One effective inclusive practice is adapting visual content to make it accessible for all students, including those with visual impairments or learning difficulties. In Mr. Thompson's third-grade classroom, the image editing platform **iloveimg** plays a central role. To accommodate a range of needs, he compresses high-resolution images for faster loading across assistive devices, crops unnecessary backgrounds to help students focus, and creates large-print handouts and accessible PDFs with alt text. His use of batch processing ensures consistency and efficiency.

By making visual materials adaptable and readable, Mr. Thompson ensures that all students—regardless of ability—can engage meaningfully with the lesson content.

### 2. Creative Expression and Differentiation: Storybird

Another best practice for social inclusion is fostering creative expression through differentiated learning. In Ms. Johnson's class, **Storybird** transforms writing into an inclusive, imaginative process. Students select professional artwork to inspire their stories, allowing them to write at their own pace and skill level. For example, Emily, a shy student with writing difficulties, gains confidence by building a story around images of a girl and a robot, while Jake, an aspiring artist, thrives by combining storytelling with vibrant illustrations. The platform's visual nature benefits students with diverse learning styles, and personalized teacher feedback, peer collaboration, and even a virtual storybook fair bring students, parents, and educators together, reinforcing a community of support.

### 3. Personalized Learning for Diverse Abilities: Khan Academy Kids

**Khan Academy Kids** is a powerful example of a platform that enables personalized, inclusive learning. Its adaptable lessons and intuitive interface support children with varying levels of ability and learning styles. In the classroom, teachers use it to assign specific activities, track progress, and offer targeted support. Because the app is free and works across different devices, it is particularly valuable for students from low-income backgrounds, ensuring equitable access to high-quality content.

### 4. Inclusive Coding Education: ScratchJr

Introducing programming in early education through **ScratchJr** is another inclusive best practice. The platform's visual and drag-and-drop interface makes coding accessible to all children, including those with learning challenges or limited literacy. Teachers can design interactive lessons where students create simple games or stories linked to curriculum topics. This fosters creativity, encourages teamwork, and ensures each child can contribute based on their strengths. ScratchJr supports social inclusion by promoting collaboration and peer learning in a low-pressure, high-engagement format.

### 5. Collaborative Storytelling: Book Creator

**Book Creator** offers a flexible and inclusive space for students to collaborate on digital publications. In one classroom project, students worked together to produce a digital storybook about a class trip. The platform's simple interface allows children to add text, drawings, photos, and audio, accommodating multiple learning styles. By working in teams, students learn to value each other's contributions and build social-emotional skills. Because Book Creator is cloud-based, it removes technical barriers and supports continuous learning across home and school settings.

### 6. General Guidelines for Inclusive Digital Practice

Across all tools, certain general practices enhance their inclusive impact. These include:

- Offering clear instructions and language translations to break down barriers,
- Embedding opportunities for student choice and voice,
- Encouraging collaboration over competition,
- Using feedback to guide personal growth,
- Involving families to create a broader circle of support,
- Ensuring content is accessible in multiple formats.

As highlighted by educators using **Google Classroom**, inclusion is not achieved by the platform itself, but by how it is used. Educators must consciously adapt materials, support individual needs, and actively engage all students.

## 1.2. How to help pupils understand social exclusion

Helping pupils understand social exclusion requires age-appropriate, empathetic, and interactive approaches that encourage reflection and discussion. Teachers can use stories, role-playing, and real-life scenarios to illustrate what social exclusion looks like and how it affects others emotionally and socially. Encouraging students to put themselves in someone else's shoes builds empathy and awareness of unfair treatment or isolation. Classroom activities that highlight the value of kindness, cooperation, and diversity—such as group projects, peer mentoring, or inclusive games—can reinforce the message. It's also important to create a safe space where pupils feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences, and where differences are openly discussed and respected. By guiding pupils to recognize exclusion and its impact, educators lay the groundwork for a more compassionate and inclusive school environment.

### 1.2.1. Anti-bullying workshops

#### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

##### Objectives:

1. Students will be able to explain the different types of bullying
2. Students will demonstrate the ability to apply conflict resolution strategies in scenarios involving bullying or social exclusion.
3. Students will assess various responses to bullying situations, determining which strategies are most effective in fostering an inclusive environment.

##### Brief Description

Research indicates that school-based antibullying programs can effectively reduce both bullying perpetration and victimization by approximately 18-20% and 15-16%, respectively (Gaffney, Ttofi and Farrington, 2021). Workshops that incorporate interactive elements such as role-playing scenarios allow students to experience the perspectives of both victims and bullies. This experiential learning fosters empathy and understanding, making students more likely to intervene in bullying situations.

#### 2. Main Steps:

1. **Needs assessment:** identify issues and gather data. You need to conduct surveys and/or focus groups to understand the specific bullying issues within the school. Also, analyse the existing data on bullying incidents and students' demographics to tailor the workshops.
2. **Set clear objectives:** establish clear and measurable objectives for the workshop and determine which groups will participate in the workshop (target audience).

3. **Develop the content of the workshops:** create engaging activities such as role-playing that allow students to explore real-life scenarios related to bullying and social inclusion. Ensure cultural sensitivity in your activities.
4. **Train the facilitators:** choose experienced facilitators in the field of conflict resolution, social-emotional learning and cultural competency. Ensure that they are well prepared to handle such sensitive topics and create a safe space for discussion.
5. **Implement Workshops:** organise workshops during school hours and engage participants by fostering an inclusive environment where everyone feels safe.
6. **Encourage Parental Involvement:** inform parents and offer resources to them to help them discuss social inclusion and bullying with their children at home.
7. **Evaluate the effectiveness of the workshops:** through surveys and/or interviews gather feedback from students and assess changes in attitude towards bullying, knowledge gained and any reported incidents of bullying before and after the workshops.
8. **Follow-up activities:** plan follow-up activities that continue the conversation around bullying and social inclusion. Establish ongoing peer-led groups where students can support one another.
9. **Adjust and improve:** review feedback and identify areas of improvement. Make necessary adjustments according to the school needs.

### 3. Teacher's Tips:

Practice mindful communication using THINK strategy, which asks students five key questions to filter out the inappropriate comments. "Before I speak, I think: Is this:

1. True?
2. Helpful?
3. Necessary?
4. Important?
5. Kind?

### 4. References:

Gaffney, H., Ttoli, M.M., & Farrington, D.P. (2021) 'Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying perpetration and victimization: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis', *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 17(2). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1143> (Accessed: 29 November 2024).

## 1.2.2. Art Strategy

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objective

This activity aims to help pupils understand the concept of social exclusion through creative expression. By using art (drawing, painting), pupils can explore and visualize what exclusion feels like, looks like, and how it impacts individuals and communities.

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1. Introduction to the Concept.** The teacher tells pupils they are going to simulate visiting an Art Gallery or a Photo Exhibition. The paintings/ pictures displayed around the classroom depict kids being bullied or excluded from different games/activities. The pupils are asked to say what they think about the paintings/ pictures.



**Brief Explanation:** Explain what social exclusion means. You can say something like, *"Social exclusion is when someone is left out or made to feel that they don't belong. This can happen in groups of people, at school, or even in communities, and it can hurt people's feelings or make them feel isolated."*

**Real-life Examples:** Give some examples of exclusion they might relate to, such as being left out of a game, not being invited to a birthday party, or seeing someone being ignored or bullied for being different or belonging to vulnerable categories. Emphasize that exclusion can happen in many different forms.

**Step 2. Discussion and Reflection.** Before starting to draw, have a brief discussion about the emotional and social aspects of exclusion, by asking questions like, *"How would you feel if you were left out?"*, *"How do people usually act when they feel excluded?"*. Allow pupils reflect on these questions and share their thoughts, creating a safe space where they can talk openly.

Ask pupils if they would like to come in front of the class and show their colleagues how exclusion can be seen on someone's face or in their body language.

**Step 3. Drawing Instructions.** Give each pupil a piece of paper and some drawing materials (coloured pencils, markers, etc.). Explain the following drawing task:

*Task 1: Draw a scene that shows someone being excluded.*

Encourage pupils to focus on emotions, body language, and the overall atmosphere in the drawing. The idea is not to draw specific people, but rather to capture the feelings of exclusion. For example:

A person sitting alone on a bench while others are in a group.

A hand reaching out to someone who is ignoring it.

A group of people looking away from someone who is trying to join in.

You can make the task even more challenging if you ask the pupils to try drawing by not using their thumb or with a pencil in their less dominant hand (their left hand if they are right-handed). Thus, they can experience how others feel when they face difficulties.

*Task 2: Draw a scene that shows inclusion or a way to stop exclusion.*

Now, ask the pupils to draw a second picture that demonstrates inclusion or how exclusion can be overcome. For example:

A group of friends inviting someone to join their game.

A hand helping another person up from the ground.

A circle of people, arms linked, to show togetherness.

**Step 4. Classroom Sharing and Discussion.** Once pupils have completed their drawings, invite them to share them with the class and explain the choices they made. Ask the following questions to guide the discussion, *"What do you want others to notice in your picture?"*, *"How can we make sure that we don't exclude people in real life?"*, *"What would make someone feel included?"* This is an opportunity for pupils to reflect on how exclusion affects others, how they might contribute to inclusion, and how they can act in a positive way in social situations.

Ask pupils to replace the exclusion paintings/ pictures they could see during the visit to the Art Gallery/ Photo Exhibition at the beginning of the class with the inclusion ones drawn by themselves.

**Step 5. Reflection and Extension.** To wrap up, ask pupils to reflect on the activity with these prompts, *"What did you learn about exclusion today?"*, *"How can we make sure that everyone feels included in our class or group?"*

As an extension, you could also have pupils create posters or write short stories or poems based on their drawings, reinforcing the message of inclusion.

**Step 6. Conclusion.** End the activity by reinforcing the importance of empathy and kindness. Remind the pupils that we all have the power to make others feel included and valued, and that understanding exclusion can help us prevent it.

### 1.2.3. Cultural Competency

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCY: SOCIAL AWARENESS

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others



Picture 1.2.1: .Social-Awareness | Social-Emotional Learning (@PBS LearningMedia):

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/social-awareness-social-emotional-learning/social-emotional-learning-video/>

#### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

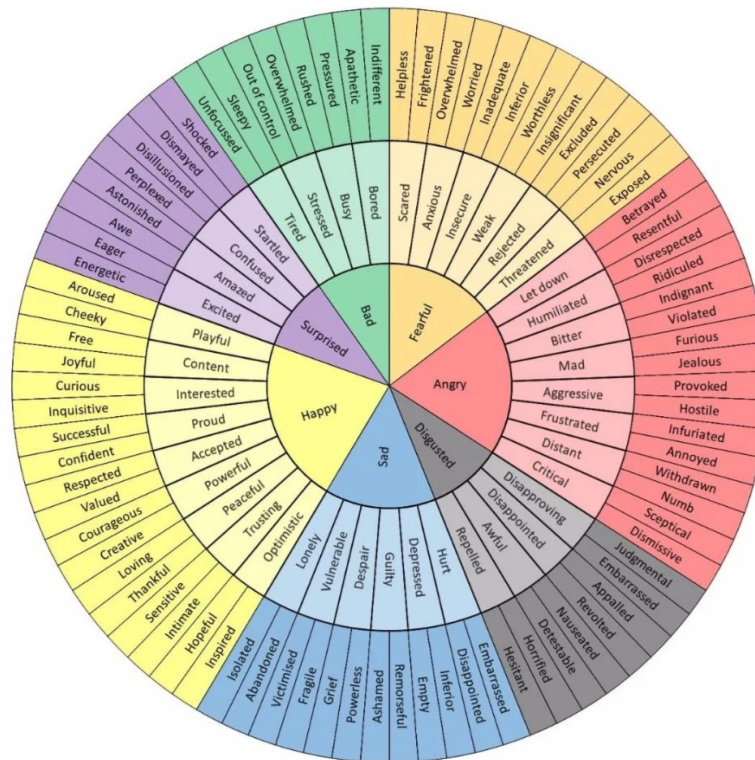
This strategy combines empathy-building exercises with Project-Based Learning (PBL) to help pupils recognise their emotions and appreciate diversity. By using tools like the "Emotions Wheel" and engaging in a PBL project about social issues related to diversity, pupils will practice understanding different cultural perspectives and develop empathy by putting themselves in others' shoes.

##### Objectives:

- Objective 1: Recognising and understanding emotions with the "Emotions Wheel".
- Objective 2: Appreciating diversity and developing empathy by seeing the world from others' cultural perspectives.

##### Brief Description

This strategy fosters empathy and cultural competence by encouraging pupils to understand their emotions and learn about diverse perspectives through collaborative exploration.



Picture 1.2.2: Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions. Image by @trainingsbyromy on Instagram

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Introductions. Begin by introducing emotions and using the "Emotions Wheel" to help pupils identify and express their feelings. Discuss how emotions can vary based on cultural backgrounds.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* "Emotions Wheel".

**Step 2:** Empathy Role-Play Activity. Pupils watch a short story or video on a diversity-related topic (e.g., a story about someone being left out because of their culture or background). Afterward, in small groups, pupils will role-play the scenario. One pupil can act as the person experiencing exclusion, while others play the roles of classmates, teachers, or family members who respond with empathy, support, and inclusion.

*Time:* 10-15 minutes

*Materials:* Short videos or stories on diversity issues (e.g., inclusion, cultural prejudice).

**Step 3:** Reflection & Presentation. Pupils present their findings and reflect on how learning about diversity has changed their perspectives and improved their empathy towards others.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Presentation tools.

## 3. Teacher's Tips

- Facilitation: Create a safe, open space for pupils to share their emotions and reflections.
- Integration: Incorporating the interactive stories developed by the SIEMdig project. These stories provide rich, cultural narratives that can enhance pupils' empathy by offering diverse perspectives.
- Concepts to Address: Empathy, emotional regulation, diversity, social justice.

## Annex: Lesson Scenario/Lesson Suggestion

Pupils can explore migration stories, use the "Emotions Wheel" to express how they feel about migration, and present ways to make their school more inclusive for migrant pupils. Through role-play, they can discuss how a migrant pupil might feel and how others can offer support.

Inclusion: Extra activities cater to diverse needs.

**Body Mapping:** Provide a handout with an outline of a body and ask pupils to draw or colour where they feel emotions like excitement, fear, or sadness. For example:

- What colour is your feeling?
- Where in your body do you feel it?
- What kind of feeling is it?

**Sensory-Based Activities for Neurodiverse Learners:** Provide activities like emotion-matching cards for pupils under the Autism Spectrum Disorder. For example:

- Match "angry" with a red face, "sad" with a blue teardrop, and "happy" with a yellow sun.
- Discuss triggers: "Angry is when someone doesn't listen to me," "Sad is when I miss my family," and "Happy is when I play with friends."

## 4. References:

PBS LearningMedia. (n.d.). *Social awareness / Social emotional learning* [Video]. PBS LearningMedia.

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/social-awareness-social-emotional-learning/social-emotional-learning-video/>

Interaction Design Foundation. (n.d.). *Wheel of emotion*. Interaction Design Foundation.

<https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/wheel-of->

## 1.2.4. Daily Emotional Check-ins

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives:

- Objective 1: Recognize and describe their own emotions using simple and appropriate language.
- Objective 2: Identify and differentiate one's own emotions from those of others, building social awareness.
- Objective 3: Develop self-control and respect for others, practicing emotional expression in a group context.

#### Brief Description

Daily Emotional Check-ins are short, daily moments when pupils express their emotional state through visual or verbal tools. This activity helps students recognize and manage their emotions. Through this exercise, students also develop empathy, as each pupil understands that others may have similar or different emotional experiences, all of which are valid.

## 2. Main Steps

### Step 1: Introduction and Creation of Check-in Space.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Emotion board (coloured emotive faces or emoji) or an "emotion wheel" where each pupil can choose their emotional state for the day. In alternative, try some apps, interactive whiteboards, or digital storytelling platform as alternatives to physical materials, like jamboards or mindmaps.

### Step 2: Sharing Moment. Each pupil chooses an image or word that represents their emotional state and shares it with the class or a peer.

*Time:* 5-10 minutes (depending on class size and number of pupils).

*Materials:* Optional emotion cards with words (e.g., "happy," "sad," "anxious").

### Step 3: Guided Discussion. Teachers can ask questions about how a pupil might deal with particular emotions or ask if anyone has had a similar experience. The following are suggestions of questions, but you can adjust and come up with others:

- "What can you do to feel better when you're sad?"
- "Has anyone else ever felt this way? How did you handle it?"

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* None specifically (optionally a blackboard or whiteboard).

## 3. Teacher's Tips

- Facilitation Suggestions: Start with personal examples of emotions to help pupils feel comfortable sharing. Use simple examples and response models to guide them.
- Integration: Connect this exercise to discussions on topics like emotional diversity and respect. It's also useful to link it to other empathy-building activities, such as role-playing or active listening exercises.
- Concepts to Address: Emotional awareness, empathy, respect for others' emotions.
- Scenario/Lesson Suggestion: On days when there has been a conflict or misunderstanding in class, use the emotional check-in to review the incident and address it collaboratively and respectfully. It may occur that pupils are reluctant to share their emotions. In these situations, try non-verbal options like placing a sticker on an emotion chart or drawing.

## 1.2.5. Empathy Journals

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives

- Objective 1: Enable pupils to organize and reflect on their own emotions and those of others, cultivating emotional literacy.
- Objective 2: Encourage empathy by recognizing diverse perspectives and learning to see situations from others' viewpoints.

- Objective 3: Foster emotional expression and personal insight, empowering pupils to make connections between feelings, thoughts, and behaviours.

### **Brief Description**

Empathy Journals are daily or weekly personal writing exercises where pupils describe their own emotions, reactions, and thoughts about the experiences of others. This tool helps children explore empathy by connecting with their feelings and those of their peers, enhancing self-reflection and understanding. Through structured prompts, pupils practice expressing their thoughts about events and emotions, helping them develop a respectful attitude toward their own experiences and those of others.

## **2. Main Steps**

**Step 1:** Introduction to the Journal Activity. Explain the journal's purpose as a private space to explore emotions and the value of empathy. Teachers can guide students with initial questions or examples.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Personal notebooks or journals, pens.

**Step 2:** Prompted Journal Writing. The journal prompts should encourage pupils to explore different emotions and social interactions. While some children may be eager to write, others may feel hesitant or struggle with expressing emotions through text. Offering various formats for response can help all pupils participate.

- Empathy-focused: "Think about a time when you saw someone feeling sad. What did you do? How did you feel?"
- Conflict resolution: "Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend? How did you solve it? How did it make you feel afterward?"
- Self-reflection: "What was one thing that made you smile today? What is something that frustrated you?"
- Gratitude and perspective: "Write about someone who helped you recently. How did their kindness make you feel?"

Alternative Methods for Pupils Who Struggle with Writing:

- Drawing: Instead of writing, pupils can draw how they feel and discuss their drawing with the teacher or a classmate.
- Anonymous sharing: Pupils can write their feelings on small notes and place them in a "Feelings Box" to be discussed later in a group setting.
- Sentence Starters: Provide structured prompts like "Today I feel \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_" to help reluctant writers begin their journal entry.

*Time:* 10-15 minutes.

*Materials:* Journal prompts written on the board or handed out.

**Step 3:** Reflection and Optional Sharing. After writing, pupils may choose to share their reflections with a partner or in a small group, fostering communication and empathy. This step is optional based on class comfort.

*Time:* 5-10 minutes.

*Materials:* None required.

### 3. Teacher's Tips

- Facilitation Suggestions: Model journaling by sharing a personal story or reflection to show how empathy can connect us with others. Encourage openness but respect privacy; students should feel their journals are a safe space.
- Integration: Combine with group discussions about emotions and experiences. Empathy Journals can be paired with storytelling exercises or role-playing to enhance understanding.
- Concepts to Address: Self-awareness, emotional expression, empathy, and perspective-taking.
- Scenario/Lesson Suggestion: For a class dealing with specific conflicts or misunderstandings, tailor prompts that allow students to reflect on feelings of belonging, kindness, and understanding toward others.
- Empathy journaling may be a new concept for young pupils, and some may feel unsure about how to start. To ease them into the practice, teachers can use guided introductions and structured frameworks.

Ideas for Making Journaling Comfortable:

- Model the Process: Teachers can write their own brief journal entry on the board to show pupils how it's done.
- Daily Warm-Up Question: Begin each session with a question like "How are you feeling today? Can you think of one word to describe it?" to spark ideas.
- Pair Sharing (Optional): Allow pupils to share their responses in pairs before writing to help them articulate their thoughts.
- Consistent Routine: Establishing journaling as a regular part of the day (e.g., every morning or after lunch) helps pupils feel comfortable with self-expression.

### 1.2.6. Identity affirmation

#### SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) COMPETENCY: SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset."

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy



Picture 1.2.3: Self-Awareness | Social-Emotional Learning (@PBS LearningMedia):

<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/self-awareness-social-emotional-learning/social-emotional-learning-video/>

## 1. Introduction to the Strategy

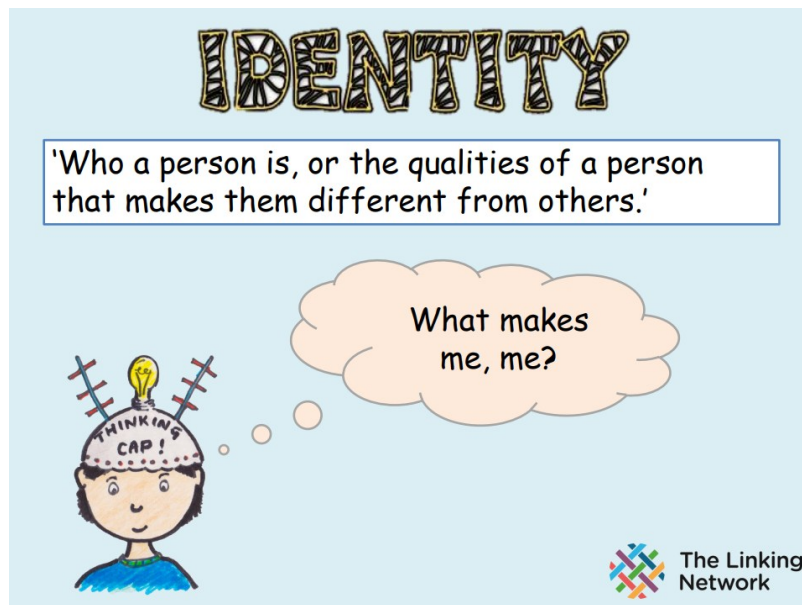
This strategy is grounded in Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), which focuses on recognising and validating pupils' cultural backgrounds, experiences, and identities while promoting respect and understanding of other cultures. By using activities like identity maps and family storytelling, children can explore and express their cultural identity, fostering self-awareness and empathy for others.

### Objectives:

- Objective 1: Encourage pupils to create "identity maps" and share family stories to explore their cultural background.
- Objective 2: Help pupils recognise and articulate their emotions in relation to their cultural identity.

### Brief Description

The strategy uses "identity maps" to encourage pupils to visually explore their family background, culture, and traditions. Teachers will guide pupils in creating these maps and sharing family stories to deepen their connection to their personal identity. This activity will also integrate discussions on emotions tied to these stories, promoting emotional self-awareness.



Picture 1.2.4: Picture©TheLinkingNetwork2020 (<https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/>).

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Introduction. Introduce the activity by explaining the importance of understanding and celebrating personal cultural identity. Briefly introduce the concepts of "identity maps" and family storytelling, explaining that pupils will be reflecting on their family, traditions, and culture.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Paper, crayons/markers.

**Step 2:** Identity Map Creation & Sharing. Ask pupils to draw their "identity map," depicting key aspects of their family background, culture, and traditions. After completing their maps, invite pupils to share their identity maps with a partner or the class, explaining what each symbol or image represents.

*Time:* 10-15 minutes.

*Materials:* Paper, crayons/markers.

**Step 3:** Family Storytelling & Emotion Reflection. Ask pupils to share a short family story or tradition. Afterward, facilitate a discussion where pupils reflect on the emotions tied to their cultural stories (e.g., pride, joy, nostalgia). Encourage them to identify how these emotions influence their self-awareness and personal identity.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Optional props (pictures, objects).

### 3. Teacher's Tips

- Facilitation Suggestions: Encourage an open and respectful environment where all pupils feel comfortable sharing. Acknowledge the diversity of experiences and validate all identities.
- Integration: Link the self-awareness gained in this activity to broader discussions on emotions (Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions), empathy and intercultural understanding (cultural competency lesson).
- Inclusion Strategies:
  - Provide Clear Instructions: Use simple, step-by-step verbal and visual cues (e.g., pictures or examples) to explain the activity.
  - Offer Alternative Materials: For pupils with fine motor challenges, provide pre-printed identity maps or templates that they can colour, stick images on, or label instead of drawing.
  - Adapt Storytelling Options: If verbal communication is challenging, allow pupils to express their stories through drawings, recorded audio or acting with props.
  - Use Visual Supports: Offer emotion cards or a simplified emotions chart to help pupils identify feelings (e.g., happy, sad, proud, confused). These can include relatable visuals like smiley faces, tears or hearts.

### 4. References:

The Linking Network. (n.d.). Home Learning Resources: It's Good to Talk. The Linking Network. Retrieved November 18, 2024, from <https://thelinkingnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Identity-Maps-1.pdf>

Alliance for a Healthier Generation (2021). Mapping your identity. Healthier Generation. Retrieved November 18, 2024, from <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/articles/mapping-your-identity>

## 1.2.7. Interactive Stories

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives:

- Pupils will be able to identify and analyse instances of social exclusion and inclusion through interactive storytelling.
- Pupils will develop empathy by reflecting on the emotions and perspectives of the story's characters.



### Brief Description

Interactive stories engage pupils in narrative scenarios where they can make decisions for characters, helping them to explore the feelings and consequences associated with social exclusion. By guiding the story's direction, pupils actively reflect on how different actions can either include or exclude others.

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Select a story with clear decision points related to social inclusion (e.g., helping a classmate, resolving a conflict, or including an outsider).

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Prepare props, character cards, or a digital storytelling platform to make the activity engaging.

**Step 2:** Introduce the Story and Characters. Set clear expectations, explaining that they will participate by guiding the characters' actions.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Use visual aids like illustrations or digital slides to capture attention.

**Step 3:** Assign roles to pupils (narrator, characters, or group leaders).

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Provide a brief script or outline to ensure pupils understand their roles and the scenario.

**Step 4:** Pause for Key Decisions. Allow pupils to choose different paths for the story's outcome, discussing how each choice affects characters.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Whiteboard for discussion prompts or feedback forms.

**Step 5:** Story Engagement (Role-Playing). Pause the story at decision points and ask pupils what the characters should do. Facilitate discussions on the possible outcomes of each choice, ensuring all pupils have an opportunity to share their thoughts. Use guiding questions to encourage reflection: "How might this decision make others feel?"

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Simple costumes or props (optional).

**Step 6:** Feedback and Discussion. After the story concludes, hold a class discussion to review the decisions made and their consequences. Use a simple feedback form or prompts like: “What did you learn about inclusion?”

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Reflection sheets.



### 3. Teacher's Tips

- **Facilitating Role-Playing:**
  - Create a welcoming environment where pupils feel safe to express themselves.
  - Ensure balanced participation by rotating roles and encouraging quieter pupils to take active parts.
  - Use props or costumes to enhance engagement.
- **Engaging All Pupils:**
  - Pair shy pupils with supportive peers or assign non-verbal roles, such as directing or assisting.
  - If a pupil struggles to articulate their thoughts, offer simpler prompts like, “What would you do if you were the character?”
- **Evaluating Understanding:**
  - Develop a short feedback form to assess pupils' understanding. Include questions such as: “What new ideas did you learn about inclusion?”; “How did the character's decisions make you feel?”
  - Use a reflection circle where pupils can share one takeaway from the activity.

- Linking to Broader Concepts:
  - Connect the story to real-life scenarios by asking pupils to share similar experiences from their lives.
  - Incorporate follow-up activities, like writing an alternative ending or drawing their favourite scene, to deepen their engagement.
  - Good Practice Reference: Link this activity with scenarios from WP3 for consistency.
  - Scenario Suggestion: Use the story "The Lonely Bench," where pupils decide whether to include a peer during recess, to foster discussions on empathy and kindness.

### Annex: Lesson Scenario for Interactive Stories

**Lesson Title:** Understanding Inclusion Through "The Lonely Bench"

**Grade Level:** 3-4

**Objective:**

- Pupils will be able to *analyse* the feelings of social exclusion through a story-based scenario.
- Pupils will *evaluate* the impact of different actions taken by characters in the story to foster empathy and inclusive behaviour.

**Materials Needed:**

- Story script for "The Lonely Bench" (printed or projected)
- Whiteboard and markers
- Reflection sheets
- Optional: simple props or costumes for role-play (e.g., hats, scarves)

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Lesson Overview:**

In this lesson, pupils will engage with an interactive story called *The Lonely Bench*, where they help shape the story's outcome through their decisions. The story explores the feelings of a child who is often excluded during recess and what happens when another child makes a choice to either include or ignore them.

**Step-by-Step Plan:**

**1. Introduction to the Story (5 minutes):**

The teacher gathers pupils in a circle and introduces the story: "Today, we will hear a story about Sam, who often sits alone on the playground bench. One day, a classmate named Mia sees Sam. What do you think Mia should do?" The teacher briefly introduces the two possible paths: Mia inviting Sam to play or choosing to walk away.

**2. Story Reading and Decision Points (10 minutes):**

As the teacher reads the story, they pause at key decision points and ask pupils, "Should Mia invite Sam to play, or should she walk away?"

- a. Write the two choices on the board: *Invite* or *Ignore*.
- b. Allow pupils to discuss briefly and vote on which path to take.
- c. Proceed with the story based on the class's choice, describing what happens next.

**3. Role-Play Activity (15 minutes):**

Divide pupils into small groups and give each group a scene from the story to act out. Encourage them to explore both outcomes (Mia inviting Sam and Mia walking away).

- a. Groups perform their scenes for the class.
- b. After each performance, ask the audience how each character might be feeling in the scene.

**4. Reflection and Discussion (10 minutes):**

Bring the class back together and distribute reflection sheets. Ask pupils to write or draw:

- a. "How do you think Sam felt when he was left out?"
- b. "How do you think Mia felt when she chose to include him?"
- c. "What can we do to make sure no one feels like Sam at our school?" After a few minutes, allow some pupils to share their reflections with the class.

**5. Conclusion (5 minutes):**

Wrap up by discussing how small actions can make a big difference in helping others feel included. Remind pupils that they have the power to make their classmates feel welcome and valued.

**Follow-Up Activity:**

Throughout the week, encourage pupils to notice when others are sitting alone or feeling left out, and to take the initiative to include them, just like Mia did in the story. Revisit the story if a similar situation arises in real life, using it as a teaching moment.

## 1.2.8. Mentoring (Peer-to-peer)

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

**Objectives:**

- Pupils will develop a better understanding of inclusion and exclusion by engaging in supportive and reflective peer discussions.
- Pupils will practice empathy and active listening while providing constructive feedback to their peers.
- Pupils will enhance their confidence and social skills by participating in structured, meaningful peer interactions.

**Brief Description**

Peer-to-peer mentoring is a collaborative activity where pupils pair up as equals to provide mutual support and guidance. By working in pairs or small groups, pupils discuss and reflect on scenarios

related to social exclusion, explore solutions, and practice inclusive behaviours. The approach fosters a sense of responsibility and shared learning, empowering pupils to be both learners and mentors.



## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Pair pupils thoughtfully, considering their personalities and communication styles. Have each pair set shared goals for the session, such as identifying ways to promote inclusion in the classroom.

*Time:* Initial pairing session - 20 minutes.

*Materials:* Scenario cards with examples of social exclusion and inclusion.

**Step 2:** Clearly define the roles for each peer mentor and mentee during the activity. While these roles rotate, ensure participants understand the shared responsibility. Provide an example scenario to demonstrate the expected discussion format, such as: A new student feels left out during recess. What actions could peers take to help?

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Reflection prompts or worksheets for structured feedback.

**Step 3:** Engagement Through Structured Activities: Provide a list of structured tasks, such as:

- Role-playing situations to brainstorm inclusive actions.
- Using discussion prompts to explore emotions and solutions.
- Completing a “kindness action plan” to implement in their daily routines.

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Reflection journals.

**Step 4:** Reflection and Feedback: Allow time for pairs to reflect on what they learned from each other and how they can apply their insights. Facilitate a group discussion where pairs share their key takeaways.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* “Kindness action plan” templates for follow-up activities.



### 3. Teacher's Tips:

- Promoting Equality:
  - Emphasize that both participants in the pair are equals. Avoid assigning one as the “senior” mentor; instead, highlight shared responsibility.
  - Rotate pairs regularly to expose pupils to diverse perspectives and ideas.
- Facilitating Constructive Dialogue:
  - Provide pupils with sentence starters to encourage thoughtful discussions, such as:
    - “How do you think this situation made the person feel?”
    - “What could we do to include someone in this situation?”
  - Encourage active listening by modelling, paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions.
- Creating a Safe Environment:
  - Establish ground rules, such as mutual respect and confidentiality, to ensure a safe and supportive space for sharing.
  - Offer alternative participation methods, like writing or drawing, for pupils who may feel hesitant about speaking.
- Extending the Learning:
  - Encourage pupils to create a peer mentoring journal to document their discussions and action plans.
  - Incorporate follow-up activities, such as implementing one inclusive action from their “kindness plan” and sharing the outcome with the class.
- Using Stories and Good Practices:
  - Incorporate relevant examples from WP3 or real-life cases to enrich the discussion.

## 1.2.9. Mindfulness & Relaxation

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to apply conflict resolution strategies in hypothetical scenarios involving social exclusion. (Apply).
- Students will be able to assess different responses to instances of social exclusion (Evaluate).

#### Brief Description

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques can play a pivotal role in helping students understand social exclusion through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and it relates to two core SEL components self-awareness and self-management. Mindfulness practices encourage students to be present in the moment, fostering a deeper understanding of their own emotions and those of others, ultimately leading to improved social interactions and relationships.

### 2. Main Steps:

**Step 1:** Introductions. Simply explain to students how mindful practices will help them to become aware of and then embody their emotions, thought and bodily sensations. Using this methods students will be able to regulate their emotions.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

**Step 2:** Teach students to focus on their breath for a few minutes. Use the “blow out a birthday cake” or “blow up a balloon” technique. These techniques will allow them to connect the physical act of breathing with a visual image of engaging in an exciting activity. Use a script like: “When you're upset or worried, calm yourself with deep breaths. Imagine a birthday cake. Inhale through your nose to smell it (count to 5), then exhale through your mouth to blow out the candles (count to 5).”

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* ballon/student.

**Step 3:** Use the “mindful jar” technique to teach a lesson on emotion regulation. Use a glass jar filled with water and glitter. Swirl the jar and show them how the glitter is spinning all over. Then, set the jar down and show the students how the glitter begins to settle. After this simple activity, use a metaphor and discuss with the young kids how our thoughts begin to settle when our body is calm and relaxed.

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* glass jar, water, colourful glitter.

**Step 4:** Provide kids with small notebooks in which they are called to write down or draw their emotions and their feelings each day for a month. Provide guided questions for reflection such as “What did I notice about my feelings today?” “How can I show kindness to someone feels left out?”.

*Time:* 15 minutes/day for 1 month.

*Materials:* 1 notebook/students.

### 3. Teacher's Tips:

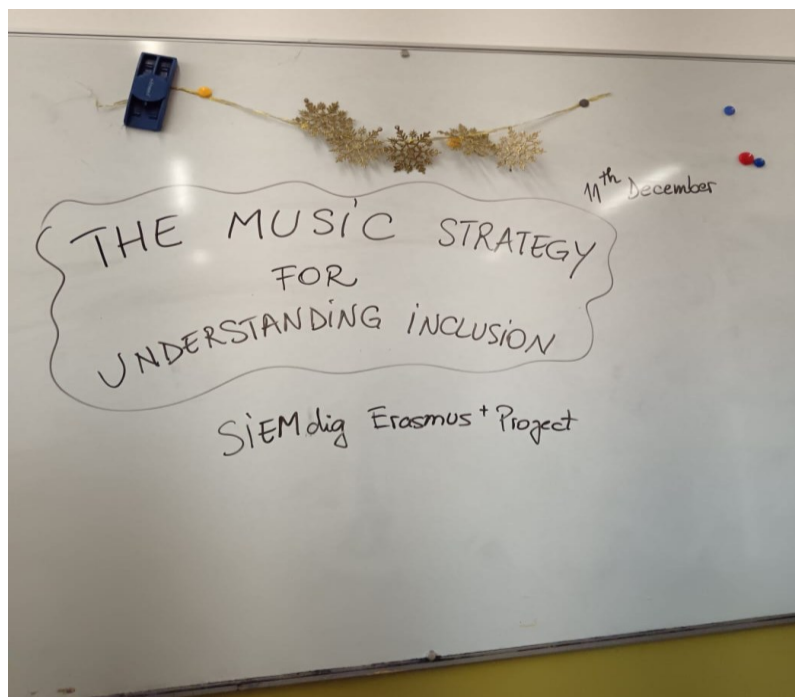
- **Be patient:** Mindfulness skills take time to be developed. Encourage consistent practice.
- **Engage Parents:** Share mindfulness resources with parents so they can reinforce these practices at home, creating consistent approach to emotional learning.
- Align mindfulness practices with established SEL frameworks to ensure comprehensive skill development.

## 1.2.10. Music Strategy

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objective:

This activity uses music and sounds to help pupils understand the emotional impact of social exclusion. By listening to and creating music/ sounds, students can explore the feelings associated with being excluded and learn ways to foster inclusion and empathy.



### 2. Main Steps

**Step 1. Introduction to the Concept of Social Exclusion.** Explain Social Exclusion: Begin with a brief introduction to social exclusion. You might start with an example: "Imagine some of you are playing together, by holding hands and moving in a circle, while singing a song. One of your colleagues wants to join the circle, but none of you wants to include her in your game. How do you think your colleague feels when they are not invited or allowed to join in? *Possible answers:* Excluded, sad, disappointed, lonely etc." "Continue with the same game, but this time, include your colleague in your game. How does she feel now? *Possible answers:* happy, joyful, included etc."

Start a discussion about it, by saying, "*Social exclusion is when someone feels left out or ignored by a group. It can happen in many ways, like not being invited to join in, or feeling like you don't belong.*"

*Exclusion can make someone feel sad, lonely, or even invisible, whereas inclusion can make someone feel happy, joyful, not ignored."*

Discuss Emotional Impact: Help pupils understand that exclusion isn't just something that happens on the outside—it also affects how people feel on the inside. Ask questions like, *"Has it ever happened to you to be excluded in any way? For instance, by not being invited to someone's birthday party or by not being asked to join a game during the breaks? How did you feel when it happened? How do you think someone feels when they are excluded?"*

**Step 2. Exploring Emotions Through Sound.** Explain to the pupils that they will use music and sounds to express the feelings of exclusion and inclusion. Music is a powerful way to communicate emotions, even without words. You can play a key role in guiding them through this process by modelling and discussing how different sounds can evoke feelings.

**Activity 1:** Explain that you would like to form a band with many instruments. First of all, the pupils are supposed to recognise the instruments by listening to different sounds on the internet, while sitting with their eyes closed e.g.

the guitar sound: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tniu5fr3wTw>

the piano sound: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA0Yh1OxJVI>

the violin sound: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o7lcC6CqMY>

the harp sound:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TO\\_oHxuk6c&list=RDQM1jYUvEaTBpM&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7TO_oHxuk6c&list=RDQM1jYUvEaTBpM&start_radio=1)

the drum sound: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ViZqQkddCc>



Secondly, the pupils who guess the correct instruments are invited in front of the class, in order to "perform" on stage with the newly-formed band.

**Activity 2:** The teacher excludes one of the instruments from the band and asks the pupils how they think that instrument might feel when excluded.

**Task 1:** *"Creating the Sound of Exclusion"*.

Objective: Help pupils create a piece of music or sound that represents exclusion—both the feelings of being left out and the silence that often accompanies it.

**Materials:** Instruments (if available), body percussion (clapping, snapping, tapping) or mouth sounds.

### Play the game: The Machinery of Exclusion

Instructions: Ask pupils to imagine what exclusion might sound like. What emotions might music convey when someone is alone, left out, or ignored?

Divide them in groups of 3-4 and ask them to imagine they are a Machinery of Exclusion. Guide them to create a piece using dissonant (clashing) or sparse sounds to represent isolation. For example, you could suggest:

A single instrument playing alone, without accompaniment, to symbolize loneliness. A repeating, disconnected rhythm to suggest feelings of being left out of the group. Silence or pauses between sounds, representing the gaps created by exclusion. Encourage pupils to think about how silence in music can be as powerful as sound itself, representing the feeling of being ignored or unseen.

### Task 2: "Creating the Sound of Inclusion"

Objective: Now, shift the focus to inclusion. pupils will create a contrasting piece of music that represents togetherness, support, and belonging.

*Materials:* Same as above.

Instructions: Ask pupils to think about what inclusion sounds like. What music makes them feel happy, connected, and part of something bigger? Ask them to hum those pieces of music, using La-la-la. Guide them to create a piece of music with harmony, rhythm, and texture. For example: Layering sounds or instruments together to represent unity and support. A rhythm where all instruments or sounds are playing in sync, showing how inclusion brings people together. Use major scales or upbeat melodies to express positivity and belonging. Emphasize the importance of rhythm and harmony in showing how working together can create something powerful and uplifting.



**Step 3. Conclusion.** End the lesson by emphasizing the key messages: *"Just like in music, inclusion means working together, listening to each other, and creating something beautiful as a group."*

## 1.2.11. Peer Support

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives

This strategy aims to develop social and emotional skills, promote empathy, and foster a sense of responsibility among pupils through structured peer support activities.

- Objective 1: By participating in peer support roles, the pupil will be able to **differentiate** between supportive and unsupportive behaviours in classroom relationships.
- Objective 2: Through regular interaction with a peer buddy, the pupil will be able to **demonstrate** empathetic responses in common school situations.
- Objective 3: During the peer mentoring sessions, the pupil will be able to **construct** inclusive social interactions by actively listening and responding to their peers.
- Objective 4: By reflecting on peer experiences, the pupil will be able to **evaluate** their role in creating a supportive learning environment.

### Brief Description

Peer support is a structured strategy where pupils are paired or grouped to help each other with academic, emotional, or social tasks. It can take the form of peer buddies, classroom helpers, or rotating support partners. This strategy encourages inclusive behaviour by developing social responsibility, empathy, and collaboration. It is especially beneficial for integrating students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds.

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1: Introduction and Pairing.** Explain the purpose of peer support and discuss with students what being a good peer supporter looks like.

*Time:* 30 minutes

*Materials:* Whiteboard, discussion prompts

**Step 2: Training Mini-Workshop.** Teach pupils simple skills like active listening, asking questions, and helping without doing the work for others.

*Time:* 45 minutes.

*Materials:* Worksheets with conversation starters, role-play cards.

**Step 3: Assign Roles and Tasks.** Create a buddy system or small groups with clear responsibilities (e.g., check-in partner, reading helper, class greeter).

*Time:* 20 minutes.

*Materials:* Role cards or badges.

**Step 4: Weekly Check-Ins and Journaling.** Set a regular time for peer pairs/groups to connect. Encourage short reflective journaling after each session.

*Time:* 10–15 minutes per week.

*Materials:* Journals or digital logs, timer.

**Step 5: Teacher Monitoring and Feedback.** Observe interactions, support struggling pairs, and give constructive feedback.

*Time:* Ongoing.

*Materials:* Observation checklist.

**Step 6: Reflection and Sharing.** Hold regular group discussions to share experiences and improve peer support practices.

*Time:* 30 minutes bi-weekly.

*Materials:* Talking stick or ball, reflective question cards.

### 3. Teacher's Tips

#### Facilitation Tips:

- Begin with low-stakes, easy tasks to build trust between peers.
- Rotate roles occasionally to allow all students to experience different forms of support.
- Model peer support behaviour through teacher-student interactions.

#### Personalization:

- Consider students' personalities, strengths, and social skills when pairing or grouping.
- Use visual aids or simplified scripts for younger children or those with language difficulties.

#### Integration Ideas:

- Combine this strategy with activities like "Empathy Journals" or "Circle Time Discussions."
- Link peer support to SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) or anti-bullying curriculum.

#### Concepts Addressed:

Empathy, collaboration, social inclusion, responsibility, communication skills, emotional awareness

#### Annex: Lesson Scenario (Optional)

*Title:* "Peer Buddy Monday".

*Objective:* By the end of the lesson, students will be able to describe and demonstrate at least two supportive behaviours in a peer partnership.

*Activities:*

- Brief role-play on "How to help a friend".
- Matching supportive behaviours to real-life scenarios.
- Journaling on how it felt to help or be helped.

## 1.2.12. Role-Play Activities

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives:

- *Promote Empathy:* Pupils will be able to analyse and differentiate feelings of inclusion and exclusion by participating in and observing role-play scenarios.
- *Recognize and Reflect on Social Dynamics:* Pupils will be able to evaluate the impact of actions on others' emotions and recognize social exclusion dynamics.
- *Encourage Positive Social Actions:* Pupils will create constructive strategies to counter exclusion, fostering a collaborative and inclusive classroom environment.

## Brief Description

This role-play strategy helps pupils understand social exclusion by engaging them in scenarios where they experience different social roles. Pupils will play both roles of inclusion and exclusion, enabling them to explore diverse perspectives and emotional impacts. The activity helps pupils recognize the impact of exclusion and learn empathy by seeing how it affects peers.

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Introduction to Social Exclusion. Explain social exclusion to pupils. Use simple examples and encourage discussion to ensure everyone understands the concept. Ask them to think of times when they felt left out or when they saw someone else being excluded.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Whiteboard, markers, definition of social exclusion written on board or on handouts.

**Step 2:** Role-play Activity Setup. Assign roles to each pupil, explaining the role-play scenario (e.g., a group project where one person is left out). Ensure that everyone understands their role and the scenario's context.

*Time:* 5 minutes.

*Materials:* Pre-made role cards describing different roles (e.g., “excluded person,” “excluder,” “observer”), optional props if scenario-based.

**Step 3:** Role-play Execution. Facilitate the role-play, allowing pupils to act out the scenario. Observe and take notes, but let the pupils manage interactions organically within their roles.

*Time:* 10–15 minutes.

*Materials:* Optional props, timer.

**Step 4:** Debrief and Reflection. Lead a discussion about how pupils felt in their roles. Encourage pupils to journal or write about their experience and emotions. Guide them to identify and label feelings they observed in themselves and others, promoting emotional awareness.

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Journals or paper, pens.

**Step 5:** Solution Brainstorming. Ask pupils to brainstorm positive actions or strategies they could use in real life to prevent exclusion. Write down ideas and discuss them as a group to foster collaborative solutions.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Whiteboard, markers.

## 3. Teacher's Tips

- **Facilitating Empathy:** Encourage pupils to express how they felt during each role, and validate their emotions. For those who may struggle to articulate feelings, provide examples or prompts.
- **Personalizing Scenarios:** Adjust scenarios based on class dynamics or specific issues observed within the group. Tailor role cards or situations to reflect realistic challenges pupils might face.
- **Follow-up Suggestions:** Integrate this role-play activity with journaling or storytelling exercises. For example, pupils could write a story about someone overcoming exclusion.

Reinforce the message by pairing this activity with discussions on historical or fictional stories involving social challenges.

**Concepts Addressed:**

Empathy, social dynamics, anti-bullying, inclusion, emotional intelligence.

### 1.2.13. Self-reflection

#### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

**Objectives:**

- **Empathy Development:** By reflecting on their own and others' experiences, children develop empathy and understand how their actions affect others.
- **Social Awareness:** Reflecting helps students recognize social dynamics and learn how to act inclusively.
- **Self-Regulation Skills:** Self-reflection fosters awareness of their behaviour, which helps them control their responses and be more intentional in their actions.

**Brief description**

For teachers working with students in grades 1-4, self-reflection can be a powerful tool to help young children understand social exclusion issues in a developmentally appropriate way.

Using self-reflection in this way helps young students understand social exclusion in a manner that is appropriate for their age, while also fostering emotional growth and social skills.

#### 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Start with Simple, Relatable Scenarios

- **Use Everyday Examples:** Begin by sharing simple scenarios that children can relate to, such as a student not being included in a game at recess or someone being left out of a group activity. These everyday examples help make the concept of social exclusion understandable and relevant to their experiences.
- **Ask Reflective Questions:** After presenting the scenario, ask questions that prompt students to think about how they would feel in that situation. For example:
  - "How do you think you would feel if you wanted to play but no one let you join?"
  - "Why do you think it's important to make sure everyone feels included?"

**Step 2:** Encourage Personal Reflection

- **Use "Think-Pair-Share":** Ask students to think quietly about a time when they felt left out or when they saw someone else being left out. Then, have them share their thoughts with a partner and, finally, with the whole class. This activity helps students connect their own feelings to the topic and learn from their peers.

- **Draw or Write About Feelings:** For younger students, drawing can be a helpful way to express their feelings. Ask them to draw a picture of a time when they felt included and a time when they felt excluded. For older students in this range, writing a few sentences about these experiences can also be beneficial.

**Step 3: Use Stories and Books to Spark Reflection**

- **Read Aloud Stories About Inclusion:** Choose picture books or short stories that feature themes of friendship, inclusion, and exclusion. After reading, ask the students reflective questions about the characters' experiences and feelings.
  - "Why did the character feel sad when they were left out?"
  - "What could the other characters have done to make everyone feel included?"
- **Connect the Story to Their Own Lives:** Ask the students if they've ever felt like one of the characters in the story and encourage them to share their thoughts.

**Step 4: Reflect on Classroom Behaviour**

- **Classroom Reflection Activities:** Use circle time or morning meetings to reflect on the day's interactions. Ask questions like:
  - "Did anyone see a friend being kind and including someone today?"
  - "Did we notice any times when someone seemed left out? What can we do differently next time?"
- **Create a "Kindness and Inclusion Journal":** Allow students to reflect on their behaviour by writing or drawing about times when they included others or when they saw someone being left out and how they helped.

**Step 5: Set Goals for Inclusive Behaviour**

- **Encourage Self-Set Goals:** Ask students to set small goals for including others in activities. For instance, "I will invite someone new to play at recess today," or "I will make sure to ask if everyone wants to join in a game."
- **Reflect on Progress Regularly:** At the end of each week, have the students reflect on how they did with their inclusion goals. What went well? What was challenging? How can they improve?

**Step 6: Model Self-Reflection as a Teacher**

- **Share Your Own Reflections:** Show students how you reflect on your behaviour by sharing examples of when you made someone feel included or missed an opportunity to do so. This modelling helps normalize self-reflection and shows that everyone can improve.
- **Acknowledge Mistakes Openly:** If you see an opportunity where you could have encouraged more inclusion, share it with the class and explain how you'll handle it differently next time. This teaches students that reflection and growth are ongoing processes.

### 3. Teacher's Tips

**Age-Appropriate Self-Reflection Prompts:**

- "How would I feel if I were in their shoes?"
- "What can I do to make someone feel included?"

- "Why is it important to treat others the way I want to be treated?"

We illustrate the above general strategy by a specific example based on one of our interactive stories, namely *The civil courage* featuring Eva and Adam.

### Annex: Lesson Scenario- Understanding Social Exclusion Through Self-Reflection

**Grade Level:** 1-4.

**Objective:** To help students recognize social exclusion, understand the importance of taking responsibility, and develop empathy through the story of Eva and Adam.

**Materials:** The interactive story *Civil Courage*, paper, crayons or markers, a whiteboard, and a "Kindness and Inclusion Journal" (optional).

#### Step by step plan:

- The teacher begins the class by gathering the students in a circle on the carpet, saying, "Today, we're going to learn about a situation that could happen to anyone. It's about a girl named Eva, who is seven years old, just like some of you. She loves school, but one day, something happened that made her very upset."
- The teacher then introduces the interactive story *Civil Courage*, explaining the situation: "Eva was drinking some juice during a break when Adam, one of her classmates, accidentally bumped into her, causing the juice to spill all over her shirt. Eva got very angry because Adam didn't say sorry."
- The teacher asks the class, "Have any of you ever had an accident where someone hurt your feelings or made you upset? How did you feel?" The teacher allows a few students to share their experiences to make the situation relatable.
- The teacher continues the story: "Eva thought about hiding Adam's coat because she was so mad. It was cold and rainy outside, and hiding the coat would mean Adam couldn't go home without getting cold. What do you think about Eva's idea?"
- The teacher writes the words "Good Idea?" and "Not a Good Idea?" on the whiteboard and invites the students to share their thoughts on whether Eva should hide Adam's coat or not.
- The teacher then says, "Let's think for a moment. Have you ever done something you weren't proud of when you were upset? Maybe you said something unkind or did something to get back at someone? Close your eyes and think about a time when you felt like Eva. What could have been a better choice?"
- After a moment of quiet reflection, the teacher invites the students to share their thoughts with a partner, using the "Think-Pair-Share" method: "Talk to your partner about a time when you felt angry or upset and what you did. How did that make the other person feel? What do you think could have been a better way to handle it?"
- The teacher continues the story to the turning point where Eva decides to hide Adam's coat. "Eva hid the coat so well that no one could find it. Because it was raining outside, Adam's teacher had to drive him home since he didn't have a coat to keep him warm. The next day, the teacher asked the whole class if anyone knew who hid Adam's coat."
- At this point, the teacher pauses the story and poses a question to the class: "What should Eva do now? Should she admit what she did, or should she stay quiet?" The teacher writes the words "Admit" and "Stay Quiet" on the board and lets the students discuss what they think Eva should do.

- To deepen the reflection, the teacher asks, "How do you think Adam felt when he couldn't find his coat? How do you think Eva felt when she was hiding it? What would you do if you were in Eva's shoes?"
- The teacher then explains both possible endings to the story: "If Eva admits that she hid Adam's coat, she will apologize, and everything will go back to normal. But if she doesn't admit it, the teacher will lock the cloakroom to prevent more problems, which will make everyone unhappy because they won't be able to use it like before."
- The students are then asked to draw a picture of what they think is the best ending and what Eva should do. They can draw Eva admitting the truth and making things right, or they can draw what might happen if she stays quiet.
- After the drawing activity, the teacher brings the class together to share their drawings and thoughts. "Who would like to show their picture and tell us what Eva chose to do in your ending? How did it make the other characters feel?"
- The teacher concludes the lesson by saying, "Sometimes we all make mistakes, just like Eva. The important thing is to have the courage to make things right, even when it's hard. Being honest and including others helps everyone feel safe and happy."
- Finally, the teacher introduces the "Kindness and Inclusion Journal," explaining that students can use it to write or draw about times when they helped someone or showed courage in admitting their mistakes. The class will revisit these entries weekly to celebrate the efforts to make the school a kind and inclusive place.

**Follow-Up Activity:**

Throughout the week, the teacher encourages students to look for moments of courage, honesty, or kindness in themselves and others. The teacher might also refer back to the story if a similar real-life situation arises, using it as a teaching moment to reinforce the lesson on social inclusion and responsibility.

## 1.2.14. Six Thinking Hats

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

The Six Thinking Hats technique, developed by Edward de Bono (1985), is a structured method for problem-solving and decision-making that encourages parallel thinking. This approach allows individuals and teams to explore issues from multiple perspectives, enhancing creativity and collaboration while minimizing conflict.

According to Bloom's taxonomy Six Thinking Hats technique belongs to the Analysis level (4th level) as it requires breaking down the problem and analysing it from multiple angles, which is the core of this level.

### Overview of the Six Thinking Hats

| Hat Colour | Focus                        | Description                                             | Purpose in Social Exclusion Context                                         |
|------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| White      | Data, facts, and information | What we know, and what we ought to find out             | Gather data on social exclusion incidents and understand their context.     |
| Blue       | Manages the process          | Listens directs attention, integrates, moves forward    | Guide discussions and ensure all perspectives are considered.               |
| Yellow     | Sunshine and Positivity      | Optimism, possibilities, upsides, potential             | Explore the benefits of inclusion and the positivity impact of friendships. |
| Red        | Feelings, Reaction and vibes | How we feel: gut instincts, honest emotions, intuition  | Allow students to express their feelings about exclusion and bullying.      |
| Green      | Creativity and surprise      | Alternates, reframing, out of the box ideas, what ifs   | Encourage brainstorming of solutions to promote inclusivity.                |
| Black      | Caution and scepticism       | Danger, threats, risks, drawbacks, worst-case scenarios | Identify potential negative outcomes of social exclusion and bullying.      |

### Objectives:

- Students will be able to examine situations from multiple viewpoints to explore classmates' feelings and reactions.
- Students will be able to identify factors that influence empathy by comparing classmates' thoughts and feelings in various scenarios using each thinking hat.
- Students will be able to differentiate between positive and negative emotions by analysing peer responses through each thinking hat's perspective.

### 2. Main Steps:

**Step 1:** Introduce each hat to the students: use age-appropriate language and examples to explain each hat's perspective.

**Step 2:** Set a scenario: present a simple scenario and invite students to think about it from different perspectives.

**Step 3:** Assign Hats to each student, students can either take turns trying on different hats to explore different viewpoints.

**Step 4:** Discuss each perspective by focusing on feelings, creative solutions, risks and benefits from this situation.

**Step 5:** Reflect on students' responses: focus on how thinking from different perspectives helps the student to understand classmates better.

**Step 6:** Conclude with Insights: summarize how each hat helps students build empathy and how they can use these perspectives to support one another.

### 3. Teacher's Tips:

- Use familiar scenarios, and situations that are relevant to students' experiences.
- Create a safe space for students and remind them that all perspectives are respected.
- You can use visual aids showing each hat's colour and function to help students easily reference their roles and stay on track.
- Use simplified hat descriptions with age-appropriate language and provide them with clear examples.

### 4. References:

De Bono, E. (1985). Six Thinking Hats. Penguin Books.

## 1.2.15. Social Skills Group

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives

Objective 1: to enhance students' social awareness and relationship skills, enabling them to identify instances of social exclusion and respond appropriately.

#### Brief Description

Social skills groups teach various behaviours, including perspective-taking, conversation, friendship, problem-solving, social competence, emotion recognition, and theory of mind. They also enhance interaction skills like initiating, responding, maintaining conversations, greetings, giving compliments, turn-taking, sharing, asking for and offering help, and including others.

### 2. Main Steps:

**Step 1:** Identify social needs: Consider the specific students you have in mind and identify the particular social skills they require the most. Begin with the most essential skills and gradually progress to those that are less critical.

**Step 2:** Give time to get to know each other: Give time to students to get to know each other, if they are not friends already by playing "Two truths and a dream". Students write two truths about them and one dream for their future. The other students should identify which are the truths and what is the dream.

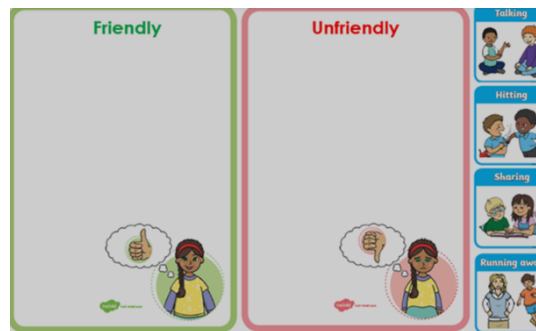
*Time:* 30 minutes.

*Materials:* paper and colourful crayons.

**Step 3:** Make cards similar to the image below and ask students to place them in the "Friendly" or "Unfriendly" table.

*Time:* 30 minutes

*Materials:* printed cards



**Step 4:** Reflection & Feedback: conclude each session with reflection activities where students can discuss what they learned.

### 3. Teacher's Tips

- **Use real examples:** incorporate real life situations that students can relate to when discussing social skills and inclusion scenarios.
- **Encourage Peer Support:** promote peer mentoring where students can help each other practice inclusion.
- **Collaborate with Parents:** Share insights with parents about the importance of social skills development at home and provide them with resources or activities they can do together with their children.

## 1.2.16. Storytelling

### 1. Introduction to the Strategy

#### Objectives:

- *Objective 1:* Pupils will be able to **identify** various forms of social exclusion by analysing characters and events in stories (Bloom's Taxonomy: Analysis).
- *Objective 2:* Pupils will **express empathy** by describing the emotions and experiences of characters facing exclusion (Bloom's Taxonomy: Application).
- *Objective 3:* Pupils will **reflect** on their own and others' feelings related to exclusion and belonging (Bloom's Taxonomy: Evaluation).

#### Brief Description

This activity uses storytelling to help pupils understand and discuss the theme of social exclusion. Pupils will listen to or read a story focused on themes of exclusion and belonging, discuss character emotions, and create their own reflective journals or stories. By engaging in storytelling, pupils will develop empathy and consider ways to foster inclusion.

## 2. Main Steps

**Step 1:** Introduce the Topic and Story. Briefly introduce social exclusion and share a story that illustrates its impact. Discuss main characters, plot, and emotions expressed in the story.

*Time:* 10 minutes.

*Materials:* Selected storybook or story text that illustrates social exclusion.

**Step 2:** Guided Group Discussion. Facilitate a discussion on how characters feel, why they feel excluded, and how others could help. Use open-ended questions to encourage pupils to think critically about characters' actions and motives.

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Whiteboard, markers, discussion prompts.

**Step 3:** Create an Empathy Journal. Pupils write a journal entry from the perspective of a character who experiences exclusion or belonging. They can describe how the character feels and what they might need from others to feel accepted.

*Time:* 15 minutes.

*Materials:* Notebooks, pens, or an empathy journal template.

**Step 4:** Storytelling Activity - "What Would You Do?" Pupils create a short story or comic where they depict a situation involving exclusion and how characters respond to it. This encourages them to think about actions that promote inclusion.

*Time:* 20 minutes.

*Materials:* Blank paper, colouring materials.

## 3. Teacher's Tips:

- **Facilitation Tips:** Encourage open dialogue and ensure a safe, non-judgmental environment. Use real-life connections to deepen understanding, helping pupils relate the story to their own experiences with inclusion or exclusion.
- **Integration Ideas:** Combine this activity with a role-playing exercise where pupils act out scenarios of exclusion and practice inclusive behaviours. This could serve as a follow-up to strengthen concepts.
- **Related Concepts:** This activity can introduce discussions on diversity, acceptance, kindness, and teamwork.
- **Good Practice Reference:** Link this activity with scenarios from WP3 for consistency.
- **Scenario Suggestion:** For a more structured lesson, use a scenario such as "A New Student in Class" where pupils role-play or write about ways to make the student feel included. Use the story "Ivan at a New School" where students decide whether to include a peer in a team game (volleyball) in physical education class. This offers concrete practice in applying inclusive behaviours and reinforces the lesson's key objectives.

This strategy leverages storytelling's emotional power to deepen pupils' understanding of social exclusion, fostering empathy and proactive inclusion in the classroom.

## 1.3. How to create supportive school environment

Creating a supportive school environment starts with building strong, positive relationships among students, teachers, and staff, where everyone feels valued, respected, and safe. This involves fostering open communication, setting clear expectations for respectful behaviour, and responding consistently to bullying or exclusion. Supportive environments also prioritize students' emotional well-being by incorporating social-emotional learning into the curriculum and providing access to counsellors or support staff when needed. Classrooms should be welcoming and inclusive, with flexible teaching strategies that accommodate diverse learning styles and needs. Celebrating students' achievements—academic and personal—and involving families in school life further strengthens the sense of community. Ultimately, a supportive school environment empowers all students to thrive, take risks in their learning, and feel confident in their place within the school.

### 1.3.1. Bullying

#### Prevention

To build a supportive school environment to combat bullying, the first step is **Prevention**. This phase involves developing a comprehensive anti-bullying policy that guides the entire school community in understanding, identifying, and proactively addressing bullying. This policy will set the foundation for a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment.

#### Policy Development for Prevention

A clear and structured anti-bullying policy should consider input from all relevant stakeholders, including teaching and administrative staff, parents, students, and external specialists such as counsellors and community advocates. This policy should cover:

- **Practice Area:** Defines where the policy applies, including all school property, events, and digital spaces related to the school.
- **Types of Bullying:** Outlines the different types of bullying (physical, verbal, social, and cyberbullying) to help everyone recognize them clearly.
- **Bullying Behaviours:** Describes behaviours associated with each type of bullying to create a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying.
- **Causes of Bullying:** Educates stakeholders on common factors that lead to bullying, such as lack of empathy, peer pressure, or personal struggles, to encourage empathy and intervention.
- **Reference System:** Establishes a reporting and referral system that allows any member of the school community to report incidents of bullying confidentially and safely.
- **Help-Seeking Channels:** Explains how students and staff can seek support or report incidents, including hotlines, guidance counsellors, or anonymous reporting boxes.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly defines the roles of teachers, administrators, parents, students, and external staff in preventing, identifying, and responding to bullying.

- **Prevention and Intervention Measures:** Details proactive measures like supervision in common areas, the promotion of positive behaviour, and designated safe spaces, as well as reactive measures such as mediation and consequences for bullying behaviours.
- **Guidance and Advice:** Includes guidelines for how students, parents, and staff can promote a positive school culture and support peers.

## Confrontation

Confronting bullying is essential to fostering a safe and respectful environment in schools and communities. By creating clear processes for identifying, reporting, and responding to bullying incidents, we can support those affected, and prevent future occurrences. The following steps outline a structured framework for effectively confronting and managing bullying in a way that promotes understanding, accountability, and continuous improvement. Informing the educational community about how to report the bullying events and how to confront them.

Steps for Confronting Bullying:

**Step 1: Educate the Community:** Inform students, staff, and parents on how to report bullying incidents and the steps for addressing them.

**Step 2: Assess the Incident:** Evaluate the situation thoroughly and define the specific actions to be taken.

**Step 3: Communicate with All Parties:** Inform everyone involved—students, staff, and parents—about the planned actions.

**Step 4: Monitor and Adjust:** Observe the effectiveness of the actions taken and plan any necessary corrective measures.

**Step 5: Gather Family Feedback:** Obtain feedback from the family to ensure the issue is being addressed holistically.

**Step 6: Document the Incident:** Keep a detailed record of the event, the response, and any outcomes.

**Step 7: Implement Continuous Improvements:** Use insights gained to improve future responses and preventive measures.

## Establishing an antibullying network

Creating an internal network within the school to address bullying is essential to building a supportive and safe environment. This network should involve all stakeholders, including school staff, administrative staff, students, and parents, to ensure a collaborative and unified approach. The network will consist of two main components:

- **Mediator Team:** Made up of students from grades 5 to 12, this team will help mediate conflicts and support students in addressing bullying incidents among peers.
- **School Anti-Bullying Committee:** This committee will include the principal, teachers, the school psychologist, parents, and student representatives.

The goal of this network is to maintain the integrity of the anti-bullying process, ensure objective and impartial handling of incidents, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions within the school. By establishing this structure, the school can better evaluate and improve its efforts to confront bullying, providing both internal accountability and external support.

## References:

<https://iep.edu.gr/el/odigoi-kai-ergaleia-m/sxoliki-diamesolavisi>

## 1.3.2. Cultural inclusion

Creating a supportive school environment that fosters cultural inclusion, particularly around the topics of eating, holidays, and festivities, is a great way to promote understanding, respect, and celebration of diverse cultural backgrounds.

### Key Approaches to Supporting Cultural Inclusions

#### 1. Promote Awareness through Education

- **Curriculum Integration:** Incorporate lessons that explore different cultural practices around food, holidays, and festivities. For example, discuss how different cultures celebrate major holidays, such as Diwali, Christmas, Easter, New Year or Indigenous Peoples' Day. Likewise, design lessons and assign tasks related to other celebrations, festivities or cultural events, such as Red Nose Day, Children's Day, Mother's Day, May Day, Halloween etc
- **Guest Speakers & Workshops:** Invite cultural representatives, community leaders, or parents to speak to students about their traditions and practices. For example, a chef might demonstrate traditional foods from their culture, or a community leader could share stories about festive celebrations. Another idea would be to organize trips in the countryside to find out from host farmers how bio healthy food products are made or go to different food festivals in the city.
- **Storytelling and Books:** Include books and stories from diverse cultures that feature food, holidays, and family celebrations. This allows students to learn about these traditions in a relatable and engaging way. Organize or encourage students' participation in contests related to the various ethnic communities' traditions.

#### 2. Celebrate Diverse Holidays and Festivities

- **Inclusive Holiday Celebrations:** Instead of focusing on just one cultural holiday, host school-wide celebrations or events that represent a variety of holidays from different cultures. These could include activities like multicultural fairs, holiday craft-making, or food tastings.
- **Respectful Observance:** Acknowledge that not all students may celebrate the same holidays due to personal, religious, or cultural beliefs. Offer alternative activities or spaces for students who do not participate in a particular celebration. For example, during Christmas, offer a multicultural arts and crafts session that doesn't focus exclusively on one holiday.
- **Holiday Calendar:** Create a school-wide calendar that includes a variety of global holidays and celebrations. This can serve as an educational tool and a reminder that all cultures have meaningful traditions.

#### 3. Incorporate Culturally Diverse Foods in the Cafeteria

- **Cultural Food Days:** Have themed lunch days where the school cafeteria offers traditional foods from different cultures. Students can try dishes from a variety of regions and learn about their cultural significance. For example, celebrate Lunar New Year with dumplings, or serve samosas for Diwali.

- **Educational Posters:** Display educational posters in the cafeteria or throughout the school explaining the origins of certain foods and the role they play in various celebrations and cultures.
- **Food Sensitivity:** Be mindful of dietary restrictions due to religious or cultural practices. Offer diverse food options that accommodate these needs, such as vegetarian, gluten-free options etc.

#### 4. Encourage Student Participation and Empowerment

- **Student-Led Cultural Clubs:** Establish clubs or student groups where students can share and showcase their cultural traditions, including food, holidays, and festivities. Encourage students to organize multicultural events, potlucks, or presentations.
- **Showcase Diversity through Art and Performance:** Allow students to express their cultural identity through art, dance, music, and poetry. This could include a multicultural talent show or an art exhibit focused on holiday traditions and festive celebrations.
- **Peer Learning and Sharing:** Encourage students to share their cultural celebrations and festive traditions with classmates. For example, a student might give a presentation on how their family celebrates a specific holiday, or share a traditional recipe with the class.

#### 5. Create an Inclusive School Environment

- **Cultural Competence Training for Staff:** Provide professional development for teachers and staff on cultural competence and inclusion. This ensures that all school staff are equipped to support diverse cultural practices in their classrooms, from food to holiday observances.
- **Inclusive Language and Practices:** Be mindful of the language used in school materials and events. Use inclusive terms that respect all cultures, and avoid assumptions or generalizations about specific holidays or celebrations. For example, don't assume that all students celebrate Christmas, or that everyone eats turkey on Thanksgiving.
- **Create Safe Spaces for Discussion:** Establish environments where students feel comfortable discussing their cultural traditions and asking questions about other cultures. This could be through open forums, class discussions, or even informal "cultural sharing" sessions.

#### 6. Engage Families and the Community

- **Family Involvement:** Encourage families to share their cultural practices, recipes, and holiday customs with the school community. This can be done through events like "family heritage days" where students bring in traditional foods or artifacts that represent their cultural backgrounds.
- **Collaborate with Local Cultural Organizations:** Partner with local cultural organizations or cultural centres to host educational events, festivals, or workshops that introduce students to the rich diversity in their local community. Organize dance and music talent shows.
- **Cultural Ambassadors:** Designate cultural ambassadors within the school community who can lead efforts to promote understanding and inclusion across different cultural groups. These ambassadors can help ensure that all cultures are represented and respected.

#### 7. Foster Respect and Empathy

- **Encourage Respectful Curiosity:** Teach students to ask respectful questions when they encounter new traditions or customs. This can be part of a broader curriculum on empathy, diversity, and global citizenship.

- **Address Stereotypes and Misunderstandings:** Actively work to dispel cultural stereotypes and misconceptions. This can be done through discussion, education, and creating opportunities for direct interaction with people from different backgrounds.
- **Focus on Shared Values:** While celebrating cultural differences, also emphasize the common values that unite people, such as family, generosity, love, and community.

### 8. Create a Welcoming Physical Space

- **Decorate with Cultural Significance:** Decorate classrooms and common areas with symbols, flags, or artwork that represent a wide variety of cultures and their celebrations. This helps students feel that their cultural identity is visible and valued within the school environment.
- **Multilingual Signage:** If possible, include multilingual signs and resources that reflect the diversity of the student body. This shows that the school values linguistic diversity and helps create an inclusive environment.

### 9. Evaluate and Reflect

- **Feedback from Students and Families:** Regularly ask for feedback from students and families to ensure that cultural inclusivity is being effectively promoted. This could be through surveys, focus groups, or informal conversations.
- **Reflect on Practices:** Continuously evaluate the school's cultural inclusivity practices. Make adjustments based on new information or evolving cultural dynamics within the school community.

## Conclusion

Creating a supportive and inclusive school environment around eating, holidays, and festivities involves intentional efforts to celebrate diversity, educate students, and foster understanding and respect for all cultures. By integrating cultural education into daily school life, celebrating a range of holidays, and providing opportunities for students to share and learn from one another, schools can create a welcoming environment where all students feel valued and respected.

## 1.3.3. Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion in primary schools ensures that every student, regardless of their socio-economic background or physical ability, can engage with digital resources equitably. With the rise of online learning and digital tools, primary schools play a crucial role in ensuring students develop essential digital skills and have access to adaptive resources when needed. By fostering digital equity, schools help bridge the digital divide, empowering students to succeed in modern learning environments.

### Key Goals

- Equip all students with foundational digital skills.
- Ensure digital resources are universally accessible, especially for students with disabilities.
- Build a school culture where technology supports collaborative and inclusive learning.

## Key Approaches to Supporting Digital Inclusion

### 1. Equitable Access to Technology

Schools can promote digital inclusion by ensuring all students have consistent access to digital devices and internet connectivity, creating equitable learning opportunities regardless of their backgrounds.

- **Device Availability.** Schools can establish device-sharing programs, where tablets, laptops, or desktop computers are available in shared “digital learning stations.” These stations can be integrated into daily lessons, allowing students to rotate through activities that build familiarity with digital tools.

*Example:* A primary school has established “technology corners” in each classroom, where students can use devices for interactive learning activities. Students are encouraged to explore educational games or create digital artwork during designated class times.

- **Digital Literacy Training.** Incorporating digital literacy as part of the standard curriculum helps establish a foundation of essential skills. For younger students, this may start with basic tasks like navigating a tablet or learning how to use educational apps. As students grow, schools can introduce typing, web navigation, and online safety lessons.

*Example:* During weekly “Tech Thursdays,” students practice basic digital literacy skills such as typing, navigating the school’s online learning platform, and using educational apps. Teachers introduce activities that reinforce these skills, allowing students to gain confidence and familiarity with digital tools.

### 2. Accessible Digital Content

Ensuring that digital materials are accessible to all students is essential for creating an inclusive environment. The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 provide standards for making digital content comprehensible and usable by everyone, especially students with disabilities.

- **Colour Contrast.** High contrast between text and background is essential for readability, especially for students with visual impairments. WCAG 2.0 guidelines recommend a minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for standard text and 3:1 for large text. Teachers and school staff can use tools like the [Coolors Contrast Checker](#) to verify the contrast of digital materials, ensuring that all students can easily read the content.
- **Characteristics of Accessible Text.** Readability is a key element of accessibility. To support students with visual or learning needs, it’s important to use clear, legible fonts like Arial or Verdana and avoid decorative fonts. Text should be left-aligned with adequate line spacing (at least 1.5) to enhance readability. Avoiding excessive use of uppercase letters is also important, as they can be challenging for some students to interpret.

*Example:* A first-grade teacher checks the colour contrast of a PowerPoint presentation to ensure that the text has sufficient contrast against the background. Using the Coolors Contrast Checker, they adjust colours to make the content more readable for students with visual impairments. The text is also set in a clear font with appropriate line spacing, enhancing the reading experience for everyone.

### 3. Developing Digital Skills for All Learners

Developing age-appropriate digital literacy skills ensures that all students can navigate online resources and use technology responsibly. By creating a structured approach to digital skills, schools can help students build a foundation of responsible and safe digital habits.

- **Age-Appropriate Digital Literacy Modules.** Introducing digital literacy modules tailored to primary students' developmental levels enables students to progress through increasingly complex skills as they grow. This could start with recognizing digital icons and basic commands, then moving to online research and responsible internet use in upper primary grades.

*Example:* In a second-grade classroom, students learn to identify basic icons like the “home” button on a tablet or desktop. By fourth grade, they’re using educational search engines to explore topics relevant to their curriculum.

- **Peer Learning Opportunities.** Encouraging peer support in digital learning helps students feel comfortable asking questions and sharing their knowledge. Schools can implement “tech buddies,” where students more comfortable with technology assist others, fostering a collaborative learning environment.

*Example:* A “Tech Buddy” system pairs older students with younger peers. Older students help teach basic skills, like opening a learning app or typing simple words, creating a supportive environment where students learn and grow together.

### Detailed Strategies for Implementing Digital Inclusion

#### Digital Literacy and Responsible Use

Integrating digital literacy across various subjects can enhance learning and make digital skills a natural part of the school experience. Introducing internet safety and digital citizenship concepts helps students understand both the benefits and responsibilities of online participation. Teachers can include modules on safe browsing, recognizing trustworthy sites, and understanding the importance of privacy.

*Example:* In a unit on online safety, a teacher leads a discussion about identifying safe websites, avoiding suspicious links, and protecting personal information. Students then create posters about digital safety rules, which are displayed in the classroom to reinforce these important concepts.

#### Inclusive Digital Tools and Resources

Accessibility tools ensure all students can engage with digital content. Schools can provide tools such as screen readers, adjustable text sizes, and colour contrast adjustments, and train staff to integrate these tools into daily activities. Teachers should feel comfortable navigating these features to ensure they can support students with specific needs effectively.

*Example:* A teacher uses a screen reader for a student with visual impairments. The student actively participates in reading activities, contributing to discussions and benefiting from the shared learning experience. Meanwhile, students without accessibility needs gain awareness and understanding of adaptive technology.

### Further Reading

For those interested in exploring additional resources on digital inclusion and accessibility, the following websites provide valuable insights and tools:

- [Set4Inclusion](#) - This resource focuses on infrastructure, tools, and technology that support inclusive education. It provides guidance on selecting and implementing accessible digital tools and equipment in educational settings.
- [Ecodigi](#) - Ecodigi offers educational resources and best practices for promoting digital inclusion, with a specific focus on environmentally friendly and sustainable digital education solutions.

- [DigitALL Project](#) - The DigitALL Project provides practical approaches for enhancing digital skills, especially for underserved communities. It emphasizes the importance of digital accessibility for ensuring inclusive and effective learning experiences.
- [Ideal Digital](#) - Ideal Digital is dedicated to fostering digital literacy and inclusion. The platform includes resources and strategies for creating accessible digital environments, making it easier for all users to engage with digital content.
- [The Good Manager](#) - This site offers training modules focused on digital skills for managers, including techniques for ensuring accessibility in digital communication and content, which can be useful for educators seeking to build inclusive digital spaces.
- [DigitInclusion](#) - DigitInclusion provides resources aimed at reducing the digital divide. The site includes information on accessible digital tools and methods for making digital resources more inclusive in educational contexts.
- [Skills4Parents Digital Skills Hub](#) - This hub offers guidance on developing digital skills for both educators and parents, with a focus on accessible digital practices. It provides tips on using digital tools inclusively to support learning at home and in school.

These resources offer in-depth perspectives and tools to support digital accessibility, helping educators and administrators create a more inclusive digital environment for all students.

### 1.3.4. External environment friendly to PWD

Creating a supportive and inclusive school environment for persons with disabilities (PWD) is essential for fostering equality, independence, and dignity for all students. A school environment designed to be accessible and welcoming helps PWD feel valued and included, which positively impacts their engagement and educational experience. This document provides a brief overview of the importance of external accessibility for PWD and outlines specific approaches and methods to create a more inclusive school environment for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.

#### Overview of External Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

An accessible external environment is fundamental in ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their physical abilities, can navigate and interact with the school campus independently and safely. For many PWD, the external areas of a school—such as entrances, pathways, parking areas, and recreational spaces—are the first points of contact. Ensuring accessibility in these areas removes potential barriers and fosters a welcoming atmosphere. External accessibility requires not only the presence of accessible structures but also an understanding of the diverse needs of PWD, including those with mobility, visual, hearing, and cognitive impairments.

#### Approaches to Creating an Accessible and Inclusive External Environment

##### 1. Conduct a Comprehensive Accessibility Audit

- Review the school's physical layout, identifying barriers to accessibility.
- Include key stakeholders in the process, such as accessibility consultants, PWD, and their families.

## 2. Provide Accessible Pathways and Entrances

- Designate accessible routes from parking areas to entrances, ensuring they are wide, clear of obstacles, and well-marked.
- Ensure that ramps, handrails, and elevators are available as alternatives to stairs.

## 3. Create Accessible Parking Areas and Drop-off Zones

- Allocate designated parking spots near main entrances and ensure they are clearly marked.
- Provide a safe and accessible drop-off zone for students, staff, and visitors with disabilities.

## 4. Enhance Wayfinding and Signage

- Use clear, visible, and tactile signage to guide PWD around the campus.
- Place wayfinding cues at accessible heights, incorporating Braille and large print for those with visual impairments.

## 5. Design Inclusive Recreational and Outdoor Spaces

- Include accessible playground equipment and benches that accommodate individuals with various disabilities.
- Design outdoor spaces with paths that accommodate wheelchairs and provide shaded areas for rest.

## 6. Ensure Proper Lighting and Safety

- Use adequate lighting along pathways, entrances, and parking areas, reducing glare and shadows for those with visual impairments.
- Install emergency call buttons and alarm systems designed to notify individuals with hearing impairments.

## In-Depth Approaches to Key Accessibility Elements

**1. Accessible Pathways and Entrances** Creating an accessible pathway from the parking lot to the school's main entrances is essential. Accessible pathways should be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility aids. Ramps should complement stairs, with slopes meeting existing standards. Handrails on both sides provide support for those who may need extra balance, and non-slip surfaces reduce the risk of accidents in wet weather.

**2. Accessible Parking and Drop-Off Zones** Accessible parking should be located close to main entrances and should be level, with curb ramps provided for seamless access to pathways. Parking spaces should be clearly marked with signs and blue-painted markings to ensure they remain available for PWD. For schools with significant vehicle traffic, a dedicated drop-off zone close to the entrance can be invaluable. This zone should include wide, level areas where students can safely exit or enter vehicles, with staff support if needed.

**3. Enhanced Wayfinding and Signage** Good signage is essential for helping PWD navigate the campus independently. Tactile signage (e.g., Braille), high-contrast colours, and large fonts are particularly useful for individuals with visual impairments. Signage should be placed at accessible heights for wheelchair users, and arrows should direct people clearly to essential locations like entrances, restrooms, and elevators. For added accessibility, digital wayfinding solutions—such as QR codes linked to audio guides or maps—can provide further orientation options for individuals with visual impairments.

**4. Inclusive Recreational and Outdoor Spaces** Outdoor spaces and playgrounds can be made accessible by including wheelchair-friendly play equipment, transfer platforms, and pathways with firm, smooth surfaces. Sensory play areas with textured materials, sound elements, and interactive features offer enjoyable options for students with sensory or cognitive disabilities. Additionally, ensuring that benches, tables, and other seating areas accommodate wheelchair users and provide spaces for social interaction fosters a truly inclusive environment.

**5. Proper Lighting and Safety Measures** Lighting is a critical yet often overlooked component of accessibility. Paths, entrances, and parking areas should be well-lit to ensure safe navigation, particularly for individuals with visual impairments or limited depth perception. Glare-reducing lights and consistent illumination help PWD feel safe when moving about the school grounds. In addition, emergency call buttons and alarm systems with visual signals (such as flashing lights) can help individuals who are hearing-impaired recognize alerts. These devices should be located at accessible heights and tested regularly.

## Conclusion

Creating an accessible and supportive external school environment requires thoughtful planning, collaboration, and ongoing commitment to meeting the diverse needs of all individuals on campus. By addressing external accessibility through audits, structural adjustments, and the inclusion of accessible pathways, entrances, parking areas, wayfinding, and outdoor spaces, schools can establish a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. By implementing these recommendations, administrators, teachers, and staff can contribute to an environment that respects the dignity and independence of PWD, ensuring they feel valued and able to participate fully in school life.

## 1.3.5. Inclusive Classroom Language and Communication Practices

This strategy focuses on creating an environment where students feel safe, respected, and understood by emphasizing positive and inclusive communication.

### Key Elements

- **Use of Inclusive Language:** Training teachers to use language that is respectful and recognizes diversity in terms of gender, race, ability, and cultural background. For example, avoiding stereotypes, using gender-neutral terms, and recognizing each student's identity.
- **Active Listening and Student Participation:** Creating opportunities where every student can voice their opinions or share experiences without fear of judgment. Teachers can implement regular class discussions or "sharing circles" where students are encouraged to speak openly about topics related to diversity, inclusion, or any concerns they may have.
- **Respectful Conflict Resolution:** Equipping students and staff with conflict resolution skills that emphasize empathy, understanding, and restorative practices instead of punitive measures. This includes having clear protocols for dealing with bullying, discrimination, or exclusionary behaviours.
- **Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity in Teaching Materials:** Train teacher to use diverse teaching materials that reflect different cultural backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. This will ensure that all students see themselves represented positively in the curriculum, fostering a greater sense of belonging.

This strategy supports building a respectful and empathetic classroom environment, which is a foundation for an inclusive school culture.

### Key Approaches to Using Inclusive Language

Training teachers to use language that is respectful and recognizes diversity in terms of gender, race, ability, and cultural background is essential to fostering an inclusive school environment. The following points elaborate on how inclusive language can be applied effectively:

#### 1. Avoiding Stereotypes

- **Recognizing Diversity in Abilities and Backgrounds:** Teachers should be trained to avoid making assumptions based on a student's race, gender, socioeconomic status, or abilities. For example, instead of saying, "Boys are better at math," teachers could say, "Everyone has the ability to excel in math."
- **Promoting Individuality:** Teachers should learn how to focus on each student's unique strengths and contributions. This helps dismantle harmful generalizations that often marginalize students from diverse backgrounds.

#### 2. Using Gender-Neutral Language

- **Gender-Neutral Pronouns:** Encouraging the use of gender-neutral pronouns (e.g., "they/them") when the gender of a person is unknown or when a student identifies as non-binary. This promotes respect for students' gender identities and fosters inclusivity.
- **Gender-Inclusive Terminology:** Teachers should be trained to avoid gendered terms like "boys and girls" or "ladies and gentlemen" in favour of more inclusive alternatives like "students," "class," or "everyone."
- **Respect for Chosen Names and Pronouns:** Teachers should accept to respect and use students' chosen names and pronouns, correcting mistakes in a respectful, non-embarrassing manner.

#### 3. Culturally Sensitive Language

- **Cultural Identity Recognition:** Language training should emphasize acknowledging and respecting students' cultural identities. For example, using the correct pronunciation of students' names and being aware of culturally specific terms.
- **Avoiding Ethnocentric Language:** Teachers should be mindful to avoid language that positions one culture as the norm. For instance, instead of referring to European traditions as "normal" and others as "foreign," teachers can present all cultures as equally valid and valuable.

#### 4. Fostering Respect Through Communication

- **Modelling Empathy and Respect:** Teachers can model inclusive language that fosters empathy and respect. For example, using phrases like, "How can we support each other in understanding this better?" encourages a supportive atmosphere.
- **Encouraging Open Dialogue:** Training teachers to create safe spaces for dialogue about identity, language, and diversity helps students express themselves and learn about others.

#### 5. Teaching Inclusive Language to Students

- **Promoting Peer-to-Peer Respect:** Teachers can train students to use inclusive language with one another. This can include teaching respectful language and encouraging students to address one another in ways that recognize individual identities.

- **Creating an Inclusive Vocabulary:** Teachers can integrate inclusive terms into classroom activities and assignments, making inclusion an everyday practice.

### Benefits of Inclusive Language

- **Building a Sense of Belonging:** Students who feel their identities are respected are more likely to feel included and accepted.
- **Reducing Bias and Prejudice:** Regular use of inclusive language helps normalize diversity, reducing bias and exclusion.
- **Improving Student-Teacher Relationships:** Inclusive communication builds trust between teachers and students, particularly for those from marginalized groups.

### Key Approaches to Active Listening and Student Participation

Creating opportunities where every student can voice their opinions and share experiences without fear of judgment is essential to fostering an inclusive school culture. This can be effectively implemented following the path suggested below:

#### 1. Establishing a Safe and Supportive Environment

- **Ground Rules for Respectful Dialogue:** Teachers should be trained to set clear expectations for respectful communication in the classroom, emphasizing that all opinions are valued and no one will be judged for sharing their thoughts. These ground rules can include guidelines such as "Listen without interrupting," "Speak from personal experience," and "Disagree respectfully."
- **Encouraging Vulnerability and Openness:** Teachers should model and encourage active listening by giving their full attention to students when they speak, responding empathetically, and validating their feelings. This helps to create an atmosphere where students feel comfortable sharing their experiences.

#### 2. Implementing Regular Class Discussions

- **Structured Discussion Formats:** Regular class discussions can be organized around specific themes such as diversity, inclusion, empathy, or social issues. Teachers can use structured formats, like "Think-Pair-Share" or "Fishbowl" discussions, to ensure that all students have the opportunity to participate.
- **Rotating Discussion Leaders:** Assigning different students to lead discussions can help encourage participation from all students. This practice gives students a sense of ownership and responsibility, helping to amplify voices that might not always be heard.

#### 3. Using "Sharing Circles"

- **Creating Space for Personal Experiences:** Sharing circles can be a powerful tool where students sit in a circle and take turns speaking on a chosen topic, one at a time. This format ensures that each student has a dedicated moment to share their experiences, thoughts, or feelings in a non-judgmental space.
- **Focus on Inclusivity and Diversity Topics:** Teachers can choose topics related to diversity, inclusion, or social concerns to encourage students to reflect on their own experiences and listen to others. This might include prompts like, "Share a time when you felt included or excluded," or "Talk about something unique to your culture that you value."

#### 4. Promoting Student-Led Initiatives

- **Creating Student Committees or Groups:** Encouraging students to form committees or groups focused on topics such as diversity, social justice, or community engagement allows them to take initiative in promoting inclusion. These groups can plan events, lead discussions, or create awareness campaigns.
- **Student Surveys and Feedback Sessions:** Regularly soliciting feedback from students on classroom inclusivity, their sense of belonging, and how discussions are conducted can provide valuable insights for continuous improvement.

#### 5. Techniques for Active Listening

- **Paraphrasing and Summarizing:** Teachers can model active listening by summarizing or paraphrasing what a student has said before responding. This demonstrates that the student's thoughts are being heard and understood.
- **Non-Verbal Cues:** Maintaining eye contact, nodding, and using facial expressions to show engagement can encourage students to share more freely. This reinforces the idea that the teacher values the student's input.
- **Asking Follow-Up Questions:** Teachers can ask clarifying or follow-up questions that show genuine interest in what the student has shared. This encourages deeper reflection and dialogue.

#### Benefits of Active Listening and Student Participation

- **Empowerment of All Students:** When students feel that their voices matter, they are more likely to participate actively in their education, leading to higher engagement and confidence.
- **Improved Classroom Relationships:** Regular, open dialogue helps build stronger relationships among students and between students and teachers, fostering a sense of community.
- **Enhanced Social and Emotional Skills:** Participating in respectful discussions helps students develop skills like empathy, critical thinking, and conflict resolution.
- **Addressing Concerns Early:** Open discussions create a channel for students to raise issues, such as feelings of exclusion or experiences of bullying, allowing for early intervention.

#### Key Approaches to Respectful Conflict Resolution

Equipping students and staff with conflict resolution skills that emphasize empathy, understanding, and restorative practices is essential for creating a positive and inclusive school culture. Here's an outline how this can be effectively implemented:

##### 1. Establishing Clear Protocols for Addressing Conflict

- **Developing a Step-by-Step Process:** Schools should establish a clear, step-by-step process for addressing conflicts, including incidents of bullying, discrimination, or exclusionary behaviours. This process should outline the roles of teachers, administrators, and counsellors in managing conflicts.
- **Documenting and Reporting Procedures:** Create simple and accessible forms for students and staff to report conflicts or concerns. Documenting incidents ensures that patterns can be identified and addressed proactively.
- **Ensuring Confidentiality:** Emphasize that reports will be handled confidentially to protect the privacy of all involved and to encourage reporting without fear of retaliation.

## 2. Emphasizing Restorative Practices Over Punitive Measures

- **Restorative Circles or Conferences:** Use restorative circles where those involved in a conflict can come together to discuss the issue in a structured manner. The goal is for each party to understand the impact of their actions and work together to find a resolution.
- **Repairing Harm:** Focus on solutions that help repair relationships and restore the community. For instance, instead of suspension, a student involved in a conflict might be asked to participate in a community service project, make amends, or engage in a mediation process.
- **Reducing Recidivism:** Restorative practices aim to prevent future conflicts by addressing the root causes of behaviour and fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy.

## 3. Training Students and Staff in Conflict Resolution Skills

- **Workshops on Active Listening and Communication:** Conduct regular workshops for students and staff on active listening, assertiveness, and negotiation skills. These skills help individuals express themselves clearly and listen to others during conflicts.
- **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Use role-playing to help students and staff practice resolving common conflicts they might face, such as peer disputes or incidents of exclusion. This prepares them to handle real-life situations more effectively.
- **Peer Mediation Programs:** Train selected students as peer mediators who can help resolve minor conflicts among their classmates. Peer mediation encourages students to solve their problems independently while learning conflict resolution skills.

## 4. Fostering Empathy and Understanding

- **Teaching Perspective-Taking:** Encourage students to view conflicts from the other person's perspective. Activities that involve discussing different viewpoints can build empathy and reduce misunderstandings.
- **Discussing Real-Life Examples:** Use case studies or real-life stories to illustrate the impact of bullying, discrimination, and exclusion. These discussions can help students and staff understand the consequences of hurtful behaviour.
- **Promoting Emotional Literacy:** Teach students to identify and express their emotions in constructive ways. Emotional literacy can reduce the likelihood of conflicts escalating and help students resolve issues calmly.

## 5. Addressing Bullying, Discrimination, and Exclusionary Behaviours

- **Zero Tolerance for Harmful Behaviour:** Clearly communicate that bullying, discrimination, and exclusion are unacceptable. Immediate action should be taken when such behaviours occur, following established protocols.
- **Support for Affected Students:** Provide support services such as counselling for students affected by harmful behaviour. This ensures that victims receive the emotional support they need and feel safe in their environment.
- **Interventions for Offenders:** Rather than solely punishing students who engage in harmful behaviour, provide interventions such as counselling, social skills training, or restorative meetings to address the underlying issues.

### Benefits of Respectful Conflict Resolution

- **Improving School Climate:** When conflicts are resolved respectfully, the overall school climate becomes more positive, reducing fear and anxiety among students.
- **Building Stronger Relationships:** Restorative practices help rebuild relationships that may have been damaged by conflict, fostering a sense of community and trust.
- **Reducing Recurrence of Conflicts:** By addressing the root causes of conflicts and emphasizing empathy and understanding, schools can prevent similar issues from arising in the future.
- **Promoting Emotional and Social Growth:** Students develop valuable life skills such as emotional regulation, empathy, and problem-solving, which are beneficial beyond the school setting.

## 1.3.6. Inclusive Teaching Practices

Inclusive teaching practices involve strategies to ensure that all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or needs, can access the curriculum and participate fully in school life. This includes working closely with specialised educators such as itinerant teachers, support teachers, and other educational support professionals. Below is an overview of these practices, practical approaches, and concrete examples to foster a supportive school environment, specifically targeting administration, teachers, and staff.

### Overview of Inclusive Teaching Practices

Inclusive teaching practices aim to remove barriers to learning for all pupils, particularly those who need additional support due to learning difficulties, disabilities, or specific needs. Itinerant teachers, support teachers, and other specialised staff play a key role in these efforts. An itinerant teacher travels between schools or classrooms to provide targeted support, while support teachers work closely with classroom teachers to assist pupils who require additional help. By adopting these practices, schools can create an environment where every student feels valued and has the opportunity to succeed. Inclusive teaching practices aim to provide equitable learning opportunities by addressing the diverse needs of students. This strategy focuses on fostering collaboration between itinerant teachers, support teachers, and classroom staff to ensure every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

### Key Approaches to Creating a Supportive School Environment

#### 1. Collaboration Between Teachers and Support Staff

- **Co-Teaching Models:** Support teachers work alongside general educators in the same classroom, allowing both to share responsibility for planning and delivering instruction. This ensures that pupils with diverse needs receive targeted support without being separated from their peers.
- **Regular Team Meetings:** Establish weekly or bi-weekly meetings between support staff, itinerant teachers, and classroom teachers to discuss student progress, adapt teaching plans, and share strategies.
- **Cross-Training:** Provide professional development sessions where teachers can learn from support staff about strategies for differentiating instruction and supporting diverse learners.

*Example:* In a school that implemented a co-teaching model, a support teacher worked with a general educator to modify science lessons for a student with dyslexia. Together, they created visual aids and hands-on experiments that made the content more accessible, allowing the student to engage with the material alongside peers.

## 2. Detailed Roles of Itinerant and Support Teachers

### Itinerant Teacher:

- Training on Assistive Tools:
  - Teach classroom teachers how to use tools like AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) devices for students with speech delays.
  - Provide training on visual timers to help students with autism manage transitions and maintain focus.
- Modelling Inclusive Practices:
  - Conduct weekly visits to demonstrate lesson planning for students with autism, including strategies like sensory break schedules and visual aids.
  - Guide teachers on using differentiated materials, such as color-coded charts or simplified instructions.
- Ongoing Support and Assessment:
  - Offer feedback after classroom observations, focusing on how to integrate assistive tools effectively.
  - Monitor students' progress and suggest adjustments to teaching strategies as needed.

### Support Teacher:

- Lesson Modifications:
  - Work alongside classroom teachers to adapt materials, such as creating simplified texts for students with dyslexia or using graphic organizers for students with ADHD.
  - Incorporate audio recordings of lessons for students who struggle with reading.
- In-Class Support:
  - Assist students with reading, offering targeted help during group or individual activities.
  - Provide direct instruction to small groups, helping students master foundational skills before advancing to complex concepts.

## 3. Individualized Support Plans (ISPs) and Regular Monitoring

- **Developing ISPs:** Work with itinerant teachers and support staff to create individualised support plans for pupils with specific learning needs. These plans should outline goals, required accommodations, and teaching methods tailored to each student.
- **Ongoing Assessment and Feedback:** Regularly assess student progress and adjust support plans as needed. This process should include input from both classroom and itinerant teachers, parents, and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.

*Example:* A student with ADHD received an ISP that included frequent breaks, the use of a quiet corner during independent work, and additional reading support from an itinerant teacher. This tailored approach helped improve the student's focus and academic performance.

### 4. Professional Development on Inclusive Practices

- **Workshops on Differentiation Techniques:** Provide training sessions for teachers and support staff on how to modify lessons to meet the needs of diverse learners, including pupils with physical or cognitive challenges.
- **Cultural Competency Training:** Ensure that staff understand how to create an inclusive environment that respects diverse cultural backgrounds, which can intersect with other needs pupils may have.
- **Peer Observation and Feedback:** Encourage teachers to observe support staff or itinerant teachers in action, allowing them to see effective strategies in practice and apply them in their own classrooms.

*Example:* A school organised a workshop led by a support teacher on using assistive technology tools like speech-to-text software. This training enables teachers to better support pupils with dyslexia and other learning differences in their writing tasks.

## Detailed Strategies for Implementing Inclusive Teaching Practices

### 1. Clarified Examples for Co-Teaching Models

- **Station Teaching:** In this model, the classroom is divided into stations where different activities are taking place. The classroom teacher and support teacher each take responsibility for a station, while a third station allows for independent or peer-based learning. This allows pupils to receive more personalised instruction in smaller groups.
- **Parallel Teaching:** Both the classroom teacher and support teacher teach the same content simultaneously but to different groups of pupils. This method is effective in classrooms with a wide range of abilities, as it allows each group to move at a suitable pace.

*Example:*

**Station Teaching.** In a math lesson:

- **Station A:** The classroom teacher uses visual aids to review multiplication tables.
- **Station B:** The support teacher facilitates hands-on activities using manipulatives like fraction tiles.
- **Station C:** A peer-led group solves story problems collaboratively, promoting teamwork and inclusion.

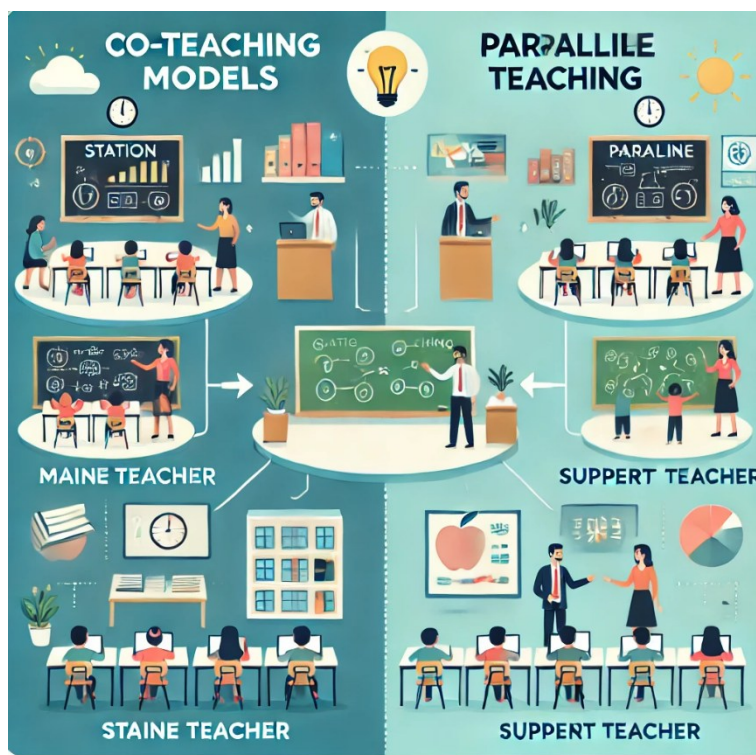
This model ensures students receive differentiated support in small, manageable groups.

**Parallel Teaching:**

In a reading comprehension lesson:

- One teacher works with advanced readers, focusing on analysing the main text and discussing themes.
- The other teacher provides support to students needing additional help, simplifying the text and using tools like vocabulary visuals and sentence starters.

This approach allows for smaller group sizes and tailored instruction to address varying skill levels.



## 2. Use of Assistive Technology and Adaptive Resources

Assistive technology can significantly enhance inclusivity in classrooms when effectively integrated:

- **Speech-to-Text Software:** Enables students with writing challenges to complete assignments or participate in discussions.
- **Visual Timers:** Helps students with autism stay on schedule and transition smoothly between activities.
- **Screen Readers:** Provides access to digital content for students with visual impairments.

### Practical Examples:

- Itinerant teachers can train classroom staff to use these tools during lessons, ensuring they become a seamless part of daily teaching. For instance, a visual timer can be introduced to structure classroom transitions or to manage timed group activities.
- Tablets with adaptive learning apps can help students with varying skill levels progress at their own pace, supported by the teacher's guidance.

## 3. Fostering a Positive and Inclusive School Culture

- **Peer Support Programs:** Develop programs where pupils support one another under the guidance of a support teacher. This encourages social integration and reduces stigma around receiving extra help.
- **Inclusive Classroom Layouts:** Adapt classroom environments to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities can easily navigate and participate in all activities. This might include rearranging furniture to make space for wheelchairs or creating quiet corners for pupils who need sensory breaks.

*Example:* A school implemented a peer buddy system for pupils receiving support services. A student struggling with social interactions was paired with a classmate during group activities, helping to build friendships and social skills in a natural setting.



### Conclusion

Inclusive teaching practices, through the collaboration of itinerant and support teachers, co-teaching models, and assistive technologies, ensure every student's needs are met. These strategies build a supportive school environment where students feel valued and can achieve their potential.

## 1.3.7. Intellectual Disabilities

Creating a supportive school environment for pupils with **Intellectual Disabilities (ID)** requires the collaboration of all school stakeholders — teachers, administrators and support staff — guided by the principles of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**. The goal is to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, have access to learning and can participate fully in the school community.

### Key Elements:

- **Individualised Education Plans (IEPs):** Administrators should ensure that individualised education plans are created and implemented for pupils with intellectual disabilities that include individual learning goals and the necessary accommodations to support their academic progress.
- **Training and professional development:** Administrators can organise and support ongoing training programmes for teachers and staff to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to effectively teach and support pupils with intellectual disabilities.

- **Flexible curriculum:** School leaders can advocate for a flexible curriculum that takes into account the diverse learning needs of all pupils and allows for modifications and adaptations as needed.
- **Peer support programmes:** School leaders can establish and promote peer support programmes that encourage collaboration and social interaction between pupils with intellectual disabilities and their peers to create an inclusive environment and improve social skills.

## Key Approaches to Creating a supportive school environment for pupils with Intellectual Disabilities (ID)

### 1. Individualised Education Plans (IEPs)

According to Klang et. al (2019), giving pupils with special educational needs [including those with Intellectual Disabilities (ID)] the opportunity to be educated alongside their peers is essential to uphold their rights. However, research shows that teachers in general ("mainstream") education schools often feel unprepared to respond to the needs of pupils with SEN, particularly those with ID. Furthermore, the quality of inclusive practices in mainstream schools is generally low. To address these challenges, schools and educational systems must adopt targeted approaches that enhance inclusivity and build teacher competence in supporting SEN pupils, especially those with intellectual disabilities.

The implementation of Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) in mainstream schools is essential to support pupils with ID. IEPs adapt learning goals and teaching methods to the needs of pupils and help them to better engage in the classroom and develop socially. Effective IEPs rely on collaboration between teachers, therapists, parents, and administrators who meet regularly to review and adjust the plan as needed. As Mbugua et al. (2016) note, parent involvement is critical as they help with homework and assessments. Administrators also play an important role by coordinating with special education staff and promoting peer support programmes. Together, these efforts create a stronger, more inclusive learning environment for pupils with ID.

### 2. Training and professional development

While special education training is important, changing attitudes towards inclusion could have a greater impact on effective support for pupils with disabilities. Mbugua et al (2016) found that only 17.6% of teachers had special education needs training, and a significant number of those with extensive training felt less equipped to promote inclusion than those with shorter training. This suggests that the length of training does not necessarily increase teachers' confidence or attitudes towards inclusion. A single course cannot prepare teachers for the complexities of inclusive teaching. Instead, fostering a positive school culture and adapting the environment to meet diverse needs are critical. Collaboration and ongoing professional development are essential to cultivating an inclusive mindset and emphasise that commitment to inclusion is as important as formal training.

### 3. Flexible curriculum

A flexible curriculum that incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is essential to effectively support pupils with intellectual disabilities. These pupils often spend little time in mainstream classrooms and engage primarily in non-academic activities when they are included. UDL is a valuable framework for teachers to create inclusive lesson plans that meet diverse learning needs. By prioritising flexible and relevant curricula, UDL addresses the shortcomings of traditional education models that can limit meaningful learning experiences. As Salamiah (2018) states, UDL emphasises the importance of accessibility while highlighting the need for curricula that promote a high quality of life.

When the ultimate goal is to educate competent learners, the artificial distinctions between general and functional curricula are removed, allowing for individualised approaches that support pupils with intellectual disabilities (Hartmann, 2015). This change not only promotes academic achievement, but also improves the overall educational experience for these pupils.

#### 4. Peer support programmes

UDL peer support programmes offer significant benefits to pupils with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) by fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment. These programmes can establish buddy systems that bring pupils with intellectual disabilities together with their peers, fostering meaningful friendships and social interactions. This not only improves the social skills of pupils with disabilities, but also fosters empathy and understanding of their peers. In addition, these peer support groups can act as a platform for collaborative learning, with classroom assistants, therapists and teachers working together to provide tailored support. This collaborative approach ensures that the diverse needs of all pupils are met as it enables the sharing of insights and strategies between teachers and empowers peers to take an active role in each other's learning. By fostering an inclusive atmosphere where pupils with ID are encouraged and supported by their peers, schools can create a more equitable educational experience that aligns with the UDL principles of flexibility, engagement and accessibility. Ultimately, peer support programmes not only benefit pupils with disabilities, but also enrich the educational experience of all learners and foster a culture of collaboration and inclusion.

#### Parental Involvement

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in supporting pupils with **ID**. Active engagement of parents or caregivers in the development and implementation of **IEPs** ensures that learning strategies are reinforced at home, enhancing the educational outcomes for pupils.

#### Community Advocacy

Creating a supportive and inclusive environment requires advocacy not just within the school but in the wider community. Teachers, administrators and support staff should lead efforts to raise awareness of **ID** and address cultural attitudes and societal structures that impact the inclusion of children with **ID**. This includes challenging stereotypes, promoting positive representations, and ensuring that school practices support the rights of pupils with **ID** both in and outside the school setting.

#### Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms

Continuous assessment is essential to monitor the progress of pupils with ID and adapt strategies as needed. Regular feedback mechanisms, involving teachers, parents, and support staff, ensure that educational plans remain dynamic and responsive. This approach not only helps identify areas of improvement but also strengthens collaboration among stakeholders to provide targeted and effective support.

#### Conclusion

Schools and education systems need to adopt targeted approaches that promote inclusion and strengthen teachers' competences in supporting pupils with intellectual disabilities. By implementing specific strategies — such as Individual Education Plans, training and professional development, flexible curriculum adaptations and peer support programmes — schools can create a more accommodating environment. These methods not only improve accessibility for pupils with intellectual disabilities, but also provide teachers and administrators with the tools and resources they need to effectively address their diverse learning needs.

**Extra resources:**

Link: <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/app/resources/microlearnings/14>

This 10-minute microlearning activity will help you identify mindsets and practices needed to develop a caring classroom. The strategies discussed will improve classroom climate and lead to better school attendance and engagement.

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### 1.3.8. Internal environment friendly to PWD

Creating a supportive school environment for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) involves promoting physical accessibility, inclusive education practices, and a culture of respect and support. In this section a comprehensive approach to making a school environment more welcoming for students with disabilities is presented. The approach addresses to all relevant stakeholders, namely students, teachers, school principals, school staff, parents, and policy makers in the field of education.

Schools should be places with equal opportunity for use, this is called universal design. Universal design goes beyond simply meeting accessibility standards; it emphasizes the seamless integration of accessible features into the overall design from the start. This approach fosters a more inclusive and cohesive design, avoiding the stigma that often accompanies accessible features added as afterthoughts or modifications. Unlike accessibility standards, which are typically prescriptive and detail specific requirements, universal design is focused on performance and usability, aiming to create spaces that everyone can use comfortably. Rather than adhering to fixed standards, universal design addresses usability challenges directly, resulting in spaces that are intuitively functional for all. Although Universal Design has its roots in the field of architecture, it can provide a philosophical framework for all products and environments at all educational levels.

## Approaches to Key Accessibility Elements

**1. Physical Accessibility.** A **barrier-free school campus** is essential to ensure that all parts of a school, including classrooms, restrooms, and common areas, are fully accessible to students with disabilities. This involves installing ramps, widening doorways, and adding elevators where necessary to accommodate wheelchairs and other mobility aids. **Accessible facilities** within restrooms should include grab bars, non-slip flooring, and sinks and toilets designed for easy access. Classrooms also need flexible seating arrangements, including adjustable desks for students who use wheelchairs, to ensure comfort and ease of participation.

For students with visual and auditory impairments, **visual and auditory supports** are crucial. Large-print signage, braille labels, and tactile markings throughout the campus help students navigate their environment independently. Installing visual alarms and hearing loops further enhances accessibility by providing vital information through visual cues and amplified sound where needed. Additionally, creating **sensory-friendly spaces** offers students with sensory processing disorders or autism a quiet, calming retreat when they feel overstimulated. These rooms are designed to reduce sensory input, allowing students to regulate their emotions and return to learning feeling more centered. Together, these measures create an inclusive, accessible, and supportive school environment that meets the diverse needs of all students.

**2. Inclusive Curriculum.** To support diverse learning needs, schools should adopt **Differentiated Instruction** by implementing teaching methods that cater to various learning styles—visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic—to reach all students effectively. Integrating **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** principles further enhances inclusivity by offering flexible curriculum options that allow multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement, ensuring that all students can access content meaningfully. Additionally, **Assistive Technology** such as speech-to-text software, text-to-speech readers, and alternative communication devices can empower students with disabilities to access the curriculum fully and participate actively in their learning environment.

**3. Teacher Training and Professional Development.** To create an inclusive school environment, provide Disability Awareness Training to educate teachers and staff on various disabilities and best practices, fostering empathy and respect. Offer Specialized Training in adaptive strategies, assistive technology, behaviour management, sensory support, and communication methods to empower teachers with practical tools for supporting students with disabilities. Promote Collaborative Planning between general and special education teachers to enable coordinated lesson planning, ensuring seamless and inclusive support in the classroom.

**4. Supportive policies and procedures.** A clear inclusion policy, that emphasizes equal rights, accessibility, and non-discrimination for students with disabilities, should be developed. Also, it is advised that students with disabilities have Individualized Educational Plans, that are created in collaboration with educators, parents, and where appropriate students themselves, and are regularly reviewed and evaluated to meet evolving needs.

**5. Peer Education and Student Engagement.** The role of the students is equally important to all methods already mentioned. To achieve this, it is important to implement Disability Awareness Programs to educate students about disabilities and promote empathy, understanding, and inclusion. Moreover, schools should host events, workshops, and awareness days to foster an inclusive school culture. Another method that can be used in the school environment is to establish Peer Support Programs, like buddy systems or peer mentoring, where students without disabilities are paired with those with disabilities to provide support and build friendships. Additionally, it is important to ensure Inclusive Extracurricular Activities by playing sports, clubs, and other activities accessible and welcoming to all students.

**6. Parents and Community Involvement.** To foster an inclusive school environment, schools can establish regular communication, provide inclusive events, and promote open dialogue to ensure parents feel heard. Offering training and resources, organizing diverse cultural events with community partners, and recognizing parental contributions further support a collaborative atmosphere. Together, these strategies empower parents as active partners in their children's education and help build an inclusive school community.

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