

Accommodating differences essay example

[Profession](#), [Student](#)



Challenges and Opportunities Educators Face in a Diverse Classroom

Handling a class with variety of students can pose a great challenge to any teacher, both neophyte and seasoned, who has the duty to squarely overcome such challenges for the sake of learning. This paper presents three possible groups of students who can bring about the variety and the challenge. Specifically, these groups include international students, who have English as Second Language; student athletes who are part of national teams; and a trickle of academically challenged students who are under the provisions of inclusive education.

Common Characteristics of the Group

There are some characteristics that are common across groups of students that account for the class variety. First of all, they are all undergoing a period of adjustment. International students are adjusting into the new culture, the new language, and the new way of life of doing things. Student athletes who are part of national competition teams also have some adjustments to make. They need to adjust to the demands of both school and training so as to successfully and effectively attend to both at the same time. Students who are academically challenged also need to do some adjustments being newly incorporated into the mainstream class.

Aside from the adjustment period, students coming from these special groups all have the need to belong, the longing to be accepted into the mainstream, and the desire to be understood and accommodated despite their varied forms of shortcomings. ESL students have the longing to be

understood by their new society despite the language barriers; national athletes long to be understood for their erratic schedules and some inabilities to go with the regular school timetable; and academically challenged students long to be treated with patience and to learn as much as they could.

Special Challenges Faced by an Educator

Educators approach the needs of their students as a mother would to her children. Though they may have the heart of a mother, still they are faced with special challenges that are brought about precisely because of their desire to attend to the needs of their diverse students. Some challenges that the educators commonly face include lack of experiential training in handling special or extraordinary cases in the classroom; making other members of the class to accept and include the diverse groups; handling all demands in the classroom by herself if no teaching aide is available; coordinating with the parents of the diverse students for collaborative teaching-learning efforts; and keeping up with the personal care and needs that the individual students have. As Ramos (2009) claims, “ Inclusion classrooms are a wonderful concept but it takes a lot of training, patience and compassion on the part of these teachers” (par. 2).

According to UNESCO’s Inclusive Education in Action project partners (n. d.), there are three main characteristics that educators who need to accommodate differences have as a challenge to acquire. Teachers in diverse classrooms have to be a researcher, strategic, and resilient.

Teachers are faced with special challenges which they need to combat with

special skills as well. Being a researcher would help in staying abreast with social trends related to the diversity in the classroom. Being strategic would help in “facing uncertainties with creativity” (Inclusive Education in Action, n. d.). Being resilient would help keep the challenged educators moving forward, looking ahead beyond the challenges.

Special Learning Opportunities

Any source of challenge in the classroom can be turned into learning opportunities. International students can share their own culture to the rest of the class and promote openness to different cultures. Student athletes can share their expertise in sports and give some kind of training to the rest of the class. Students who are academically challenged may have some special and unique talents in little ways that can also be shared with other members of the class. Teachers must be able to spot these learning opportunities that can be offered by the diverse groups in the class and grab the chance to use them to the advantage of both the minority and the mainstream groups.

Teachers in diverse classrooms must keep an open mind for such opportunities that can be offered by the diverse groups because it is a way to make them feel accepted by the bigger group. It is important for them to realize that they are able to contribute positively to the class through their special little ways.

Strategies to Accommodate Differences

Given these specific groups dealt with in this paper, the following are specific strategies a teacher can use to accommodate differences in the classroom:

a. Using ethnic literature can make international students feel welcome and

accepted (Shreiner, n. d.);

b. Holding mini or classroom sports fest can give student athletes the opportunity to coach their classmates;

c. Organizing talent exhibitions can give academically challenged students the chance to bring out their special talents and make them feel that they do belong.

Conclusion

Diversity in the classroom need not be always looked at as a great feat to overcome. Rather, diversity must be looked at as opportunities that enrich the overall learning environment of the school. Teachers must therefore celebrate diversity for in it is a great source of unity.

References

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