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Inclusion Art Contest

Apache Junction Unified School District

Apache Junction, Arizona

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Planning for this Inclusion project was very involved. Since Inclusion was a relatively new concept in our district, I wanted to make sure that it was a project that could be participated in by absolutely everyone in school. I wanted to tie it in to Arizona State Standards, but I also wanted it to be fun and invigorating. As I was skimming through various books about differentiated instruction and diversity in the classroom, one thing that stood out to me was the use of art. Art seemed to be a favorite among teachers (Jasmine, 1995). I decided I would make use of art projects to teach my lessons on inclusion.

This project had multi facets to it and was very dynamic in nature. What began as inclusion awareness for students, turned out to be a project that was very insightful as to teacher attitude towards inclusion in a school that was just incorporating an Inclusive model that year for the first time. This project was also meant as a way for me, as a teacher in a self contained room for students with Severe and Profound disabilities, to become a more familiar face on campus. Although having worked at my school for five years, many students really didn't know what I did or where I worked. This was my way of trying to gap that lack of familiarity and to make my classroom students seem to be less of a "scary or strange mystery" to the rest of the campus (Canfield, 2007).

I sponsored a school wide Inclusion Art Contest. Little did I know when I began this journey, how strongly the impact of my results would be. Not only did we make it into the local newspaper in Apache Junction, but I was able to write an entire curriculum titled "Mad About Inclusion". I taught this curriculum for our district's Professional Development classes which are held through Prospector University.

The school that participated in this project was a Middle School which is comprised of 6th, 7th and 8th graders. It is a Title One school and has students from quite a mixture of backgrounds and socio economic groups. Races can be divided up roughly into 75% Caucasian students, 23% Hispanic students and 2% African American students. The students from the central Apache Junction area are from more humble homes. The students that come in from the Gold Canyon area are more

affluent. In this school, this blending results in a positive environment where the two groups meet without any major issues being displayed. While many times it is not the case that there is a positive blending, the administration has taken a proactive stance over the years of making sure that regularly the students are aware of and are highly commended for displaying “Character Counts” traits (Engelmann, 1997).

The First Step: Gaining permission

I began this adventure by asking permission to my administration to put the planned activities on the staff calendar. The principal and deans were very supportive and thought that the project sounded worthwhile. They realized it was not enough simply to seat non disabled students and students with disabilities in a classroom together (Henley, 2004). They immediately gave me their “go ahead” and put it on the calendar.

The Second Step: Notifying teachers

I sent an email to all of the teachers on campus, explaining that I would be coming to their classrooms during 6th period and teaching a short 15 minute lesson. I did not need them to do absolutely anything but allow me to come in and speak. I arranged what day I would be visiting each classroom. I let them know that I would be covering all of the classrooms on the campus during this period over the next two days. I let them know that while I would be keeping it “short and sweet”, I did need their cooperation for this process to flow smoothly and in a timely manner. I wanted to make sure that the teachers understood that my goal was to reach all of the students and not to leave anyone out. I wanted to provide equal opportunities and resources to all of the students (Meier, 2004).

The Third Step: My inclusion lesson

The script and format of the lesson was exactly the same for each and every classroom. This is the procedure that was followed:

1) I presented myself telling the students what classroom I worked in.

2) I handed out a pretest form with the following questions on it:

What is inclusion?

What role, if any, do you play in inclusion?

What does inclusion look like at our school?

3) I asked the students to fill it out to the best of their ability and make sure to write down what grade they were in the slot provided for it.

4) I let the students know that if they were not sure of the answer they could write “I don’t know” or put a question mark.

5) I picked up all of the pre tests.

6) I put the pre tests in groups by grade level.

7) I then gave the following definition of inclusion:

“Inclusion means students of all different learning styles, different capabilities, needs etc. learn in general education classes. This involves you in that when you go to classes, you might see some students that have a staff member assisting them. Or you may see that someone’s assignment is a little different from yours. Or you may see that they need equipment to do things that you don’t use etc.”

8) I shared the art contest rules with the students, showing them samples of what some possibilities might look like. I stressed the fact that it is not so much the art that matters but their message about inclusion.

9) I gave out the materials the needed to their posters on (manila folders).

10) I gave out a handout reiterating the contest rules, the deadlines and the prizes. This is what the handout stated:

“SPECIAL INCLUSION FILES” Art Contest

Rules: Students can use any art media and have to do their art work on legal size manila files that will be provided to them. They need to portray how they understand inclusion through their artwork. Artwork cannot extend past the boundaries of the file. Names need to be placed on back of art work for judging purposes.

Art Entries need to be turned in to any of your teachers who will make sure to get them to me (Ms. Mel) BY SEPT 14.

PRIZES:

First: \$25 Walmart Gift Card and Certificate of accomplishment
Second: \$15 Walmart Gift Card and Certificate of accomplishment
Third: \$10 Walmart Gift Card and Certificate of accomplishment

11) I left the classrooms letting the students know that there would be a post test in the near future with the exact same questions and a second inclusion art contest later on in the year.

12) I encouraged all the students to participate in all of the events as I was really looking forward to their seeing their projects and getting their input.

Unexpected occurrences:

The introduction of this project brought about quite a few unexpected twists. First of all, I had planned two days to get around to all of the classes on campus. However it took me four days to do so. In addition, I had thought that all of teachers would welcome me into their classrooms and yet some of them were downright rude making me feel like an intrusive bother (Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Some even had me wait 10 to 15 minutes for them to be ready for me (even though this had all been prearranged). These “waits” are much of the reason why my plans of taking only two days to cover the school had to be changed to four days.

Another surprise that came my way was that in every classroom, when I would ask the students if they had any questions, the first question I would get from any student was “do we HAVE to do this?”

At first, the question caught me off guard and rather rude. But after the second classroom, I got to expect it and my answer was something along the lines of “No, you don’t HAVE to do it. However you are part of Inclusion and the student body, so it would be nice if you included yourself in this project.” This seemed to answer the question and yet still encourage them to participate (Charles, 1996).

Expectations:

My hope was to see a positive difference in inclusion knowledge percentage wise from when I give the pretest to when I give the post test. This I measured by tabulating the pre and post tests (Stiggins, 2001). I also hoped to see a positive environmental difference in the acceptance of students with Special needs when they are included in the general education classrooms (Henley, 2004). This I measured by number of “character counts” bracelets given out and by comments made by our teachers at staff meetings. Since I tied the project into Arizona State Standards, I hoped that teachers would choose to incorporate the poster contest into their curriculums. They could even use it for an extra credit assignment or a make up assignment for the students to complete. I measured this by input given to me by the teachers. I also expected to have 100% of student participation in the pre test because I was personally handing them pretests out and collecting them. I measured this by counting the number of pretests that I had collected.

Projects goals:

Let students get to know me as a campus teacher.

Inform students of what Inclusion is.

Have students reflect on what role they play in inclusion.

Have the students give me input as to how the Inclusive environment looks to them from a student’s perspective.

Target group:

The targeted group was the entire student body of TMMS - all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders – whether in General Education or in Special Education. I made it very clear that was important to me that ALL students be able to participate and that they all feel encouraged to do so (Kluth, 2003). There are 649 students in the school.

Connection to Arizona State Standards:

All Arizona State Standards that focus on citizenship tied in neatly to this project.

Because Arizona schools (including our district) is moving towards an Inclusive model, I thought that this project would help to encourage students to understand what was happening and how it affected each and everyone of them (Henley, 2004).

Resources:

I used 620 manila folders (half of these were provided from office surplus in our school supplies bank). I provided the ones that the office was unable to provide. The certificates given out, I made from “heavier” paper that I bought at Office Max. The prizes were Walmart Gift Cards which I purchased. The entire cost for this stage of the project came to about \$250.

Length of the project:

The project span was over most of the school year. It extended from the beginning of the First quarter to the end of the third quarter. My data collection included the first and second art contests and the teacher input at the end of the project.

Post assessment:

After the posters had been turned in, I put the Post tests (with the exact same questions) in each of the teacher's boxes in the lounge. I put the number of copies that each teacher needed for their sixth period class. I sent out an email asking the teachers to please give the post test to the students during their sixth periods and to put them in my box in the lounge within a three day period.

Outcome of First Art contest

My visits to the classrooms on campus had the following results:

I gave out 632 pretests.

I picked up 632 pretests. (194 from 6th graders)
(193 from 7th graders)
(204 from 8th graders)

Of the 632 students that received manila folder to participate, I had 107 Posters turned in for competition.

Even though I had given a three day "window", I had post tests coming to me for 9 days throughout

which I had sent four emails asking teachers to please follow up and get the post tests turned in to me.

Of the 632 post tests expected back, I received a total of 344 (173 from 6th graders)

(157 from 7th graders)

(142 from 8th graders)

All competitors received a Certificate of Participation at their grade award ceremony.

The three prizes were awarded before the end of the month.

The winning posters were hung in the front office for display.

Pictures were taken for the newspaper with the winners and Mark Blomgren, the principal.

Breakdown of 6th grade Pre and Post tests:

The following three charts indicate the results found from the Pre and the Post tests that were given out to all of the sixth graders in the school. 194 sixth graders took the pretest and 173 took the post test.

Both the pre and post tests were made up of the exact same three questions. The first chart addresses the question asked “What is inclusion?” The second chart addresses the question asked “What role, if any, do you play in inclusion?” The third chart addresses the question asked “What does inclusion look like at our school?” The charts are broken down into five columns. The first column indicates the nature of the student answers. The second column displays the Pretest results. The third column displays the post test results. The fourth and fifth columns make use of arrows to express the expectations held and the results obtained. As can be seen, most of the expectations had the desired results.

What is inclusion?	SIXTH GRADE PRETEST	SIXTH GRADE POST TEST	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what the definition of inclusion was	137 of 194 students 70.6 %	26 of 173 students 15.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was a term related to Special Education	16 of 194 students 8.2%	15 of 173 students 8.7%	INCREASE OR REMAIN THE SAME ↔	INCREASED ↑
Used the word “include” to define inclusion	8 of 194 students 4.1%	63 of 173 students 36.4%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “grouping” or “togetherness” idea to define inclusion	3 of 194 student 1.5%	12 of 173 students 7.0%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “helping” or “taking care of” idea to define inclusion	6 of 194 students 3.0%	27 of 173 students 15.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of a “mix” or different peoples to define inclusion	0 of 194 student 0.0%	11 of 173 students 6.4%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of the student body as a whole to define inclusion	0 of 194 student 0.0%	5 of 173 students 2.9%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Drama	6 of 194 students 3.0%	1 of 173 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Language Arts	5 of 194 students 2.6%	4 of 173 students 2.3%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was a term with negative connotations	1 of 194 students .5%	0 of 173 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Random response that didn’t fit any category	12 of 194 students 6.2%	8 of 173 students 4.6%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓

What role do you play in inclusion?	SIXTH GRADE PRETEST	SIXTH GRADE POST TEST	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea of what role they each play in inclusion.	143 of 194 students 73.7%	45 of 173 students 26.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt they play no role at all in inclusion	12 of 194 students 6.2%	21 of 173 students 12.1%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to Special Education	3 of 194 students 1.5%	11 of 173 students 6.4%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ OR ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt they played a role but didn't know why	3 of 194 students 1.5%	2 of 173 students 1.2%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role was somehow related to helping others	3 of 194 students 1.5%	27 of 173 students 15.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to getting along, including all and accepting differences	8 of 194 students 4.1%	40 of 173 students 23.1%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to various different roles	6 of 194 students 3.1%	13 of 173 students 7.5%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to the Drama class	1 of 194 students 0.5%	0 of 173 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role was related to the Language Arts class	7 of 194 students 3.6%	2 of 173 students 1.2%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role had a negative connotation to it	1 of 194 students 0.5%	1 of 173 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Random response that didn't fit any category	8 of 194 students 4.1%	10 of 173 students 5.8%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑

What inclusion looks like?	SIXTH GRADE PRETEST	SIXTH GRADE POST TEST	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what inclusion looked like at our school	151 of 194 students 77.8%	41 of 173 students 23.7%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was non existent at our school	3 of 194 students 1.5%	3 of 173 students 1.7%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school was something related to Special Education	0 of 194 students 0.0%	4 of 173 students 2.3%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to the lunch room	7 of 194 students 3.6%	6 of 173 students 3.5%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASE ↓
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to including, helping and working cooperatively	25 of 194 students 12.9%	98 of 173 students 56.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Drama	0 of 194 students 0.0%	1 of 173 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Language Arts	1 of 194 students .5%	0 of 173 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Had mixed feelings about what inclusion looked like at our school	0 of 194 students 0.0%	5 of 173 students 2.9%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something of neg connotation	2 of 194 students 1.0%	5 of 173 students 2.9%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Random responses that didn't fit any category	5 of 194 students 2.6%	9 of 173 students 5.2%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑

Breakdown of 7th grade Pre and Post tests:

The results found for the seventh grade were very much along the lines of what was found for the sixth graders. The following three charts indicate the results found from the Pre and the Post tests that were given out to all of the seventh graders in the school. 193 seventh graders took the pretest and 157 took the post test.

Both the pre and post tests were made up of the exact same three questions. The first chart addresses the question asked “What is inclusion?” The second chart addresses the question asked “What role, if any, do you play in inclusion?” The third chart addresses the question asked “What does inclusion look like at our school?”

The charts are broken down into five columns. The first column indicates the nature of the student answers. The second column displays the Pretest results. The third column displays the post test results. The fourth and fifth columns make use of arrows to express the expectations held and the results obtained. As can be seen, most of the expectations had the desired results.

What is inclusion?	SEVENTH GRADE PRETESTS	SEVENTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what the definition of inclusion was	132 of 193 students 68.4%	14 of 157 students 8.9%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was a term related to Special Education	0 of 193 students 0%	2 of 157 students 1.3%	INCREASE OR REMAIN THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Used the word “include” to define inclusion	19 of 193 students 9.8%	93 of 157 students 59.2%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “grouping” or “togetherness” idea to define inclusion	5 of 193 students 2.6%	13 of 157 students 8.3%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “helping” or “taking care of” idea to define inclusion	5 of 193 students 2.6%	23 of 157 students 14.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of a “mix” or different peoples to define inclusion	0 of 193 students 0.0%	6 of 157 students 3.8%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of the student body as a whole to define inclusion	0 of 193 students 0.0%	1 of 157 students 0.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Drama	1 of 193 students 0.5%	1 of 157 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Language Arts	19 of 193 students 9.8%	2 of 157 students 1.3%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was a term with negative connotations	3 of 193 students 1.6%	0 of 157 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Gave random responses that didn’t fit any category	10 of 193 students 5.2%	2 of 157 students 1.3%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓

What role do you play in inclusion?	SEVENTH GRADE PRE TESTS	SEVENTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea of what role they each play in inclusion.	141 of 193 students 73.1%	27 of 157 students 17.2%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt they play no role at all in inclusion	2 of 193 students 1.0%	12 of 157 students 7.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to Special Education	0 of 193 students 0.0%	2 of 157 students 1.3%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt they played a role but didn't know why	4 of 193 students 2.1%	5 of 157 students 3.2%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to helping others	3 of 193 students 1.6%	21 of 157 students 13.4%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to getting along, including all and accepting differences	20 of 193 students 10.4%	75 of 157 students 47.8%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to various different roles	4 of 193 students 2.1%	8 of 157 students 5.1%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to the Drama class	3 of 193 students 1.6%	1 of 157 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role was related to the Language Arts class	2 of 193 students 1.0%	0 of 157 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role had a negative connotation to it	2 of 193 students 1.0%	0 of 157 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Random response that didn't fit any category	12 of 19 students 6.2%	6 of 157 students 3.8%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓

What does inclusion look like?	SEVENTH GRADE PRETESTS	SEVENTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what inclusion looked like at our school	140 of 193 students 72.5%	36 of 157 students 23.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was non existent at our school	0 of 193 students 0.0%	3 of 157 students 2.0%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school was something related to Special Education	0 of 193 students 0.0%	14 of 157 students 9.0%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to the lunch room	0 of 193 students 0.0%	1 of 157 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to including, helping and working cooperatively	30 of 193 students 15.5%	78 of 157 students 49.7%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Drama	0 of 193 students 0.0%	0 of 157 students 0.0%	STAY THE SAME ↔	STAYED THE SAME ↔
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Language Arts	3 of 193 students 1.6%	1 of 157 students 0.6%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Had mixed feelings about what inclusion looked like at our school	4 of 193 students 2.1%	12 of 157 students 7.6%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something with a negative connotation	6 of 193 students 3.1%	8 of 157 students 5.1%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑

Gave random responses that didn't fit any category as to how inclusion looked at our school	10 of 193 students 5.2%	4 of 157 students 2.5%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
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Breakdown of 8th grade Pre and Post tests:

The results found for the eighth grader were very similar to those found with the sixth and seventh graders. There was not a seeming higher understanding even though they were a couple of years ahead of those peers. The following three charts indicate the results found from the Pre and the Post tests that were given out to all of the eighth graders in the school. 204 eighth graders took the pretest and 142 took the post test.

Both the pre and post tests were made up of the exact same three questions. The first chart addresses the question asked “What is inclusion?” The second chart addresses the question asked “What role, if any, do you play in inclusion?” The third chart addresses the question asked “What does inclusion look like at our school?”

The charts are broken down into five columns. The first column indicates the nature of the student answers. The second column displays the pretest results. The third column displays the post test results. The fourth and fifth columns make use of arrows to express the expectations held and the results obtained. As can be seen, most of the expectations had the desired results.

What is inclusion?	EIGHTH GRADE PRE TESTS	EIGHTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what the definition of inclusion was	165 of 204 students 80.9%	19 of 142 students 13.4%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was a term related to Special Education	1 of 204 students 0.5%	2 of 142 students 1.4%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Used the word “include” to define inclusion	22 of 204 students 10.8%	84 of 142 students 59.2%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “grouping” or “togetherness” idea to define inclusion	4 of 204 students 2.0%	11 of 142 students 7.7%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used “helping” or “taking care of” idea to define inclusion	2 of 204 students 1.0%	11 of 142 students 7.7%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of a “mix” or different peoples to define inclusion	1 of 204 students 0.5%	4 of 142 students 2.8%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Used the idea of the student body as a whole to define inclusion	0 of 204 students 0.0%	3 of 142 students 2.1%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Drama	5 of 204 students 2.5%	1 of 142 students 0.7%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was somehow related to Language Arts	2 of 204 students 1.0%	2 of 42 students 1.4%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion was a term with negative connotations	2 of 204 students 1.0%	2 of 142 students 1.4%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Gave random responses that didn’t fit any category	0 of 204 students 0.0%	2 of 142 students 1.4%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑

What role do you play in inclusion?	EIGHTH GRADE PRE TESTS	EIGHTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea of what role they each play in inclusion.	171 of 204 students 83.8%	30 of 142 students 21.1%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt they play no role at all in inclusion	3 of 204 students 1.5%	12 of 142 students 8.5%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to Special Education	1 of 204 students 0.5%	1 of 142 students 0.7%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt they played a role but didn't know why	0 of 204 students 0.0%	7 of 142 students 5.0%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to helping others	1 of 204 students 0.5%	18 of 142 students 12.7%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to getting along, including all and accepting differences	23 of 204 students 11.3%	60 of 142 students 42.3%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was somehow related to various different roles	0 of 204 students 0.0%	8 of 142 students 5.6%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt their role was related to the Drama class	0 of 204 students 0.0%	0 of 142 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role was related to the Language Arts class	4 of 204 students 2.0%	1 of 142 students 0.7%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt their role had a negative connotation to it	2 of 204 students 1.0%	1 of 142 students 0.7%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Random response that didn't fit any category	7 of 204 students 3.4%	4 of 142 students 2.8%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓

What does inclusion look like?	EIGHTH GRADE PRETESTS	EIGHTH GRADE POST TESTS	EXPECTATION	RESULTS
Had no idea what inclusion looked like at our school	174 of 204 students 85.3%	31 of 142 students 21.9%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion was non existent at our school	0 of 204 students 0.0%	0 of 142 students 0.0%	STAY THE SAME ↔	STAY THE SAME ↔
Felt inclusion at our school was something related to Special Education	0 of 204 students 0.0%	2 of 142 students 1.4%	INCREASE OR STAY THE SAME ↑ or ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to the lunch room	1 of 204 students 0.5%	0 of 142 students 0.0%	DECREASE ↓	DECREASED ↓
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to including, helping and working cooperatively	15 of 204 students 7.4%	83 of 142 students 58.5%	INCREASE ↑	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Drama	0 of 204 students 0.0%	0 of 142 students 0.0%	STAY THE SAME ↔	STAYED THE SAME ↔
Felt inclusion at our school looked like something related to Language Arts	0 of 204 students 0.0%	0 of 142 students 0.0%	STAY THE SAME ↔	STAYED THE SAME ↔
Had mixed feelings about what inclusion looked like at our school	0 of 204 students 0.0%	14 of 142 students 9.9%	STAY THE SAME ↔	INCREASED ↑
Felt inclusion looked like something with a neg connotation	7 of 204 students 3.4%	5 of 142 students 3.5%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑

Gave random responses that didn't fit any category as to how inclusion looked at our school	7 of 204 students 3.4%	6 of 142 students 4.2%	DECREASE ↓	INCREASED ↑
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Personal Reflection Mid Project

I have enjoyed this project tremendously. Although I have been at my school for five years now, I have gotten a perspective of the students and teachers that I had not had before.

As far as the students are concerned, it is nice to be out on campus and hear students greet me by name. They know who I am and what I teach and where my classroom is. They know that I care about them and what they have to share. It is important to me that students from all over campus know that I am a staff member and that I am not a “stranger” to any of them (Whitaker, 2004).

As far as the teachers are concerned, I had a chance for them to see that while I am teaching the “most special” of levels, I am capable of teaching a lesson and managing a “regular” classroom. In addition, I got to get a “sneak peek” of what each of their classrooms looked like so that I could get ideas from them (Wong, 2005).

I am always looking for subjects that I can cover in my Prospector University classes. Not only did I develop an entire curriculum built around the data I gathered, but this project gave me some ideas as to other curriculums I can build that will address the needs that I saw in district that will help address the interactions in the classroom (Presseisen, 1990).

I enjoy data gathering and charting and so the tabulating of all the responses was “fun work” for me. While it was very time consuming, I can easily say that the excitement of seeing the outcome was worth the work it made.

Seeing the project develop was very self gratifying as a professional. I could clearly see that the students had gotten a better idea of what inclusion meant and how it affected them. Had it not been for this project, this realization on their part would probably not have taken part.

I was a little disappointed that I had to give four reminders to teachers to please turn in their post tests even though I had provided sufficient copies for them and made it as least burdensome as I possibly could. I knew that my having less post tests than pre tests would throw off my numbers a bit. However I figured that relatively, it was not too many that I was missing. It made me reflect on the thought that not only do students have their “own drum beat” (or way of doing things), but so do teachers (Silver, 2005).

I ended this stage of the project excited about the upcoming second contest and curious to see how the teachers would do since the next steps would slowly put more responsibility on them. I was hopeful that they had a bit of “buy in” in the project since the results were indicating that there was a heightened awareness of inclusion and that this could have a positive and unifying effect on the entire student body on campus (Sapon-Shevin, 2007).

Second Art contest

Three months after the first art contest, I put a second Art contest form in each of the staff boxes in the teachers’ lounge.

I then sent out the following e mail:

Good Morning,

I have put a S.P.E.E.R. Art Contest form in each of the teacher boxes in the lounge. This is a follow up to the Inclusion contest we held earlier in the year. Since the first contest was an introduction to inclusion, I felt the need to go to each room and give a little “blurb” on it. However, at this point, if you could mention the contest in your classrooms and just refresh the students’ memories as to what inclusion is, I would appreciate it. Basically the contest is along the same lines. However this time rather than the definition of inclusion being reflected in their artwork, I am wanting to see more of a “personalized” portrait of what their real-life actions are in helping to promote inclusion. The theme of the posters should be **INCLUSION AND SPECIFIC WAYS THAT I PERSONALLY HELP INCLUDE EVERYONE ON MY SCHOOL CAMPUS**

The same prizes apply as last time and I do need all the entries to me by the 22nd. Again, the winning posters will be hung in the office and printed in the newspaper. Everyone will receive certificates. I have the poster board

necessary in my classroom so please let your students know that they are welcome to come anytime during the day to C111, and the poster board will be given to them.

Some teachers might chose to use this project as a community inspiring extra credit assignment. You are welcome to tie this in to your lessons in anyway you choose. The contest is voluntary but the more students that take part in it, the better.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks so much

Mel

Expectations:

My expectations were that I would see a similar outcome as in the first art contest. By having taken the time to cover 100% of the task, teaching and explaining inclusion, I had hoped that the teachers and all other staff, would be open to incorporating the art contest into their classes and lessons. I had used a “scaffolding” approach to the steps which involved more and more of teacher support and less reminders and active involvement on my part. I wasn’t looking so much at what I was doing at this point as to how I was doing it (Whitaker, 2004). Scaffolding seems to fill the need I had to see which direction the teachers took this project.

I prepared poster boards for 100 students with the intention of obtaining more once the first hundred were gone. I also had 100 photocopies ready of the questions that I would need to give out. I thought that 100 participants would be a reasonable number of participants to expect.

I wanted to make the questionnaire as user friendly as possible. Rather than a narrative answer format, as in the first pre and post tests given, I did a multiple choice format. This format was easier and quicker to use (Stiggins, 2001). The students simply had to circle “yes” or “no”. I felt this would help them do it rapidly since they would be picking up the poster board and dropping off the posters between classes and would not have much time to write out their answers.

Unexpected occurrences:

There was much less participation than I had even imagined there would be. Teachers and staff did not take an active interest in promoting the contest and did minimal to promote the contest, if anything at all.

Many of the students did not seem to have time to circle their answers for the questionnaires and so they just told me that they would bring it with their posters when they turned them in. In addition, more students came to my room and picked up poster boards than the number of students who returned to turn in actual posters.

Project goals:

Reiterate the importance of inclusion involving everyone on campus.

Have the teachers and all staff feel a part of the project.

Emphasize the importance of how no matter how small an action, every little bit helps to make a campus feel inclusive to all students.

Target group:

The targeted group was the entire student body - all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders – whether in General Education or in Special Education. I made it very clear that was important to me that ALL students be able to participate and that they all feel encouraged to do so (Kluth, 2003). There are 649 students in the school.

Resources:

I used 100 poster boards. The certificates given out, I made from “heavier” paper that I bought at Office Max, The prizes were Walmart Gift Cards which I purchased. The entire cost for this stage of the project came to about \$100.

Assessment:

As students came in to my classroom to collect a poster board, I would also give them a form to fill out which asked the following four multiple choice questions:

1. Students on my campus go out of their way to help and include students of all types.
YES NO
2. I like to help out others on campus when I can.
YES NO
3. These poster contests have worked out really well for me to be more aware of including others.
YES NO
4. These poster contests have made me realize that I play a part in making inclusion happen on my campus.
YES NO

Outcome of Second Art contest:

The second art contest had the following results:

Of the 632 students on campus, 19 students picked up poster boards.

13 students participated in the contest.

9 questionnaires were turned in completed.

Only 3 of the posters contained the theme requested and one was rather “iffy”.

Breakdown of all Second Art contest assessments:

6th grade – 7 forms turned in – 9 posters turned in – 4 with correct theme

1. Students on my campus go out of their way to help and include students of all types.

4 – YES 2 – NO 1- SOMETIMES

2. I like to help out others on campus when I can.

7- YES 0-NO

3. These poster contests have worked out really well for me to be more aware of including others.

4-YES 2-NO 1-I don't know...my friend is a special needs person
and I try to help her when I can.

4. These poster contests have made me realize that I play a part in making inclusion happen on my campus.

6-YES 1-NO

7th grade – 2 forms turned in – 4 posters turned in – 0 with correct theme

1. Students on my campus go out of their way to help and include students of all types.

1 – YES 1 – NO

2. I like to help out others on campus when I can.

2- YES 0-NO

3. These poster contests have worked out really well for me to be more aware of including others.

2-YES 0-NO

4. These poster contests have made me realize that I play a part in making inclusion happen on my campus.

1-YES 1-NO

8th grade – 0 forms turned in - 0 posters turned in

Personal Reflection

It is not hard to imagine that at this point, I was feeling rather discouraged. It was as if all my work and hopes has failed miserably. However the more I thought about the data that I had gathered and the more I looked at how things had gone, I went through an enlightening transition. At about midpoint, I had come to realize that the data could be useful in measuring something that I had come on quite unexpectedly – teacher attitude towards inclusion. The study done fueled my interest in the subject to the point that I began writing a curriculum for a Professional Development class. I was actually excited to see if the final stage of the project would continue along the same path.

Final Staff input

Five months after the very initial steps were taken to promote inclusion awareness via the first Inclusion art contest, I sent out an email to all school staff asking them for their input on the inclusion art contests. There are 71 staff members in our directory (excluding myself). To make sure that it was anonymous and therefore had true reflections, I sent the teacher questionnaire as an attachment and asked that each staff member just print up the form and circle “yes” or “no” and then anonymously put it in my box in the lounge.

This part of my data collection was important so that I could see what the effect of the project had been, not only for the students but the teachers as well. I hoped to get some really interesting comments that I could use for similar future projects.

Staff questionnaires

The following are the yes/no questions that were sent out:

- 1) As a teacher, I go out of my way to help and include students of all types.

YES

NO

- 2) I differentiate my lessons whenever I can.

YES

NO

- 3) These poster contests have worked out really well for me to incorporate the feeling of community in my students.

YES

NO

- 4) These poster contests have made me realize that I play a part in making inclusion happen on my campus.

YES

NO

Unexpected occurrences:

There was far less participation from the staff than I could have imagined.

There were no comments written in as to their thoughts on the subjects.

The responses held negatives (whether by stating “no” or by failing to care enough to bother to fill out a questionnaire).

Expectations:

My expectations were that the entire staff would reflect on inclusion and by that time in the year (the third quarter) they would have a positive view of inclusion and how beneficial it could be for everyone on the campus.

Project goals:

To have teachers reflect on the projects and how much or how little they had actively participated.

To indicate to me how much energy the staff had put into the project.

To indicate to me where we fell short as a district in getting the Inclusion model moving forward.

Target group:

My targeted group was anyone at all among the staff on campus.

Outcome of Teacher Questionnaires:

Of the 71 forms hoped for, I received back 12 answers.

The following is the tabulating of these:

- 1) As a teacher, I go out of my way to help and include students of all types.

15 - YES

0 - NO

- 2) I differentiate my lessons whenever I can.

15 - YES

0 - NO

- 3) These poster contests have worked out really well for me to incorporate the feeling of community in my students.

8 - YES

7 - NO

- 4) These poster contests have made me realize that I play a part in making inclusion happen on my campus.

11 - YES

4 - NO

Personal Reflection Post Project

I found this project to be very insightful. When I did my personal reflection at Mid Project, I was starting to realize something that impacted me more and more as the project progressed. The project had started out focused on the students and inclusion awareness among them. However, my findings gave me a clear picture of just how much more teachers needed to be aware of inclusion and see it as an important part of the school process. By the end of the project, there was no doubt in my mind that the data I had gathered supported the fact that if teachers didn't care, neither would the students (Wong, 2005).

For my project, I used a mixture of task analysis and scaffolding. In my classroom, we regularly use both. Staff begins by introducing an activity using hand over hand guidance and then slowly giving less and less direct assistance until the student is capable of doing the activity on his/her own. By using this approach, the hope is that the student eventually will independently be able to carry out the activity. I used this approach in the project in regards to how much assistance I gave to the teachers and students at each single step of the project (whether it was the questionnaires or the actual contest itself) and how much responsibility I left in each of their hands.

This Inclusion project started with my doing absolutely everything. I went to the class, defined "Inclusion", shared samples, gave out pretests, collected pretests and strongly encouraged the students to participate in the contest. The results were that I had 100% of the student body present in those four days, take the pretests and a relatively good percentage of the students participate in the contest.

The following step in my project was the post test. For this step, I provided all the copies the teachers needed for each of their classrooms, put it directly in their boxes, gave them step by step directions of how I needed them to have the post tests filled out and where to put them and by what date. I also sent out four encouraging reminder e mails so that they would please return them to me for data

gathering. Not only was the deadline not met, but I only received about three fourths of what I should have, which indicated that various teachers did not take the minutes necessary to give students the post test at all.

The following step was the second art contest. For this stage, I only gave each teacher one form for them to post in their classroom and the responsibility of promoting the contest. They were to share the contest rules and encourage the students to participate. I did not send out emails asking them to please promote the contest. I did not emphasize the theme nor the deadlines. The results were that hardly anyone bothered to participate in the contest. Of the 13 students that participated, only 4 had the subject of the theme in their artwork.

The last step in the project was one where I simply sent out the e mail to get the teachers' input with the questions in an attachment. They were to open the attachment, print up the questions, answer them and anonymously put them in my box. Of the entire staff, I received a handful of feedback forms.

The results of the project indicated to me that the effort of making inclusion be part of a school not only has to be emphasized with the students, but first we must have teachers realize how important it is to have them "on board" as well. They are basically the ones that will make it happen positively or not. If the teachers are not supportive of inclusion, the students will not care or be bothered either and really who could blame them?

Negative variables affecting results

There were various negative variables which I found affected the results of this project.

One of the variables that negatively affected the project was that it was not obligatory. When I went around to the classes to share the project with the students, at the end of my little presentation, I would ask if there were any questions. The very first question that someone would ask in the class was "Do we

have to do it?” At first, I was thrown back by this question. However after a couple of classes, my answer consisted of something to the effect that “since inclusion includes you, it would be too bad if you excluded yourself from this project. So while it is not obligatory, it would be awesome if you participated”. My answer was based on Debbie Silver’s thought that a “contemplative teacher will foster a feeling of community” (Silver, 2005, p.54).

Another negative variable was whether a student felt he or she was creative or not. Although I had taken this into consideration and made sure in every class to emphasize that I was not an art teacher and therefore their art was not what was being judged, I feel that some students that are not artistic may have discouraged themselves from participating. Since the judging would be based on their message about inclusion and not their art, I had 3 samples that were from very simple art to more complex art and used a variety of art means. These samples were to help the students visualize what might be something they could turn in (Engelmann, 1997).

An additional variable that negatively affected the results was that the students didn’t necessarily know me. Being a self contained classroom teacher, I do not get out much. The ones that had seen me around campus, associated me with the “very special” class and since no one wants to be “that” special, I think that a bit of fear was present as to whether inclusion meant dealing with my level of students (Canfield, 2007).

The last negative variable that I found was the biggest. This was no “buy in” from the majority of the teachers. Although my presentation was no longer than 12 to 15 minutes, some teachers made it very clear that my presence was interrupting their lesson. The teachers that actually gave the students credit (extra or otherwise) for participating or who tied the poster in to their lesson plans, had much more interest put forth by their students (Wong, 2005).

Positive variables affecting results

While there were negative variable, there were some positive variables as well.

One positive variable was that I had the back up and permission of the administration to carry out this project. Not only did I have their authorization to go to the classrooms and temporarily interrupt the classroom instruction, but they also supported the project in a practical way. They provided about 50% of the manila folders that I needed, they put the contest in the newsletter, they had the winning posters displayed in the office, they allowed me to give each participating student a Participation Award certificate at the Awards ceremony and the principal came to my room to pose with the winners of the contest (Henley, 2004).

Another positive variable was that the prizes offered were relatively generous for the area the school is in. Since the gift cards were to Walmart, students knew they would be able to purchase whatever they wanted with their prizes. Walmart is the biggest shopping place in the city of Apache Junction and students go there all the time.

An additional positive variable was that each and every student knew they would be given public recognition for participating. The certificates were given out in a ceremony in front of their peers and teachers. When they received their certificates, I shook hands with every single one of them and thanked them for their efforts and caring.

The biggest positive variable and the one I was most thankful for were those teachers who actually took the time to incorporate the project into their curriculum and encouraged their students to participate. One of the teachers that particularly stands out, was the band teacher who made the analogy of how as an instrument player, one is not much. But when you put all the instrument players together, you form a band and that band can perform beautiful melodies. He tied this in to the student body and how one student alone wasn't much but that when he or she got together with the others, they formed the

student body that had to work together to make the campus successful. This analogy was very easy for the band members to understand and relate to.

I think that these positive variables helped the project to be more successful than it might have been otherwise.

Impact on target group

The biggest impact of the SPEER was basically that there was more awareness among the students of what inclusion actually was and how it affected them. While initially the majority did not know even what the word meant, by the time the post test came along, it was clear that they realized that the word inclusion was related to the word “include” and that they were all a part of it simply for the fact that they attended an inclusive school.

An impact that stood out after all the tabulating was that the number of percentages of responses that reached their expectation was a good one. Many percentage numbers were expected to rise and they did. Many percentage numbers were expected to lower and they did. This was very encouraging to see and it made the entire effort worth the work behind it.

An unexpected impact was the exposure that this contest brought with it. Because I and some of my Para Professionals (to assist me) had visited every single classroom and spoken to every single class, students now knew us and were more familiar with what we do. My Para Professionals had experienced how now and again throughout the school year, students would jump up during their gathering of lunch trays or running errands and offer to help. We also don't get some of the “stares” that we used to get on

campus and that come with the territory when teaching students who have severe disabilities which require the use of wheelchairs or safety vests and helmets (Canfield, 2007).

An impact which I had not foreseen was the positive peer pressure brought on after my presentation in each classroom. When I would get the inevitable question of “do we have to do it?” other students would make comments to this peer. Some comments included “that’s rude”, “why’d you ask that?” or “just do it”. Others would get like a blank stare like they really wanted to know if they “had to do it” but they didn’t feel comfortable asking. They seemed relieved that their peer had asked this question and they didn’t have to (Presseisen, 1990).

An additional impact on the target group was the fact that this contest was not obligatory and it seemed to surprise them. They were given the option to go that extra mile and take interest in their school simply out of their personal drive and caring. They were not obligated to participate and although I strongly encouraged them to do so, their final decision was respected. With so much testing going on and assignments going on, it was a relief to many students that this was not another obligatory task being imposed on them.

An impact that I enjoyed seeing was when the students came to the realization that inclusion wasn’t only something for Special Education teachers and students to be concerned with. It affected everyone on campus and could easily change the atmosphere of the school for the better (Kluth, 2003). Their awareness of this fact was priceless and set the stage for other such future activities.

Implications for future teaching

The implications that stood out to me throughout this project were that while inclusion is being incorporated into schools and professional development classes, there is still a lot of reservation and resentment in regards to teachers differentiating instruction so as to make inclusion successful. We must continue to stress the importance of how important inclusion is and what positive impacts it can make (Sapon-Shevin, 2007).

Furthermore, the main focus seems to be on Special Education staff. However those who are mostly needing the training are the General Education staff. This fact needs to be highly stressed by principals who have the power and authorization to make certain classes obligatory.

In line with that last thought, I realized that there is a need for even more training in inclusion. As an “off shoot” of this project, I created a curriculum called ‘Mad About Inclusion ‘. My curriculum makes use of this study and all the data that I gathered from it.

This project made me see that I need to address inclusion with two different points of view in mind. One being that some people are “mad” about inclusion as in they are happy and excited to experiment and get ideas to implement in their classroom. The other point of view is that some people are “mad” about inclusion in that they are angry and resentful that they have to include students in their classroom that in the past they had not had to include. Hence, the play on words with the title of my class. I find there is a strong “pulling” towards each of these sides in my district. Some teachers are more vocal about it while others don’t say much but don’t practice differentiation either. The ones that are embracing inclusion stand out from the others.

For my future teaching, I saw the need to involve practical ideas and formats that can be used in the classroom. Specific things that teachers can use and resort to when they are needing to address certain aspects that involve including everyone (Wong, 2005).

Most importantly, I realize more so than ever, that inclusion is in its early stages of implementation and that every day, we are learning how to better implement inclusion in our schools. We are taking small steps but at least we are moving in the right direction.

Mad About Inclusion

Six months to the date the first inclusion art contest was begun, I taught the first of four sessions of my “Mad About Inclusion” curriculum. I taught this class through Prospecter University. I was located in a classroom at the High School with some of the class with me. The rest of the class was at the library at a Middle school participating via tele conference equipment. There was no cap put on the number of attendees possible. The findings from this Art Contest and the effort and interest put forth on the part of the students, as well as the staff, was a key component to the curriculum I wrote for this class.

The interest shown towards this class by the entire district, mirrored the interest displayed by the middle school that had been the participant in the research. There were only eight people that attended. Six of them were Special Education teachers and two of them were General Education teachers. There was not one person from an administrative position nor anyone that could be termed an “inclusion teacher”.

FINAL CONCLUSION

My district has a very long way to go before they can say that Inclusion is being handled successfully in our schools. I will here quote Mara Sapon-Shevin who sums up my findings with the perfect words and expressions, “Inclusion without resources, without support, without teacher preparation time, without commitment, without a vision statement, without restructuring, without staff development, WON’T WORK” (Sapon-Shevin, 2007, p.64).

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