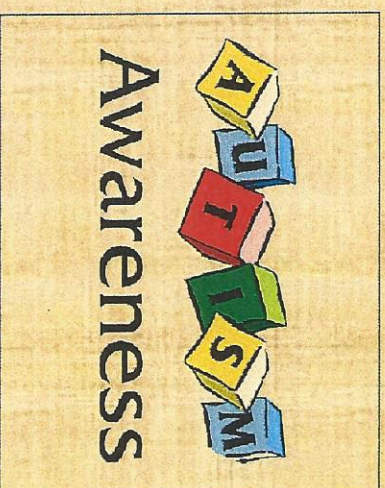


The Benefits Of Making A Classroom More Inclusive For Autistic Students.

Introduction

The purpose of this poster is to discuss the benefits of inclusivity of Autistic students in a mainstream classroom. It is intended to show how a formal classroom setting can be adapted to suit the needs of students on the autistic spectrum as well as unaffected students. The use of teaching methods and approaches will be investigated. The research should show how the inclusion of autistic students in a formal class can benefit all members of the educational community. Should educators see autistics in schools as a crisis or a challenge?



"Some teachers just have the knack for working with autistic children. Other teachers do not have it."
(Dr Temple Grandin, 2015)

Top Tips for Structuring Your Classroom.

With time and thought a classroom can easily be re structured to include autistic students. An excellent idea is to have separate areas for the different types of work, (independent work, group work, maths, english, etc.).

Try dividing the room visually. This aids the concentration of the autistic student and can prevent them from becoming distracted. Where moving furniture might be a problem use different coloured tape on the floor to designate certain areas without having to disrupt the whole classroom.

Where resources are scarce you need to be creative. 'You can also use desks as dividers, plastic dividers, file cabinets and tables.' (Sasha, 2012)

Structure the layout of the room. When students know where their work areas are they can function at a better level. Do not alter the class layout without first discussing it with the student. Ensure that other students respect the autistic person's need to sit in the same seat. Try not to suddenly introduce activities that involve moving around a classroom.

It can also be a good practise to use a buddy system where learners have a named person that they can approach with any concern. This is an excellent tool to introduce a supportive environment in the classroom. Other learners are given the opportunity to interact with autistic classmates and learn how to manage what can be considered to be inappropriate behaviours.

In conclusion, with some research and preparation it is possible to create a classroom that is inclusive for autistic students. Staff need to embrace the challenges and understand that it is best NOT to rely on one approach to education.

- Inclusion leads to all students and staff being valued equally.
- This in turn reduces the risk of exclusion. According to the National Autistic Society, 1 in 5 children have been excluded from school, many more than once.
- Inclusion should teach members of a school community to see the differences between students as resources to support learning, rather than problems to be overcome
- Students on the Autistic spectrum have much to offer. They are often extremely intelligent and creative. Albert Einstein and Vincent Van Gogh were considered to have been autistic.
- Autistic students are caring and will have great empathy for others, they make great doctors and nurses.
- Having autistic students in the classroom alongside other main stream students can benefit both groups. 40% of AS children have been bullied in school. (National Autistic Society).
- By bringing different groups together educators should succeed in preventing students from being bullied and becoming bullies.
- Inclusion within schools is a way of educating young people to be more tolerant of each other.

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