

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION OVER THE  
YEARS: WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM  
THE PAST TO HELP BUILD AND  
STRENGTHEN INCLUSION IN OUR  
SCHOOLS

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- ▶ As a historian of education, I look to the past to learn how educational theory and practice have become what they are today. The history of the idea of “inclusive education” is long and complicated. This discussion is based on events in the United States, but I believe that most of this history is applicable to other nations and school systems as well.

**FORWARD**




- ▶ 1600 – 1800: Formal schooling becomes more available to children beyond the elite class (royalty, ministry, professionals). Use of vernacular languages make school books more accessible.
- ▶ 1800 – 1920: Expansion of *compulsory education*: more and more students of all backgrounds are required to attend school
- ▶ 1890 - 1960: Development of a wide variety of segregated settings serving different types of students: race/ethnicity, gender, immigrant status, disability, English language learners

## STEPS TOWARD GREATER INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

- ▶ 1954: Brown vs. Board of Education: Separate facilities for school children are “inherently unequal.”
- ▶ 1960s: Movement toward greater racial and ethnic integration in schools; first efforts to include children with disabilities in regular classrooms (*mainstreaming*)
- ▶ 1970s – 1990s: Inclusion refers specifically to special education – education for students with disabilities – in discussing the movement toward including children with special needs in regular classrooms to the maximum extent possible. Inclusion and Full Inclusion become key terms in educational policy and practice

## **MOVEMENT TOWARD INCLUSION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

- ▶ Over the past two decades, inclusive education has become a much broader and more comprehensive concept:
  - ▶ Multicultural education
  - ▶ Multilingual education
  - ▶ Culturally responsive teaching
  - ▶ International education
  - ▶ Migrants/refugees
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- ▶ The concept of inclusive education is constantly changing and constantly expanding
- ▶ An educational institution must establish clear parameters or boundaries; to ensure all involved know and understand what inclusive education means to them



- ▶ Inclusion must be understood as having *academic, curricular, and interpersonal skills* that need to be learned by teachers and students
- ▶ At its heart, inclusive education is a humane practice: to be truly included in a classroom is to be welcome, to feel that you belong, that you are valued and celebrated for who you are – in addition to receiving the academic support needed, regardless of your characteristics
- ▶ Segregation of students from other students for any reason is contrary to the principle of inclusive education. And that is what makes building an inclusive educational institution is so challenging.

## THE HOLISTIC NATURE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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**PALDIES!! THANK YOU!!**

