

ICLife: Tools for inclusion

How to make life on a campus for higher education more inclusive.

Tool : Involving PID in teaching activities



Funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

What's in a name?

In this section we like to give advice on organizing lessons that involve people with intellectual disabilities, for example as 'life experts'. If well organized, these lessons have an added value for both regular students and people with intellectual disabilities.

Please consider the following: structural work in advance and during preparation, preparing classes, teaching and evaluation after teaching.

Experiencing and doing things together is paramount in the cooperation between teacher and co-teacher, enrolled university students and visiting students with an intellectual disability.

Target group

People with an intellectual disability

Psychologically, education means more confidence and self-assurance for people with intellectual disabilities. Regarding the socio-communicative part we can conclude that people with an intellectual disability who studied have more positive relationships towards others, make contact more easily and -in the end -have a lot more friends afterwards. Participating at a university's campus means widening their horizons with a range of interests, hobbies, access to new networks and broadening the look on their living environments.

The regular students

For the regular students helping someone with an intellectual disability is definitely an added value. It brings responsibility, self-confidence and more. Regular students happen to close themselves off less from other communities

and open up more to new cultures when they participate in Inclusive Adult Education.



What's needed?

Structural work in advance

- Ensure that there is a guided map of the school building, pictorial guide, classrooms and meeting rooms marked with numbers, toilets marked etc.;
- Ensure resources (appropriations/financing, materials, tools, staff, working hours);
- Check learning support services (guiding and tutoring, restaurant services, personal assistance in studies and transportation services if needed, insurance)
- Ensure that learning environments and public places are both socially and physically accessible (facilities, equipment).
- Cooperation between teachers and the head of degree program is very important when involving PID in teaching activities ;

- Write open and clarify the principles and plan as a part of curriculum in which studies and themes and how PID-students will study with degree students (purpose, benefits for both students, clear goals, content etc.) For example, it can be learning from each other, study credits for degree students, theoretical and experience-based knowledge combination;
- Design a personal study plan per PID with his/her tutorial teacher: education history, study skills, studying possibilities, learning goals, interests e.g. optional courses, interests and possible themes of co-teaching;
- Create partnerships with advocacy organisations and service providers supporting the philosophy of expert by experience and considers it indispensable for knowledge creation and knowledge validation;
- Consider several partnership concepts:
 - o as co-lecturer in a tandem concept which comprises long-term cooperation with one co-teacher
 - o as co-lecturer in a tandem concept which comprises long-term cooperation with several co-teachers who act alternately as co-teacher
 - o as guest lecturer which comprises occasional commitment
 - o people with an intellectual disability as student together with enrolled university students in the classroom (essentially in the classroom)
 - o people with an intellectual disability as co-worker in a team together with enrolled university students outside the classroom (essentially outside the classroom).
- The lesson should be divided into small steps. This makes the program and the material to be learned more organized. This is to the benefit of the students, co-teacher and teacher. Besides, it prevents the teacher from unintentionally taking away tasks from the co-teacher.
- Ensure that there is always a section in the program where your co-teacher is entirely in the lead. That can be something very small, like welcoming everyone, opening class, closing class, the program of the class, leading an exercise.
- Together you decide which topics will be discussed. You should check to what extent this works with the co-teacher. Nevertheless, the starting point is 'meaningful participation' of the co-teacher. Beware of the lurking dangers of tokenism.
- Determine which level of participation of the co-lecturer is desirable and feasible. For example: based on Sherry R. Arnstein, 1969:
 - o expert by experience power: co-teacher control, delegated power, partnership
 - o validation: experience-based knowledge is recognized and appreciated. It complements, counter argues or validates scientific knowledge. It is represented by experts by experience.
 - o tokenism: placation, consultation, informing
 - o nonparticipation: therapy, manipulation

Preparing classes

Prepare your classes in cooperation with the person with an intellectual disability. Keep in mind that class preparation may take longer than you are used to.

- Plan at least two meetings to prepare the classes: one well in advance (two weeks) and one shortly before (one day in advance or at the same day) class starts. Purpose of the meeting shortly before class starts is to review the content and the agreements made.
- Write a lesson plan which includes learning goals, outline of the content, exercises and division of tasks (who does the opening, who explains the outline of the class meeting, who will lead which exercises, who explains what theory et cetera).



Teaching a class

It is very important to start from the personal life experiences of the co-teacher.

- For some classes you may need several co-teachers as the personal life experiences are limited; they do not cover all topics you may wish to address.

- Take time and give space to build a good working relationship between teacher and co-teacher, between students and co-teacher and between enrolled university students and visiting students from outside the university. A few things to keep in mind while building a good working relationship:

- the vulnerability of people with an intellectual disability (cognitive, social, emotional)
 - create a safe classroom environment for all participants
 - be aware of the communication skills you need to develop a successful working relationship with people with an intellectual disability.
- Speak slowly and take pauses. Students and the co-teacher need reflection time.
- Use as many visualizations as possible (videos, photos, drawings, props, drama techniques).
- Take care for the positioning of the teacher: step backwards to give your co-teacher the opportunity to take the lead.
- Do not solely talk during the lessons.
- Make the lessons interactive for example:
- use active learning activities and exercises that require moving your body (walking around).
 - use simple ice-breakers and energizers such as: line up, countdown, be unique, lie to me.
 - scaling questions. On a scale of zero to ten, zero meaning 'not fun at all' and ten meaning 'outrageous, so funny, couldn't stop laughing' where you stand? You can create many similar scaling questions all to your own liking and depending on the audience you have or the topics you have been discussing.
 - use interviewing as an active learning activity: students interview each other, you can do interviewing activities inside the classroom but also outside. You can let the students make a short stroll on campus while interviewing each other.

Evaluation after teaching a class

Frequent evaluation is appropriate: after each class always evaluate the collaboration between teacher and co-teacher. In case of a course program you can organize a midterm evaluation and an evaluation after the course has been completed. The overall evaluation should be organized in presence of students, teacher and co-teacher.

Budget

These activities do not have to cost a lot of money. After all, it is integrated into the existing curriculum. Since teachers are already paid, only the person with a mental disability will receive attention. Depending on the activity, this can be a fee as a guest speaker or an attention in the form of a voucher, a flower or a bottle of wine.



Who gets what out of it?

Regular students gain awareness of the power relationship they have with service users i.e. persons with intellectual disabilities. Students attain a lived experience that service users have more competences. Because of the role of teacher and collaboration with the co-teacher, students gain insights into their own attitude and behavior as a professional related to the service user. Furthermore, students get a better understanding of comprehensive concepts such as power, inclusion, equality, equal worth of persons, empowerment, and emancipation.

The benefits expressed by the experts by experience comprised: feeling acknowledged, feeling competent, being proud, experiencing new social valued roles i.e. student, co-researcher, team member. It open new perspectives, they discover what they are good in, some experts by experiences wish to continue doing research, wanted to become a co-teacher in the future. In sum, the result of the teaching activities encompasses empowerment of person with mild intellectual disability.