



ORGANIZING STUDENTS' LEARNING AND PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS A METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM

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Abstract

The organization of students' learning and practical activities is one of the central methodological challenges of contemporary inclusive education. The physical placement of learners with different educational needs in the same classroom does not in itself guarantee meaningful participation, equal access to learning, or successful acquisition of practical competencies. Effective inclusion requires a pedagogically designed learning environment in which students with different abilities, learning rates, communication styles, sensory characteristics, and educational needs can participate in common activities while receiving appropriate levels of support. This article examines the methodological foundations for organizing learning and practical activities in inclusive classrooms and identifies the major pedagogical barriers that limit active student participation.

Keywords: Inclusive education, learning activity, practical activity, inclusive pedagogy, learner participation, differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, scaffolding, collaborative learning, formative assessment.

Introduction

Inclusive education has become one of the fundamental directions of contemporary educational development. Its central idea is that every learner, regardless of disability, developmental characteristics, social background, language, individual learning pace, or other differences, should have equitable opportunities to access quality education and participate meaningfully in the



educational process. UNESCO emphasizes that learner diversity should be considered a resource rather than a problem and that educational systems should respond flexibly to differences among learners (UNESCO, 2020).

However, the implementation of inclusive education cannot be reduced to the physical placement of students with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms. The methodological essence of inclusion concerns the extent to which every student can understand instructional content, interact with learning materials, participate in common activities, communicate with peers and teachers, perform practical tasks, and demonstrate learning outcomes.

This distinction is particularly important because contemporary research indicates that students may be formally present in an inclusive classroom while remaining pedagogically or communicatively excluded. For example, research involving deaf and hard-of-hearing learners demonstrates that restricted communication access can reduce classroom participation, increase social isolation, and lead to withdrawal from learning activities. Conversely, accessible and multimodal learning environments are associated with more positive participation experiences (Büyükköse et al., 2026).

Consequently, one of the major questions of inclusive pedagogy is not simply **where a learner is educated**, but **how the learner participates in educational activity**.

Learning and practical activity has a particularly important role in this process. Through practical action, learners do not merely reproduce theoretical information; they manipulate objects, solve problems, communicate, make decisions, collaborate with peers, evaluate results, and transfer acquired knowledge to new situations. Therefore, the organization of learning and practical activities represents an important mechanism connecting academic knowledge with functional competence.

At the same time, heterogeneous inclusive classrooms create significant methodological challenges for teachers. Students may differ considerably in prior knowledge, cognitive development, sensory and motor abilities, communication skills, attention, motivation, learning pace, and degree of independence. A uniform task presented in a uniform way may therefore be accessible to some students while creating significant barriers for others.



UNESCO's approach to inclusive education stresses that educational systems should adapt to learners rather than expect all learners to adapt to a standardized educational model. From this perspective, methodological adaptation does not mean simplifying education indiscriminately. Instead, it requires preserving common educational objectives while providing different pathways for students to achieve them.

Thus, the central methodological problem can be formulated as follows: **How can common learning and practical activities be organized so that students with diverse educational needs participate actively, achieve meaningful learning outcomes, and progressively develop independence without being separated from the common educational process?**

The purpose of this study is to theoretically substantiate the methodological foundations for organizing students' learning and practical activities in inclusive education and to identify effective pedagogical mechanisms for ensuring accessibility, participation, interaction, and independence.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What methodological barriers restrict students' participation in learning and practical activities in inclusive classrooms?
2. Which pedagogical approaches can increase accessibility and meaningful participation?
3. How should learning and practical activities be structured to accommodate learner variability while maintaining common educational goals?
4. What methodological sequence can support the transition from assisted activity to independent practical performance?

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a theoretical and analytical research design. The methodological framework was based on the principles of inclusive pedagogy, learner-centered education, Universal Design for Learning, differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and scaffolded learning.

The following research methods were used: theoretical analysis of pedagogical and methodological literature; comparative analysis of contemporary approaches to inclusive instruction; synthesis and systematization of pedagogical principles;



conceptual modeling; and interpretation of recent research findings concerning learner participation and instructional accessibility.

Particular attention was given to international frameworks and contemporary studies addressing inclusion, participation, differentiation, accessibility, and practical engagement. UNESCO's conceptualization of inclusion was used as a general framework, while the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines 3.0 provided methodological principles concerning engagement, representation, action, and expression.

In analyzing learning and practical activities, five interrelated methodological dimensions were identified: accessibility → differentiation → participation → reflection → independence. These dimensions were subsequently used to develop a methodological sequence for inclusive learning and practical activity.

3. Results

The analysis indicates that meaningful inclusion can be understood through three interconnected dimensions: access to learning → active participation → educational progress.

Access refers to a learner's ability to perceive, understand, and interact with educational content. Participation concerns active involvement in individual, pair, group, and whole-class activities. Progress refers to observable development in knowledge, skills, strategies, communication, and independence.

From this perspective, physical presence alone cannot be regarded as a sufficient indicator of inclusion. A student may sit in the same classroom as peers but remain excluded from the actual learning process if the task is inaccessible, instructions are incomprehensible, required responses are incompatible with the learner's abilities, or excessive adult assistance prevents independent engagement.

Therefore, the methodological organization of learning and practical activities should transform the learner from a passive recipient of assistance into an active participant in educational activity.



The analysis identified several recurring barriers.

The first is standardization of learning tasks. Traditional teaching frequently requires all learners to complete identical tasks using the same materials, within the same period, and through the same response format. Such uniformity may contradict the variability inherent in inclusive classrooms.

The second barrier is insufficient differentiation. Differentiation does not imply creating an entirely separate curriculum for every student. Rather, it involves adapting task complexity, amount of support, learning materials, response formats, time, grouping, and expected level of independence while preserving the central learning objective.

Recent evidence supports the importance of this approach. A 2026 systematic review and meta-analysis covering 45 controlled studies and 16,773 learners reported a positive average effect of differentiated instruction, although the authors emphasized that outcomes varied substantially according to context and implementation conditions. This suggests that differentiation should be understood as a strategically designed process rather than a mechanical collection of simplified tasks.

The third barrier concerns limited opportunities for action and expression. Some students may understand educational content but experience difficulty demonstrating knowledge through conventional written or oral formats. UDL Guidelines 3.0 therefore recommend providing multiple means of action and expression and flexible ways of interacting with materials.

The fourth barrier is over-assistance. Excessive teacher or assistant support may enable task completion while simultaneously reducing student agency. When adults perform substantial parts of an activity for a learner, the visible result may appear successful even though independent competence has not developed.



3.1. Differentiation of Learning and Practical Tasks

The analysis suggests that differentiation in an inclusive classroom should occur at several levels.

Dimension	Methodological adaptation	Expected outcome
Content	Different levels or forms of presenting information	Accessible understanding
Process	Individual, pair, group, visual, tactile, verbal or practical activity	Active participation
Task	Different levels of complexity and scaffolding	Achievable challenge
Time	Flexible task completion time	Reduced unnecessary barriers
Support	Verbal, visual, gestural, peer or technological assistance	Successful task performance
Product	Different ways of demonstrating learning	Equitable assessment
Independence	Gradual reduction of external support	Learner autonomy

This approach changes the teacher's methodological question from “Can this learner complete the standard task?” to “What conditions will enable this learner to participate meaningfully in achieving the common learning goal?”

Such a shift is fundamental to inclusive pedagogy.

4. Discussion

The results of the theoretical analysis demonstrate that organizing learning and practical activities in inclusive education is a complex methodological issue rather than a simple matter of adapting individual tasks.

A fundamental methodological contradiction exists between the common educational goal and the diversity of learners' pathways toward that goal. Traditional instruction often attempts to resolve this contradiction by standardizing teaching. Inclusive pedagogy requires a different solution: maintaining meaningful common goals while diversifying the means of access, participation, performance, and assessment.

This interpretation corresponds closely with contemporary UDL principles. CAST (2024) argues that learners differ in how they engage with learning, perceive information, interact with environments, and express knowledge.



Consequently, no single mode of representation or expression can be optimal for every learner.

This has an important implication for inclusive methodology: adaptation should be planned before failure occurs rather than introduced only after a learner fails to perform a conventional task.

A second important issue concerns the relationship between participation and independence. Providing assistance is necessary in inclusive classrooms, but assistance should function as a bridge toward autonomy. Permanent dependence on adult prompts may create a form of pedagogical exclusion even when a learner appears actively engaged.

Therefore, the teacher needs to regulate the amount and type of support continuously. The third issue concerns assessment. Traditional outcome-based assessment may not adequately capture progress in inclusive practical activities. Two students may produce the same final result while requiring completely different levels of support. Conversely, a student may produce an imperfect product but demonstrate substantial progress in planning, communication, strategy use, or independent performance.

Inclusive formative assessment should therefore consider at least four indicators: **accuracy of performance, degree of participation, level of required support, and independence/transfer.**

The fourth issue is the social dimension of learning. Contemporary evidence on learner participation emphasizes that inclusion includes socio-emotional participation, learner voice, belonging, and meaningful involvement in educational decision-making. Therefore, practical activity should simultaneously function as a means of academic learning and social participation.

Finally, differentiated instruction should not become a mechanism for permanently categorizing learners as “strong” and “weak.” Flexible grouping and differentiated support should respond to specific learning objectives and changing learner needs. Recent meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that differentiation can be beneficial, but its effects are strongly dependent on context, learner characteristics, and quality of implementation.



Thus, effective inclusive methodology requires an integrated combination of accessibility, differentiation, collaboration, scaffolding, formative assessment, and learner agency.

5. Conclusion

The organization of students' learning and practical activities represents one of the key methodological problems of inclusive education. Effective inclusion cannot be achieved through physical placement alone. It requires pedagogical conditions that enable every learner to access educational content, participate actively, interact with peers, perform meaningful practical actions, demonstrate learning through accessible forms, and progressively develop independence.

The analysis shows that a rigid and standardized organization of instruction creates barriers in heterogeneous classrooms. In contrast, differentiated tasks, Universal Design for Learning, multimodal materials, collaborative activities, flexible response formats, scaffolded support, assistive technologies, and formative assessment create conditions for meaningful participation.

The proposed methodological sequence — diagnostic orientation, adaptive instructional design, active participation, reflective assessment, and independence-transfer — provides a conceptual framework for organizing learning and practical activities in inclusive classrooms.

Accordingly, the effectiveness of inclusive education should be assessed not merely by whether a student is present in a mainstream classroom, but by whether the student understands, participates, acts, communicates, creates, reflects, and gradually becomes more independent.

Future empirical research should examine the effectiveness of the proposed methodological sequence across different age groups and categories of special educational needs and develop measurable indicators for evaluating accessibility, participation, support intensity, practical competence, and independent transfer.



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