

ABSTRACT

For many years, students with disabilities in schools across North America have been integrated and educated with their peers in regular classrooms (Winzer, 2006). The ultimate goal of inclusion is that all students, including those who have disabilities, feel fully a part of the life of the classroom and school, academically and socially, leading to as fulfilling a life as possible through the lifespan (Inclusive Education Canada, n.d.). For inclusion to succeed, it must happen at the classroom level in a milieu where a supportive teacher leads all students in creating a community for learning. Although inclusion has become accepted intellectually, many classroom teachers continue to struggle with personal feelings to fully accept students who have disabilities, especially those with significant challenges, perhaps because they do not feel equipped to provide the learning climate necessary to support these students along with the other students in their classrooms (Lupart, 1998). Based upon a review of the literature, a trifold motif: heart, head, and hands, has been developed to represent what has been, to date, understood as effective practice (Pudlas, 2010). The goal of this study was twofold. The first goal was to provide a survey of recent literature to ascertain current practices that have successfully led to inclusionary classrooms in small school or educational system environments within a Canadian context. The second goal was to populate subcomponents of the heart-head-hand motif based on the research that gives support for those being critical factors. As these subcomponents are explicated, this study will provide a practical support for schools.