



Unified Rugby Course

➤ Educational Equity and Inclusion

Trust Rugby International Spain

Michael Artiles Shannon

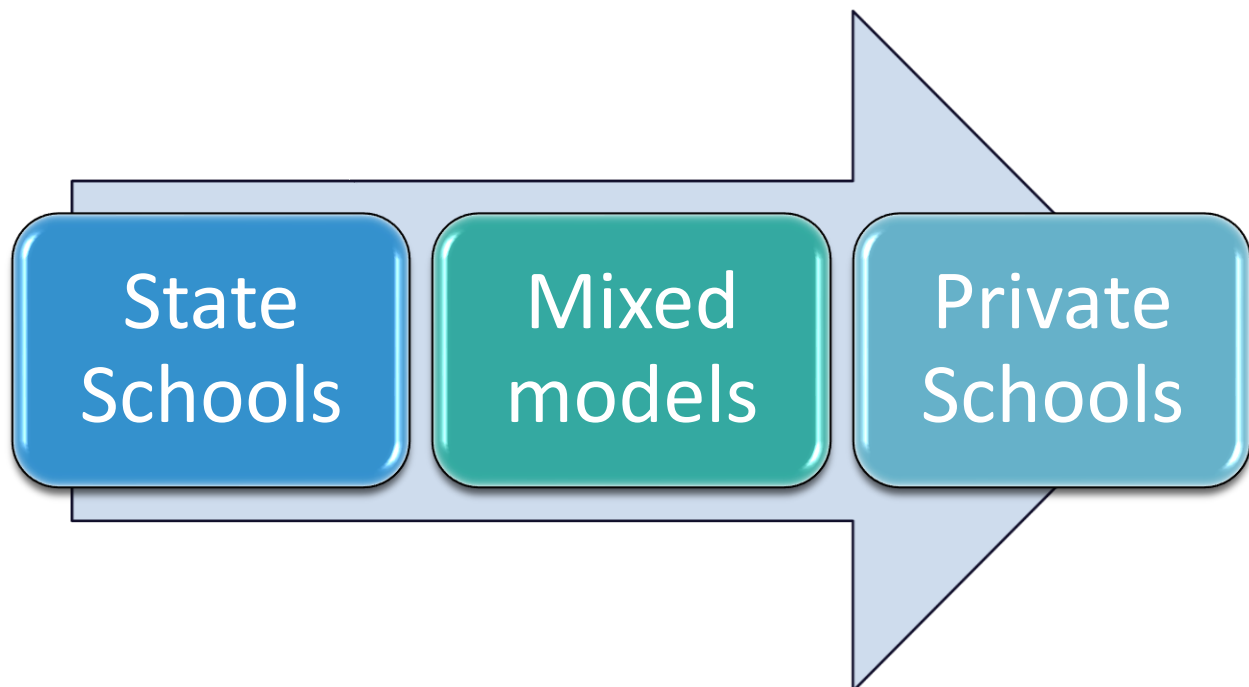
Development Director



Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





The concept of educational inclusion is very broad and covers a range of issues. It is often associated only with the educational provision for learners with disabilities. On the other hand, the term "inclusion" is being massively used by the media and marketing campaigns, blurring its meaning.

For all these reasons, before going deeper into this topic, it is useful to share a definition that can work as a frame of reference. The one with a broader consensus is given by UNESCO (2005), which defines inclusion as a **process aimed at responding to the diversity of students by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion in and from education. It is related to the presence, participation and achievements of all students, with special emphasis on those who, for different reasons, are in a situation of greater vulnerability, and the detection and elimination of barriers is of particular importance.**

Assuming the principle of educational inclusion and education for all and for all makes it necessary to re-conceptualise and redefine all, an exercise that implies putting the focus not only on the field of disability, **but on all students**, and especially on those people and groups who are in a situation of greater vulnerability and at risk of educational and social exclusion due to their origin, ethnicity, language, economic and social situation, sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual characteristics, capacity and competence, in a situation of devaluation, disregard, discrimination or violence, or all those people who, due to emotional, functional, functional, coexistence and participation reasons, are in a situation of devaluation, disregard, discrimination or violence, sexual orientation, gender identity or sexual characteristics, capacity and competence, in a situation of devaluation, disregard, discrimination or violence, or all those people who, for emotional, functional, coexistence and participation reasons, in interaction with their educational context, may be subject to exclusionary pressures or who encounter barriers to access, presence, participation and learning in schools.



We share three fundamental ideas when we talk about inclusion:

1. The first is that **each pupil is unique and different**. There are not two categories of students. We cannot consider that there is a diverse student body and another categorised as normal. Taking into account the different and varied sources of diversity, we can conclude that homogeneous educational responses are not useful.
2. The second is that **all our pupils, at some point in their schooling, may require support at** different levels, in varying degrees of intensity and duration.
3. And finally, the idea that it is not so much the students who have a disability or a problem, but rather that **there are environments that we could call disabling**, which are those that present barriers to their presence, participation and/or learning.

What is inclusion?

Firstly, a common misconception is that unified education is synonymous with integration. There are nuances that differentiate the two concepts.

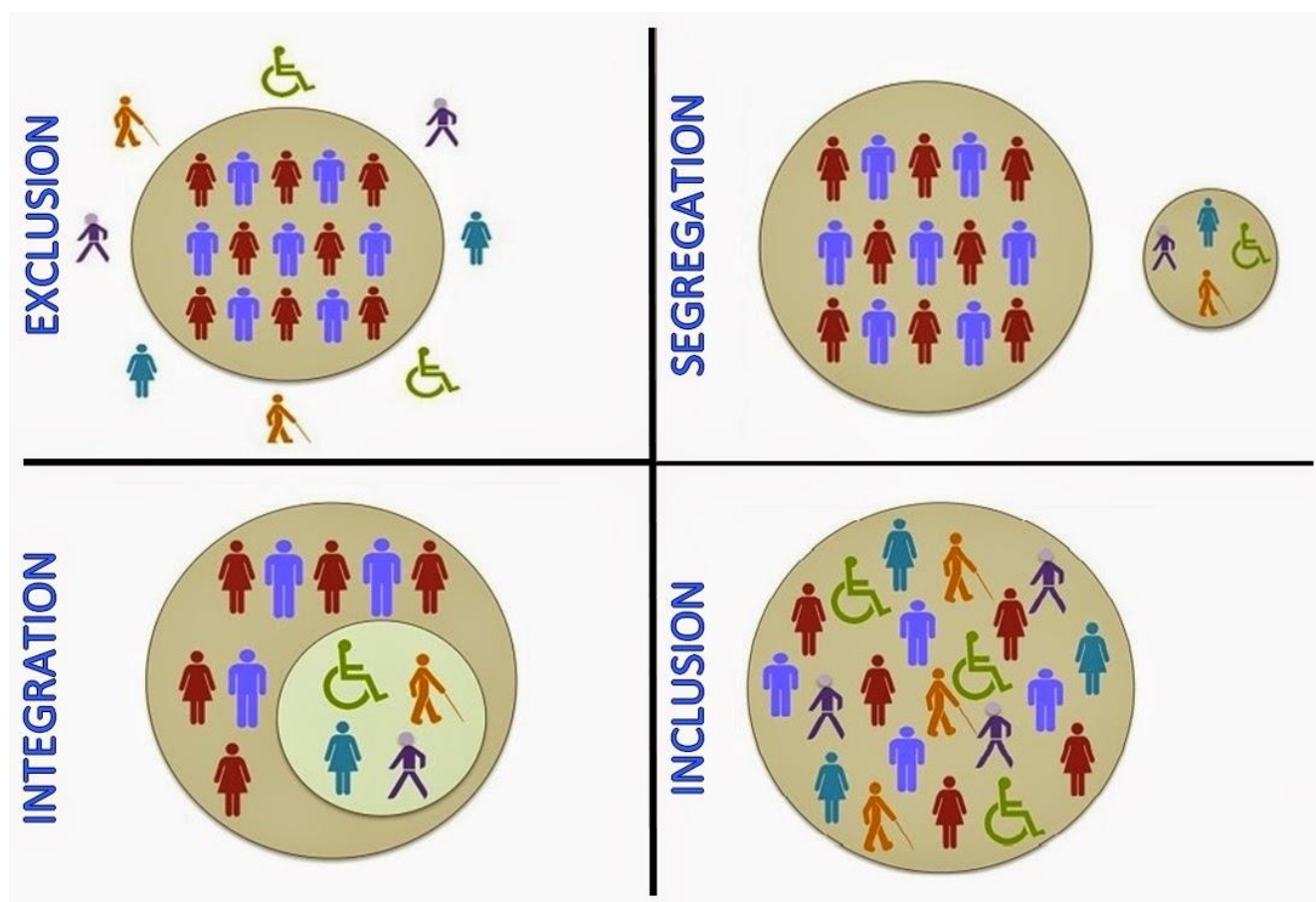
- **Integration accepts difference, recognises it, but focuses on the deficit**, impairment or disability, therefore, it speaks of educational needs and proposes an educational response that is differentiating. Differentiating in that the student leaves the ordinary classroom to receive individualised attention according to his or her disability, with a curriculum that is significantly different from the ordinary one.

In contrast, **a unified school welcomes difference and learns from it, focusing attention on the abilities** of all students and enhancing them by removing barriers that prevent all students from learning. In this sense, the educational response is unified and therefore the student is present in the regular classroom, participating and learning alongside his or her peers.

Main elements:

As we have seen in the definition, four key elements feature strongly in the conceptualisation of inclusion (UNESCO, 2005, p.152):

1. Inclusion is a **process**
2. There are three fundamental principles to be guaranteed: **presence, participation and learning.**
3. Unified schools are particularly sensitive to **situations of risk of exclusion** and act in a special way with the most vulnerable pupils.
4. Of particular importance is the **identification and removal of barriers.**



Let us take a closer look at each of them:

1. INCLUSION IS A PROCESS

What do we mean when we say that inclusion is a process?

1. It is **not spontaneous**: unified education is built little by little, with each step we take. It does not emerge suddenly, but is initiated through consensual action.
2. It is not the sum of one-off actions but the sum **of interlocking actions.**



3. And therefore, it **requires planning**: thinking about how we are going to mobilise the resources we have available in the centre.
4. It builds **little by little**
5. It is systemic: **all the pieces are fundamental** and work if they are **connected**, if there is **teamwork**. Moreover, **participation** is **essential**: from the teacher to the pupil, the families and the environment.
6. And we must understand it from the research-action paradigm. In other words, it **is a process that never ends**, that is in continuous revision and requires continuous reflection.
7. It is not the sum of one-off actions but the sum **of interlocking actions**.

2. THREE PRINCIPLES:

PRESENCE

PARTICIPATION

LEARNING

- **Presence**: means that all students are assured of quality education and access to school and the curriculum, it means that, as far as possible, no one leaves the classroom and that we do not exclude or segregate.

However, with all students in the classroom, we need to think about whether and to what extent everyone **participates** in the tasks that are carried out in the classroom. Therefore, we must ensure that all students have opportunities to participate in all the learning experiences offered by the school, to live together and to feel that they belong to the educational community.

And finally, if the student remains in the classroom and participates, we have to ask ourselves if we can guarantee the **learning** of all, if we have planned activities that all can solve, in which all can progress and develop to the maximum of their capacities. In other words, we have to guarantee that **all students** achieve the best possible performance considering their needs, characteristics and interests.

3. RISK SITUATIONS

The third element that underpins unified education is that which refers to at-risk situations, i.e. the inclusive school is characterised by being particularly sensitive to situations of risk of educational and social exclusion and therefore acts preferentially with the most vulnerable pupils.

We cannot focus only on the most obvious situations of risk of exclusion because "the group of students subject to exclusionary pressures is enormous (due to poor performance or failure at school, for health reasons or for reasons of origin, gender, social class, sexual orientation, etc.) and because, ultimately,

all students without exception, at one time or another, may experience situations of exclusion" (Echeita, 2014). This invisibility of some exclusion processes limits pupils' opportunities.

4. IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS

Finally, the fourth element refers to the concept of barriers. Barriers that exist in the context and that have a negative influence on the development of the capacity of each student, regardless of their characteristics.

Barriers can be found in three dimensions:

Cultural: A dimension aimed at creating a **safe, welcoming, collaborative and stimulating school community** in which everyone is valued, as a primary foundation for higher levels of achievement for all learners. It aims to **develop inclusive values, shared** by all teachers, students, school council members and families, so that they are transmitted to all new members of the school community.



Policy: Aims to **ensure that inclusion is at the heart of the innovation process**, permeating all policies, so that the learning and participation of all students is enhanced. In this context, **'support' is considered to be all those activities that increase the capacity of an educational institution to cater for the diversity of its student body**. All forms of support are brought together within a single framework and are seen from the perspective of learner development rather than from the perspective of school or administrative structures.

Practice: Seeks to ensure that classroom and extra-curricular activities encourage the participation of all learners and take account of learners' knowledge and experience outside the school environment.



Teaching and supports are integrated to orchestrate learning in a way that overcomes barriers to learning and participation.

All of this, establishing general lines of action that characterise the inclusive school model and guarantee the development of its principles, which are: **the identification and elimination of barriers in the context, the deployment of resources to respond to diversity, the commitment to inclusive culture and values, and the development of a syllabus for inclusion.**

The first element refers to the identification and removal of barriers that may be present in the school and socio-cultural context and in all the dimensions that define inclusive schooling: cultures; planning processes, organisation and functioning and practices. Particular emphasis should be placed on the start of schooling and at transition points.

The second element refers to the mobilisation of resources that increase the school's capacity to respond to student diversity and to the fact of offering flexible proposals in the organisation and provision of support for the personalisation and individualisation of teaching, which responds to the inclusion needs of all students. It is therefore necessary that the actions and programmes are developed.

The third element refers to making a commitment to the culture and values of inclusive education, and implementing them in a systematic and planned way in educational practices: positive valuing of diversity, social and gender equality; participation and sense of belonging to the community; solidarity; cooperation, collaboration and teamwork; coexistence and peaceful and dialogical resolution of conflicts; and commitment to local and global sustainability.

The fourth element refers to the development of a curriculum for inclusion. The structure and content of the curriculum must respond to the principles of relevance, belonging and sustainability. Therefore, syllabus management, both in the planning processes and in its development, must take into account the diversity of all learners and meet at least the following requirements:

- a) Stimulate the motivation and involvement of students in their learning process and enable them to feel recognised and represented.
- b) Apply multiple and diverse means of representation and expression that enable individualisation and personalisation in order to respond to the different learning rhythms, motivations, interests and circumstances of the students.
- c) To complement content and assessment criteria referring to knowledge, respect and appreciation of personal, social and cultural diversity, as well as gender perspective, identity and expression and sexual and family diversity existing in society, which are incorporated in all areas, subjects and modules of the syllabus.
- d) Use active methodologies and disciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching sequences that promote interaction, collaboration and cooperation, that take advantage of the resources of the environment and that prepare students for social participation and labour market insertion.
- e) Apply participatory processes and instruments for student assessment that take into consideration all the elements that intervene and influence the learning process and that facilitate the planning of the educational response, the identification and organisation of support and, ultimately, the

qualification of students or the accreditation of the competences achieved, in order to facilitate their socio-occupational integration.

f) Select and develop curricular and didactic materials that promote interaction, allow for different levels of participation and learning, use multiple options for motivation, representation of information and expression, and respect the criteria of accessibility, equality, non-discrimination and sustainability. Special care should be taken to ensure that curricular materials make the situation of women visible from a cultural and historical perspective, that they include role models and eliminate sexist and discriminatory prejudices.

g) Carry out the adaptations of the area, subject or module of the specific programmes of attention to special needs, taking the didactic programmes of the level as a reference. Likewise, the significant individual curricular adaptations must have as a reference the didactic units of the group-class.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ACROSS EUROPE
We learn best when we learn together
Every learner should have access to meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside friends and peers.

Together...
Learners, Parents and families, Educational professionals, Community representatives, Decision-makers
...are working towards this vision

How can we achieve inclusive education?

Legislation
New laws and reforms should ensure every learner's right to an inclusive and equitable education.

Practice
Operational principles underpinning legislation and policy include equity, effectiveness, efficiency and raising achievement for all learners.

Policy
Policy developments should promote inclusive education as an approach for improving educational opportunities for all.

Illustration: A group of diverse learners sitting at a table, with a teacher sitting on a chair next to them.

Through these approaches to legislation and policy, in practice we can:

- Build upon learners' individual talents and respond to their needs.
- Engage stakeholders and enable them to contribute to inclusive education.
- Develop attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills and behaviours that support inclusion.
- Personalise teaching to engage all learners and support active participation.
- Improve structures and processes over time through capacity building.
- Provide flexible resources for all stakeholders.

Inclusive education systems change lives and improve societies. When we include all learners in our classrooms, everyone benefits.

Find out more about the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education by visiting www.european-agency.org

EUROPEAN AGENCY FOR SPECIAL NEEDS AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This publication has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



In the area of Physical Education and according to Feigin, Talmor & Erlich (2004), teachers must have enough capacity to avoid "educational burnout", which arises from:

- lack of unified policies in the school or community,
- the lack of inadequate and insufficient sporting facilities for working with pupils with special needs,
- the lack of special teaching methods to include these students in the class,
- disciplinary and social problems;
- lack of appropriate time to deal with as many special needs as there are students.

Therefore, teachers face daily challenges in meeting the basic needs of all their students, especially if they have children with special needs. In other words, they must continuously provide unified education (Small & Stewart, 2013). Students coexist in classrooms with their peers, their classmates. However, any student can be subject to many types of teasing in PE classes simply because of their physical aspect (Coates & Vickerman, 2010, and Marsden & Weston, 2007).

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the competition generated by sport in physical education classes is not good for creating a suitable system of inclusion. The right thing to do would be to treat it pedagogically. Sport in PE classes can be a disadvantage and can lead to discrimination. Authors such as Marsden & Weston (2007) recommend to look for a good quality Physical Education and **not to equate "Sport" with "Physical Education", as they are not the same**. There is a need to develop a **new model of Physical Education that is unified, comprehensive and aligned with the pedagogical principles of Education**. Therefore, it is recommended that there is a need to implement preventive policies and standards to eliminate bullying, discrimination, etc., and thus create unified PE environments. The inclusion of all students in different educational grades can hinder the teaching-learning process and, in this sense, the PE class is no exception (Hansen, 2014).

Jerlinder, Danermark & Gill (2010) also focus on the role of physical education teachers in relation to inclusion in education. In their research, they analysed the attitudes of 221 Swedish teachers towards the inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities in primary school. From the data obtained, it was concluded that there was a need for teachers to have a positive attitude towards the inclusion of pupils with physical disabilities in primary school:

- (1) sufficient training (knowledge of the contents to be covered)
- (2) support from the general school (management and staff)
- (3) resource claims.

Equally, all actors involved must collaborate to promote inclusive environments (Jelas, 2000). Therefore, it can be said that there is still some way to go for PE teachers, and even more so for teacher education programmes.

A Methodological Resource: the pupil tutor

The pupil tutor in the PE class

These are students who, being of the same age and sharing the same class, and after basic training, assist students with special educational needs in the teaching and learning process. Research studying

the intervention of pupil tutors with students with difficulties in inclusion in class shows improvements in this type of students with difficulties in motor competence Houston-Wilson et al. (1997), and in basic motor movements Lieberman et al. (1997) and Lieberman et al. (2000). Houston-Wilson et al. (1997), studied the effects of intervention by six student tutors on the motor performance of six students with mild learning disabilities. The results are an improvement in the motor performance of students with average learning disabilities when the student tutors intervene. To the same extent, acceptable results are obtained when the student tutor has not received basic instructions. Lieberman et al. (1997), studies the consequences of the participation of student tutors (11 year-old group) in the possible improvement of students with Down syndrome, autism, behavioural disorders and developmental disorders. The results show that students with special educational needs improve their motor performance when the student tutor intervenes. In a later study, Lieberman et al. (2000), study the consequences after tutor intervention with students with special educational needs in regular classes. The results are that students with special educational needs increase their actual practice time by twice as much. And, the student tutors also doubled their actual practice. Future studies may aim to generalise these results and add the previous experience with students with special educational needs of the student tutors (Block and Obrusnikova, 2007).



Social interaction

Current experiences of inclusion with learners with disabilities in the physical education classroom are not always fulfilled. Inclusion and learning approaches may well be limited to pupil tutors (Ellis, 1996; Place, 2001). Place (2001), in a study, uses behaviour analysis with students with disabilities in PE classes. Pupil tutors do not always interact with students with disabilities. The interaction times between all peers - tutor and disabled student - were small (1% to 5% in most cases and 20% in one case). The limitations in social interaction with non-disabled students are partially documented in a study by Goodwin (2000). Students, in this referenced study, comment that they have good and bad days when they are included in the PE class. Good days are when students are included in the activities proposed by the teacher in class. The bad days are when the teacher does not encourage the students



to be included in the activities or when they are included in less active roles_(scorer, referee...). This leads to social interaction that is not very enriching. In the same previous study, Goodwin (2000), the group of students who had negative experiences in PE class commented on expressions in relation to the class such as: I hate it, I'm angry in class, I feel different, I'm discouraged and I shout. All participants in PE class have their positive or negative experiences, students who have negative experiences in PE class do not usually adapt to the class and therefore some students do not receive appropriate attention. When the adaptation is not adequate or the prominence of the student to be integrated is overemphasised, the student with a disability feels ridiculed_(Dunn et al. 2007).

Unified and non-unified environment

Physical educators want, like any teacher, to teach their students as well as possible. However, many physical education teachers have not had academic training in how to include their students in the classroom. This preparation needs to include inclusion processes in their curricula (Block, 2007). The experience of PE teachers with students with special educational needs is relatively high but the strategies to intervene with students with special educational needs are low. In this sense, a large number of active teachers did not have initial training in adapting programmes, adapting tasks and tests, and consequently, many of them use trial and error as the most frequent procedure.

Sources:

Gamonales Puerto, José. (2016). Physical Education as a tool for inclusion. PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH, TEACHING AND DIDACTIC RESOURCES. 70. 26-33.

<http://www.ceice.gva.es/es/web/inclusioeducativa/decret-valencia-d-equitat-i-d-inclusio-educativa>

<http://jbgeducafisica.blogspot.com/2013/12/educacion-fisica-e-inclusion.html>