

Inclusivity and Belonging in the

Shannon Luby

Southern New Hampshire University

Importance

1. My Schooling – Lack of a sense of belonging for years.
2. City Year – Diverse class of incredible third-graders.
3. Honors Thesis – Research and survey of educators in the area.
4. Educator – Free to be authentic in the classroom.

Terms

Inclusivity - Instructional and behavioral practices “that influence academic and social-personal outcomes” (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d., para. 2). An approach to education, not a set of rules. Meeting student’s unique needs.

Belonging - Extent that children feel “individually welcome[d], respected, included, and supported” in their school environment (Allen, 2022, para. 4). Free to be authentically themselves. Feel valued and part of the classroom and school community

Practices

General - Find one trusted adult in the building.


Culture - Build on background knowledge of students, dissolve dominant narrative.











Families - Accessible and positive communication for families.

Peers - Explicit teaching of empathy, working together, and accepting new students.

Intentionality - Positive language, social-emotional learning, building trust, and creating a safe environment.

Student Input - Class rules, seeing themselves in their classroom, and dedicated time for connections.



	YOUR WORDS	MATTER
	INSTEAD OF...	TRY
	Be quiet.	Can you use a softer voice?
	What a mess!	It looks like you had fun! How can we clean up?
	Do you need help?	I'm here to help if you need me.
	I explained how to do this yesterday.	Maybe I can show you another way.
	Do I need to separate you?	Could you use a break?
	Stop crying.	It's okay to cry.
	Do you have any questions?	What questions do you have?
	You're OK.	How are you feeling?
	It's not that hard.	You can do hard things.
	We don't talk like that.	Please use kind words. WE ARE TEACHERS

(Sayner, 2018)

Implications

Academic

Increase in:

Motivation

Energy

Effort

Work completion

Academic achievement

Stronger focus on academics than internal battles.

Classroom participation.

Investment in extracurriculars.

Willing and wanting to come to school –fewer dropout.

Social

Social isolation can occur for any student, but an inclusive classroom that fosters

belonging increases peer interactions (Allen, 2022)

Peer relationships and confidence (Cornell University, 2023)

Inclusive classrooms lead to having safe and open conversations.

Mutual respect

Teaching healthy conflict resolution (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.)

Teach skills students are not born with.

Developmental

Not having a sense of belonging impacts development.

Students may feel they can never belong.

Mental health and confidence.

Belonging is a basic need (St-Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017)

Encouraged to be themselves and accept their mistakes.

Personal image (Allen, 2022)

Conclusion

Educational Practices

Educators can implement any of these practices quickly and easily.

Sense of Belonging

Students have stronger academics, social experiences, and confidence.

Takeaways

This is the research, but the survey will discover what works.

Quote by Michael Dunlea, 2019

“Early elementary teachers rarely see the seeds we try to plant in our young students come to fruition, but we always hope they will grow into the people we imagine they can be.”

Resources

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