

Recenzió

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Marie Delaney: Special Educational Needs

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 104 pp.

Teacher, trainer, and educational psychologist, Marie Delaney raises the importance of the inclusion of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and the differentiation in English classrooms. Her book represents a timely and well-conceived overview on the topic of SEN including strategies, techniques, and practical teaching ideas that can be use by teachers in inclusive classrooms. It covers those special needs which are likely to appear in the mainstream English classroom but not the severe conditions. This guidebook is suited to primary and secondary school teachers without requiring a special education or training on SEN to be able to cope with students with such problems.

The paperback is divided into four main parts addressing useful strategies and ideas. The strategies presented in the text represent those activities and techniques that have been tested on students of different ages. The author recommends trying and, if necessary, altering the introduced activities for younger as well as older learners. Before eight subsections, the author inserted quotations by teachers and learners. They offer insight into the real life experiences, problems and solutions by educators and students.

The introduction includes four subsections. First, clarifying who this book is written for helps teachers identify themselves as audience. By personalizing the questions at the beginning, the author establishes a closer and more confidential connection with the addressee. Second, the author intends to reassure the chalk face practitioners that only by using good teaching strategies consciously they can help students and no magic formula is made up as the perfect one. Third, the reader is provided with summaries of the following three sections on general teaching principles, general needs of students with SEN, and the individual types of SEN. Finally, the author exposes the scope of the book and presents her own beliefs in quite a personal tone.

Chapter 1 provides a general overview of the topic. First, Delaney defines SEN, inclusion, and teacher attitude so as to a give clear picture on the notions and discusses teaching, learning, and classroom management principles in general that may be used in inclusive classroom. Second, the main categories of SEN are introduced according to the area of difficulty, adding the general indicators for identifying those. Third, the common problem areas are covered by dividing the third subsection into parts and focusing on working memory, communication, and self-esteem in a critical and professional, still personal and supportive manner. One of the techniques that could encourage students to communicate is called ‘Think, pair, share’, which allows learners to think about a given

question for two minutes, discuss it in pairs for one minute, and then share their ideas with the group. The three stages help those students, who find it challenging to speak up in front of the class. They can first test their ideas with a partner and later they may be more open in front of the whole group. It can help not only students with SEN but also learners with lower proficiency level and lower self-esteem.

Chapter 2 addresses three main ways of working with students in an inclusive classroom. The author highlights the importance of making progress in learning with students on different proficiency levels and with different skills. It is claimed by Delaney that students learn in various ways thus teachers ought to provide parallel activities. The author raises the importance of working together with professionals and parents to provide appropriate solutions for students in their learning process. In Delaney's book, Sally Farley introduces the assistive technology (AT) that allows students with SEN to overcome their barriers. As Farley highlights, the right AT programs can help students work independently, gain confidence, or overcome frustration.

Chapter 3 further broadens our view on SEN by giving information on specific types and advising practical teaching strategies. The readers are given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with seven types of SEN represented in a straightforward and explicit way. Even those practitioners who did not attend any specialist training can easily cope with the explanations and the recommended strategies. One of these strategies, which is to be pointed out, makes students find out what it feels like to walk in the shoes of a student with SEN: 'Walk in my shoes'. Delaney focuses on dyspraxia here and offers an activity in which students use a pair of thick gloves, a piece of string, and some beads. They need to wear the gloves while threading the beads onto the string. This is how they can get to know more about the situation of those who have dyspraxia. This strategy can be altered to fit different types of educational needs.

The layout of the book is clear and the chapters are presented in a logical way. Providing check-up questions for the audience generates a conversation between the reader and the author. These 'Ask yourself' sections make teachers monitor themselves and the way they use techniques or activities. Some key advice is highlighted and indicated with 'Getting it right' headings. They may serve the teachers right by emphasizing certain rules and suggestions which provide a quick overview of the teachers. The author's task suggestions are indicated with 'Try this' headings which set out various solutions for dealing with any area of English language learning. Another further peculiarity of the book is that no reference is listed, although useful websites are noted at the end of the book. These websites may appear to be useful and advantageous for those teachers who are interested in or concerned with the topic.

Although all of the introduced activities support learning process, they cannot be used in an everyday English classroom because of the limitations of an English teacher, such as time and deadline until the textbook is to be finished. However, these activities would serve the students and their language development during an after-class lesson.

Overall, *Special Educational Needs* is a relevant and meaningful collection of teacher strategies and ideas, and a valuable resource for teachers. It gives insight into a great variety of teaching practices that educators can explore and learning strategies they can recommend and teach. The activities represented in the guidebook scaffold students' learning and

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motivational process. As they will be getting better at the language with the help of these ideas, they will be more open and receptive to the new challenges in other fields of life.

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