



**A Paradigm for Inclusion
-The Four Principles for Success -**

By

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Principle 1: Education as an Outcome of the Learning Brain.

Teaching is the management of the presentation of information in such a way as to stimulate the brain to think, and learn. Differentiated learning arises out of a differentiated ability to learn. Differentiated learning requires differentiated teaching. As the brain processes and integrates information through its sensors, it is able to plan and organise behaviour in order to make an adaptive response in the ongoing process of learning. The brain's integrating process of sensory input is fundamental to the thinking process, and through the process of interaction with its environment through its sensory systems, the brain engages in a process of reaction-interaction that leads to learning. However, where the brain is not properly receiving sensory input, and/or not integrating sensory information properly, learning is belated and there is said to be a learning difficulty.

Principle 2: Learning Ability can be Accelerated

Closely aligned with the concept of the learning brain is the concept of the developing brain. As children grow and mature up to age 18, their neuro-physiological ability is developing. For example, the brain of a child of 8 years has a higher level of functional ability than a 6 year old. Where a child is identified as having a learning difficulty and developing below the level of typical development, it is possible to intervene and accelerate the development process. The theory is that because there is plasticity within the central nervous system (the brain is moldable) and because the brain consists of systems that are hierarchically organised, it is possible to stimulate the learning process and correct learning disorders.

Principle 3: Intervention as part of Schooling

With an appreciation of the fundamentals of learning, an intervention programme of therapy to accelerate learning development cannot be separated from their schooling and general learning process. The drafting of a child's Learning Development Programme (LDP) is basic to a teacher drafting a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). A teacher involved with a child with a learning difficulty needs to know what difficulties have been identified and what a therapy programme is doing to address them. Therapy intervention is a fundamental part of an inclusion programme.

Principle 4: Inclusion as a Process of Modulated Interaction.

Interaction in a grade class should take place on a sliding-scale of inclusion for children with learning difficulties and special needs. Just as there is a structured gradation of ability and class classification within mainstream schools, so there is a need to recognise the gradation of ability (and of need and support) among special needs children and invent a model of gradated and progressive inclusion. While the key to such a model must be flexibility in order to recognise development and allow progress, there are three main tiers of a gradated approach. First, low intervention; where a child is taken out of class several times a week to receive therapy to develop their sensory system and neurological function. Second, moderate intervention; where children would spend most of their school time in a learning development class extending over a period of 1 or more years but where they would spend an increasing degree of their time with their peer grade level in academic learning. Third, high intervention; where a child would spend the majority of their academic time in a

learning development class. As these children progress, they, too, would spend more time doing academic work with their grade level peers.