

No MORE EXCUSES - Jacqueline A. Specht

“We don’t have any segregated classes except for the developmental ones”

“We have 3 segregated classrooms. I could see getting rid of two of them, but I have no idea how we could get rid of the third”.



Real quotes from real teachers. Why do we not see **ALL** students when we talk about inclusion? Teachers have real issues facing them in their classrooms and we need to help. We cannot continue to believe that inclusion is simply putting children in general education classrooms and leaving it to the classroom teacher to figure out what to do. Inclusion was never meant to operate in that way. The research tells us that people need to be supported. It has been telling us this for years – let’s act. Only when teachers feel supported to implement best practices such as differentiated instruction within their classrooms will they be open to accepting all children.

There are many teachers in many schools, in many school boards who have exemplary practices for including ALL children. We know it can be done. We need to get the message out there to those who doubt and provide them with the support they need.

We cannot continue to say that – *“There are no segregated classes except for”* There are segregated classes or there are not. We cannot have some segregation and say that we are inclusive. These are mutually exclusive terms. **No more excuses.**

Our faculties of education need to instruct our student teachers in the ways of inclusion. We need to teach them to be part of a **team of teachers** for ALL students once they get into classrooms. Our boards of education need to support continued learning of their teachers by hosting professional development around inclusion. They must support teachers in the general education classrooms. Inclusion coaches would be a great way to do that. We know that learning does not happen in a one day workshop; it needs to be nurtured.

Provide teachers with the opportunity to learn and practice in their own classrooms with others who have been successful inclusion teachers. Provide the opportunities for discussion and new learning amongst the teachers and coaches. Our ministries of education need to provide frameworks that are simple to understand and do not change from year to year.

We could all do a better job of working towards inclusion. We are doing good things, but we need to do better. **No more excuses.**

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