

Supporting Diverse Learners in Postsecondary Education: Insights from Classroom Support Practice

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Abstract

Supporting diverse learners in postsecondary education requires teaching approaches that recognize differences in how students engage with learning, communicate, and complete academic tasks. While much of the existing research focuses on instructors' perspectives, less attention has been given to the experiences of classroom assistants and academic support staff who work directly with students receiving accessibility support.

This paper explores patterns of student engagement observed in inclusive postsecondary classrooms from the perspective of classroom support practice. The study draws on reflective observations from work as a note taker and classroom assistant supporting students with diverse learning needs. Through these observations, several recurring learning behaviour patterns emerged, including independent learners, students who benefit from structured guidance, learners who experience challenges with sustained attention, and students who prefer alternative communication methods.

The paper discusses practical strategies that support inclusive learning, such as structured notetaking, step-by-step task guidance, flexible communication approaches, and respect for student autonomy. Rather than focusing on diagnostic labels, the study emphasizes understanding differences in learning behaviours and adapting classroom support strategies accordingly.

The findings contribute to ongoing discussions on inclusive pedagogy and student engagement in higher education by highlighting the role that classroom support practice can play in creating more responsive and accessible learning environments.

Keywords: Inclusive Education, Student Engagement, Postsecondary Education, Learning Support, Inclusive Classrooms