

Chapter 16

The Role of Bibliotherapy and Therapeutic Storytelling in Creating Inclusive Classroom Communities

Sanja Skočić Mihić
University of Rijeka, Croatia

Kimberly Maich
Memorial University, Canada

Christina Belcher
Redeemer University College, Canada

Susan Perrow
Independent Researcher, Australia

Ana Barišić
*Catholic Elementary School “Josip Pavličić”,
Croatia*

Nadia Novak Ramić
*Elementary School “Rikard Katarinić Jeretov”,
Croatia*

ABSTRACT

This chapter reviews the literature of using the bibliotherapy as a strategy to provide empathy and understanding for diverse behaviors and emotions. Since diverse learners may have difficulties in developing social skills and emotional regulation, the development of a positive and respectful social climate is critical in encouraging all students to be more accepting of individual differences and challenges. Using the Lessac bio-dynamic approach and verbal intonation and dynamic articulation of the text, enriches students' experience and allows students with difficulties to recognize the intention of the character and to interactively participate with movements. The unique model of therapeutic storytelling with Lessac Kinestetis is presented as a teaching strategy for the development of the skills of diverse learners, as well all students in the inclusive classroom.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-2520-2.ch016

INTRODUCTION

Public school classrooms have changed substantially since the beginning of the 21st century, as a movement towards full inclusion has meant that the majority of children are attending schools in their local neighbourhood school environments. As never before, today's classrooms consist of diverse learners from—for example—varied cultures, linguistic backgrounds, race, families, with diverse intellectual, academic, and social-emotional needs and abilities. In the last two decades of thought and action on the process and realities of classroom inclusion, significant transitions within legislation and practice have occurred in many jurisdictions: from traditional, segregated classroom environments to a focus on inclusive education. School inclusion allows for, recognizes, and provides education for all children within inclusive classrooms and schools, including those with exceptionalities. Inclusive education, “an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities” (UNESCO, 2008, p.3), has—and continues to—change classroom teaching practices (UNESCO, 2008). It is important to point out that the organization of related teaching and learning processes in inclusive classrooms—which need to be suitable for all diverse learners—is often left to the educators in those very classrooms.

Policies of inclusive education established in many jurisdictions worldwide vary, dependent on a range of factors, including characteristics of national and local education practices, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, skills, and competencies to work in inclusive classrooms (Donnelly & Watkins, 2011). It is well known, for example, that the successful implementation of any inclusive policy and/or practices depends largely on the teachers' positive attitudes (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2010; Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Norwich & Avramidis, 2002; Poulson, Avramidis, Fox, Medwell, & Wray, 2001; Wilde & Avramidis, 2011). However, even despite positive attitudes, teachers often feel incapable and/or unprepared to teach children with disabilities in inclusive settings (Cains & Brown, 1996; Lombardi & Hunka, 2001; Scruggs & Mastropierei, 1996; Skočić Mihić, 2011). The variety of academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of children in inclusive classrooms inevitably results in new roles and responsibilities for teachers (Ellis & Larkin, 1995); yet, professional preparation can be described as inadequate (Skočić Mihić et al., 2014; Skočić Mihić, Lončarić, & Pinoza Kukurin, 2009), often limited to only a single mandatory course about inclusive education worldwide (McHatton & McCray, 2007; Sze, 2009). Teachers perceived themselves moderately competent in the area of differentiated teaching for students with disabilities and gifted students, but their professional workload was lower for teaching students (Skočić Mihić, Beaudoin, & Giugno Modrušan, 2016). Also, teachers found that self-learning contributed significantly more to their acquired competencies for teaching gifted students in relation to pre-service professional development, due to a lack of mandatory courses on gifted education (Skočić Mihić & Čepić, 2016).

Furthermore, the complexity of teaching diverse learners in the same classroom could easily be labelled as daunting. On one hand, teachers need to provide diverse accommodation and adaptations in teaching materials and methods for all students to successfully achieve academic goals. Inclusive educational policies require teaching that is adjusted to meet the diverse range of learners in classrooms providing curriculum adaptation and differential teaching to address the individualized educational needs of all students (Skočić Mihić, Beaudoin, & Krsnik, 2016). On the other hand, they are also expected to support the ‘whole child,’ including social and emotional interventions to promote social and emotional growth (Martan, Skočić Mihić, & Lončarić, 2015, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004). Consequently, teachers face many challenges within and

22 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the product's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-role-of-bibliotherapy-and-therapeutic-storytelling-in-creating-inclusive-classroom-communities/182395?camid=4v1

This title is available in Advances in Educational Technologies and Instructional Design, InfoSci-Books, InfoSci-Educational Science and Technology, Library Science, Information Studies, and Education, InfoSci-Social Sciences and Online Behavior, Communications, Social Science, and Healthcare. Recommend this product to your librarian:
www.igi-global.com/e-resources/library-recommendation/?id=84

Related Content

Evolving On-Line Pedagogy: Developing Research-Based Multimedia Learning Tools for the High School and Undergraduate Biology "Classroom"

Jacqueline S. McLaughlin and Darin S. Munsell (2012). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 1-20).

www.igi-global.com/article/evolving-line-pedagogy/61397?camid=4v1a

Technology in the Foreign Languages Classroom

William J. Switala (2003). *Challenges of Teaching with Technology Across the Curriculum: Issues and Solutions* (pp. 181-210).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/technology-foreign-languages-classroom/6558?camid=4v1a

Assessing 3D Virtual World Learning Environments with the CIMPLe System

Sean D. Williams and Deborah M. Switzer (2011). *Instructional Design: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools and Applications* (pp. 1817-1839).

www.igi-global.com/chapter/assessing-virtual-world-learning-environments/51914?camid=4v1a

Does Online Outshine?: Online vs. Campus-Based Degree Withdrawal and Completion Rates within an MBA Program

Belinda Patterson, William Mallett and Cheryl McFadden (2012). *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design* (pp. 53-64).

www.igi-global.com/article/does-online-outshine/61400?camid=4v1a