

What Does Inclusion Look Like, and Who Gets to Decide?

Elisabeth Staal

ABLE Assembly 2022

OVERVIEW

- Why ask this question?
- What does inclusion look like?
- Who decides what inclusion looks like?
- Findings
- Moving Forward

Why this question?

What Does Inclusion Look
Like, and Who Gets to Decide?

Why this question?

1. Contribute to a collective understanding of what pursuing inclusion entails
2. Promote intentionality and challenge complacency
3. Emphasize the power in decision-making and centering student and community voices

Research



Institute for Arts Education
and Special Needs

- Survey to practitioners
- Field examples

Survey Questions

1. How do you personally define inclusion of students with disabilities participating in arts education programs?
2. Whose perspectives or what influences inform how you define inclusion?
3. In the context of students with disabilities participating in arts education programs, please define how inclusion is operationalized in your work.
4. Who decides, or whose perspectives inform, how inclusion is operationalized in your work?
5. (Optional) Do you identify as being disabled or having a disability? This question is asked because it is important to know how voices of the disability community are or are not represented in this work. This question is entirely optional.

Pause & Answer

1. How do you personally define inclusion of students with disabilities participating in arts education programs?
2. Whose perspectives or what influences inform how you define inclusion
3. In the context of students with disabilities participating in arts education programs, please define how inclusion is operationalized in your work
4. Who decides, or whose perspectives inform, how inclusion is operationalized in your work?

Defining Inclusion

Aspirational

“Inclusion of students with disabilities takes place when all individuals can belong and make meaningful contributions to the organization, space, and program.”

vs.

Operationalize

“...creating learning environments where students can meaningfully interact with materials, learning processes, content, and with their peers in ways that account for and value multiple ways of being and doing.”

Influences & Decision-Makers

Operationally

- **Partner schools**
- **Administration**
- **Staff**
- **Budget**
- **People with disabilities**

Compelling Examples of Practice

- Advisor model
- Student feedback loops
- Community partnerships

Findings

- How can student voice be centered more in decision making?
- Are people with disabilities given decision-making power?
- Are student choices restricted because of their disabilities in ways that are unnecessary?
- How can our personal definitions of inclusion be realized in how we operationalize inclusion?

So, what now?

- Continuously ask yourself questions
- Consider how you can immediately center voices of students and the disability community in your work

Thank you!

Elisabeth Staal

elisabeth_staal@gse.harvard.edu



Institute for Arts Education
and Special Needs