



## Inclusion Conversation Starters

Are you an educator who wants to move authentic inclusive education forward in your school or district? Do you have colleagues interested in developing a shared understanding of inclusion? Do you want to focus on classroom-based practices and the school-wide organizational structures that promote inclusive education? Here are **five** ways you can get a conversation started right now to identify changes YOU can make. Ask one or more colleagues to join you!

### ONE

**WATCH** short videos and use a question to guide discussion. Some of our favorites are:

- ❑ [What is Inclusion?](#) a four-minute video that shows authentic inclusive education.
- ❑ Shelley Moore's [5 MOORE minute series](#). Some of our favorites are [Dr. Baked Potato](#), [Design Backwards to Move Forward](#), and [Show me the Purpose](#).
- ❑ Films and videos by [Dan Habib: Including Samuel](#) and [Samuel in middle school](#) are about his son's journey to inclusion; [Thasya](#), a young girl severely impacted by autism who is also an extraordinary piano player; [Axel](#), a story about a young boy's communication journey; and [Intelligent Lives](#), which focuses on young adults as well as the importance of inclusion.
- ❑ [Ruby's Inclusion Story](#), a video about a girl with Down syndrome.
- ❑ Films by SWIFT Education Center that feature the [Henderson School](#) in Boston—a charter school designed to include children with significant disabilities—as well as [Together](#) and [Whatever it Takes](#) filmed in Maryland, Mississippi, and Oregon.

### TWO

**READ** books and articles with your colleagues. Start an inclusion club using the following texts:

- ❑ [Your Students, My Students, Our Students: Rethinking Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms](#) by Lee Ann Jung, Nancy Frey, Douglas Fisher, Julie Kroener.
- ❑ The [Principal's Handbook for Leading Inclusive Schools](#) by Julie Causton and George Theoharis.
- ❑ [When You Include Students, They Learn More, Achieve More, and Are More Engaged](#), a Think Inclusive blog by Tim Villegas from his interview with Dr. Carolyn Teigland about how Cecil County Public Schools in Maryland went from educating students in segregated separate classrooms to being fully inclusive.

## THREE

**LISTEN** to podcasts, such as:

- ☒ Dr. Carol Quirk, CEO of MCIE, explaining how a district can become more inclusive through systems change: [The Think Inclusive Podcast: Carol Quirk | Systems Change and Inclusive Education](#).
- ☒ Katie Novak with George Couros on [UDL in a Flexible Learning Landscape](#) on The Innovators Mindset Podcast.
- ☒ Katie Novak with Catlin Tucker (The Balance) talking about creating inclusive classrooms for learner variability in [Universal Design for Learning](#).
- ☒ Julie Causton's [The Inclusion Podcast](#), which includes [Darlene Hanson's podcast episode](#) on including students with complex communication needs.

## FOUR

**ENGAGE** with your school staff to get their feedback and share ideas:

- ☒ **Survey staff** about their attitudes and beliefs (use MCIE's **free** [Inclusive Education Practices Staff Survey](#) or contact us through [mcie@mcie.org](mailto:mcie@mcie.org) for an electronic version.
- ☒ **Obtain staff input** by having them respond to sentence starters on 3 to 6 large poster papers situated around the room or on tables, such as:
  - To include ALL learners, I need to learn...
  - Our biggest barrier to including ALL learners is...
  - One thing that I can contribute to promote inclusion in our school is...
  - One way to engage our parent community in this discussion is...
- ☒ **Brainstorm priorities** for actions to take in the next 6 months in response to the survey, staff input session, or other staff feedback.

## FIVE

**LEARN** from other implementers:

- ☒ Check out the Edutopia videos, such [Why Inclusion Matters on the Playground](#), [3 Keys to More Effective Collaboration in an Inclusive Classroom](#), and [Students With Limited Verbal Capabilities Can Thrive in Inclusive Classrooms](#).
- ☒ Sign up for [edWeb](#) webinars, learning from national experts on various topics such as [Creating Inclusive Science Classrooms that Give Voice to All Students](#), [Using Spring SEL Data to Guide Instruction and Intervention Next Year](#), and [Building Equity: Practices That Empower ALL Learners](#).

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