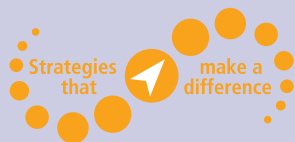


Creating Welcoming and Supportive Learning Environments



“In Alberta, an inclusive education system means: Shifting the focus from changing the student to changing the student’s environment so that barriers are reduced and students have the supports they need to be successful.” (Setting the Direction, 2010)



Creating welcoming and supportive learning environments requires commitment from all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, support workers, and school leaders. This commitment involves recognizing that the barriers to learning often exist within the environment, not the student. Creating an inclusive learning environment requires several shifts in thinking.

Shift #1

From only special education teachers being responsible for students with learning difficulties to all teachers being responsible for teaching all students.

- The responsibility for students with special learning needs is the shared responsibility of all staff.
- When all school staff focus on providing all students with meaningful learning opportunities, all students will benefit.

Shift #2

From focusing on the diagnosis of a disability to understanding students’ strengths and needs.

- Teachers, parents and specialists work collaboratively to identify supports and services that best match the unique strengths and needs of each student.

Shift #3

From focusing on what students can’t do to focusing on what students can do.

- Starting from where students are, and building on their interests and strengths, will increase opportunities for more students to experience more success.

