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Laura Broadbent

Removing Barriers, Raising Expectations

**Inclusive Strategies for
Neurodiverse Classrooms**

Inclusive teaching is not about lowering expectations—
it is about removing barriers so every learner has the
opportunity to meet those expectations.

– Laura Broadbent



Every classroom is a diverse environment with students of different achievement levels that take in, process and express information in different ways. Among these, every classroom includes students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those who are neurodivergent. Therefore, every teacher is a teacher of neurodiverse students. Neurodiverse learners bring distinctive strengths - creativity, pattern recognition, visual thinking, hyper-focus on areas of interest, and innovative problem-solving - that can enrich the learning environment for all. They have enormous potential for success.

Yet, too often, traditional classroom structures and materials are designed for a narrow conception of 'typical' learning. This deficit-oriented model not only overlooks the capabilities of neurodiverse students and those with special needs but can also erode their confidence, leaving them to believe they are 'less able' than their peers. They are aware of their challenges and often have very low self-esteem. It's time to change that, and create a classroom that nurtures, celebrates and is committed to the success of all learners.

The responsibility of educators is to achieve equity: to hold high standards while diversifying the pathways through which students access, process, and demonstrate learning. Evidence from Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and cognitive science underscores that when we design for variability - through multimodal materials, flexible assessment options, and inclusive routines - we remove barriers for some and create better learning conditions for all.

This paper argues for a strengths-first approach grounded in research and practical strategies. It challenges the misconception that teaching for SEN and neurodiversity means simplifying content; instead, it advocates for creative, multimodal methods that respect rigorous goals while accommodating diverse cognitive profiles. It highlights the importance of visible and oral instructions for learners with working-memory vulnerabilities, movement and doodling opportunities for those with ADHD, and structured regulation tools for students who experience sensory or emotional overload. It also explores the role of growth mindset practices, calm-down spaces, and brain breaks in fostering resilience and engagement.

By embedding these principles into everyday practice, schools can transform classrooms from places where only students with a certain profile succeed, into communities of belonging - where every learner, regardless of neurological profile, is recognized not for what they lack, but for the unique strengths they bring.

Teaching Neurodiverse Students

The Case for a Strengths–First Approach

Strengths–first teaching reframes classroom design around what learners can do rather than what they struggle with. Neurodiverse students often have strong visual–spatial reasoning, creativity, pattern recognition, fast associative thinking, and the ability to hyper-focus on areas of interest. When teaching builds on these strengths, students feel more motivated, confident, and capable.

Research on motivation consistently shows that when students receive repeated messages about what they *can't* do—poor memory, slow processing, difficulty reading—they begin to internalize those labels. They withdraw, avoid challenges, or aim for perfection to avoid failure. Conversely, when strengths are prioritized, students experience early wins which give them the confidence and energy to tackle harder tasks.

Strengths–first teaching is not about ignoring needs. It is about providing each student with a solid foundation of competence that reduces anxiety and cognitive load, so they have the capacity to engage fully and think more deeply¹.

“ Our understanding of cognitive science has grown, and this should now guide classroom practice. A strength–first approach helps address the limits of traditional teaching, which can overload working memory through single–modal input and teacher–centred delivery. ”

– Emma Saunders,
SEND Lead for University of Chichester (Multi) Academy Trust, UK

Equity

Equality means giving everyone the same thing, while equity means giving learners what they need to reach the same goal. In a classroom context, equality might mean providing identical worksheets and expecting identical outputs. But identical inputs do not lead to identical learning opportunities.

Equity acknowledges differences in working memory, executive function, sensory processing, language skills, and emotional regulation. It means offering multiple pathways to the same learning goal, ensuring that barriers—not expectations—are removed.



How the Brain Learns

If we want to evaluate our teaching practices and make effective changes, it's important to first understand how the brain learns. Every act of learning involves different brain systems that work together: attention, memory, processing, and emotional regulation. For many neurodiverse learners, one or more of these systems works differently — not worse, just differently². Understanding this is transformative.

Executive function helps students plan, organize, sequence steps, manage impulses, and choose strategies. It supports learning to learn, but also practical things like finding the classroom, understanding the timetable and prioritizing homework.

Working memory is different to short-term memory. Short-term memory stores information temporarily, while working memory is the brain's workspace that actively uses information, making it essential for following instructions, solving problems and making decisions. Many people with learning differences have a reduced working-memory capacity, which makes it hard to carry out these daily learning tasks³.

There are two main processing systems: phonological and visual-spatial. Skilled readers use both seamlessly. Phonological processing supports decoding and spelling; visual-spatial processing supports tracking text and organizing information. If one system is weaker, the other must work harder. Both drain mental energy quickly.

Think of each learner starting the day with ten spoons of energy. By lunchtime, a neurotypical learner may still have seven spoons left. A neurodiverse learner may have only three left, the extra spoons used up just filtering distractions, decoding text, and following instructions. Without the right support, fatigue and frustration grow, reducing their ability to learn.

Take, for example, a student with dyslexia. The Delphi 2025 definition of dyslexia describes it as a multi-dimensional processing profile rather than a narrow reading issue. It emphasizes processing differences across several areas—not only phonology—and recognizes that conditions, such as DLD (developmental language disorder), dyscalculia, ADHD, and DCD (developmental coordination disorder) often overlap. Importantly, dyslexia is independent of intelligence. This broader perspective underscores why structured, explicit, multimodal teaching is essential rather than optional.

“Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with one or more other developmental difficulties, including developmental language disorder, ADHD, developmental coordination disorder, and dyscalculia.”

– *Delphi 2025 Definition of Dyslexia*⁴

The Problem with Traditional Learning

Many traditional classroom routines often assume a ‘typical learner’ who can focus easily, process information smoothly and write long texts. As a result, many practices unintentionally disadvantage neurodiverse learners.

Verbal-only teacher instructions place heavy demands on working memory and can leave students feeling lost or embarrassed to ask for the instructions to be repeated. Additionally, single modal inputs and outputs – for instance, reading long texts to learn new information and writing long texts to show knowledge – require strong working memory, phonological processing and emotional stamina. They also underestimate the students who think visually or creatively.



Fixed-ability thinking persists in many systems. For example, in some classrooms, students are placed at a certain table in the classroom. These tables are allocated colors, which denote a perceived ability or level. These color-coded tables and fixed groups reinforce labels that follow students for years. In order to demonstrate that learning is fluid, and ability isn’t fixed, it’s important to model a growth mindset. This is an approach to learning that recognizes skills and understanding develop over time through effort, strategies, support and reflection. It emphasizes progress, resilience, and personalized pathways rather than comparison or limitation⁵.

At a classroom management level, modeling a growth mindset might take the form of grouping students according to their current attainment aligned to the specific content being taught. Rotating groups regularly helps to reduce fixed labels. As a teaching approach, encouraging students to challenge themselves and acknowledging that they might perform differently for each task further reinforces that each student has their own strengths.

A strategy useful in some contexts is to allow students to choose the level at which they'd like to tackle a task: supported, guided, independent⁶. This could also be framed as: practice, apply and extend, to focus on learning as a process, or: build, strengthen and stretch, to build confidence. For some students, selecting their own level fosters ownership and awareness of their learning, while also acknowledging that they will find certain tasks more difficult than others. It's important to be aware that this might not always work as some students can find choice confusing and stressful. As always, offer it to students and monitor their response.

3 Choose a challenge to finish the lesson.

Spicy Challenge

-  Say three professions from the interview.
-  Say three professions from the interview and what they have to do.
-  Say four professions from the interview and what they have to do.


I can talk about an interview. 

Fig 1. Example of a multi-level task from *Small Big Things Level 3* (Pearson 2026)

To further embed a growth mindset, establishing a culture of praising and rewarding effort more than achievement shifts the focus onto students' own work, rather than a generic objective that might not be attainable by everyone. Teachers can also document individual student goals and progress towards them so students can see their own learning path.

“ Unfortunately, the collaborative thoughtful approaches to teaching practices documented in projects where change has been successful are scarce in most schools, not through the wrong-doings of the schools or teachers, but through a legacy of fixed-ability thinking that permeates not only schools, but society more broadly. ”

– Rachel Marks,
Author of *The Blue Table Means You Don't Have a Clue Study*⁷

Teacher expectations also play a powerful role. Students labeled as ‘low ability’ may receive more behavior-focused comments. Students seen as ‘high ability’ receive more praise for neatness, organization, or compliance. These subtle differences shape student identity and limit growth.

Even the term ‘Special Educational Needs’ can unintentionally frame students as having deficits. It can be more beneficial to shift to ‘Different Educational Needs’ to help change the narrative from fixing students to recognizing that we’re all different.

Taken together, these practices outline how traditional classrooms often prioritize conformity, speed and surface outcomes over understanding, flexibility and learner well-being. When systems rely on fixed labels, single modes of instruction, and narrow definitions of success, they risk limiting not only neurodivergent learners, but all students whose strengths don’t align with these expectations. A more inclusive approach requires moving away from deficit-based thinking and towards teaching practices that recognize learning as variable, contextual and dynamic.



Strategies for Successfully Teaching Neurodiverse Classes

Recognizing the limitations of traditional classroom practices is an important first step, but meaningful inclusion depends on what happens next. Teaching neurodiverse learners successfully requires intentional strategies that are flexible, evidence-informed and responsive. This section outlines practical approaches that support access, reduce cognitive and emotional load, and create learning environment in which all students can participate and make progress.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) aligns naturally with cognitive science. It reduces barriers by offering multiple ways to present information, engage learners, and let them demonstrate what they know. When teachers use clear visuals, diagrams, short videos, captions, narration, and multimodal explanations (visual, oral, kinesthetic), they free up cognitive space for students to think. This is not ‘dumbing down.’ Instead, it is the removal of barriers so that deeper thinking becomes possible⁸.

Some researchers note that UDL alone isn’t enough for learners with specific needs, such as dyslexia. These students also require explicit instruction in phonology, morphology, and etymology. UDL and targeted intervention are not mutually exclusive; they work best when they’re combined where needed.

Engagement – the ‘Why’

UDL emphasizes that students engage most deeply when they experience choice, relevance and safe levels of challenge. These conditions help to support autonomy and emotional regulation. By offering options for how students enter a task, connect activities to their lived experiences and structured collaborative problem-solving, we can help students access new information effectively.

Representation – the ‘What’

Learners benefit when key information is visible, clear and presented in more than one mode. This can be a combination of elements such as spoken instructions with visuals – timelines, graphic organizers, diagrams, short videos or Venn charts⁹. Multimedia research shows that learning improves when text and visuals appear close together, when key information is highlighted (‘signaling’), and when narration replaces dense text.

For learners with working-memory or processing vulnerabilities, dual-coded materials dramatically improve comprehension and retention by distributing processing across phonological and visual-spatial systems. This helps learners understand core concepts without being overwhelmed by format.

Multiple Means of Actions and Expression – the ‘How’

UDL encourages students to demonstrate knowledge in more than one way. Students may show understanding through speaking, writing, drawing, building, performing, or recording. A menu of options allows each learner to work towards the same learning goal through their chosen route. For example, a teacher could ask students: *What do you say when you meet someone for the first time?* Then offer students different ways to answer: record an audio, act it out, draw a cartoon, write a list.

Teachers should provide graduated support—templates, checklists, exemplars, and guided practice—to help students plan and carry out tasks effectively. For learners with executive-function challenges, these supports make task initiation and sequencing visible and manageable.

“ Assessment should measure learning, not how well students can navigate the barriers we build into assessments, whether those barriers are intentional or unintentional. When we offer clarity, choice, and predictable expectations, we get a more accurate picture of what students know and can do, particularly for students with attention, language, or processing differences. ”

– Susi Miller, eLearning Accessibility Expert,
Author of *Designing Accessible Learning Content*

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is common practice in many classrooms, aimed at supporting learner success. The scaffolding for neurodiverse learners may be different, but the ultimate goal is the same. Neurodiverse scaffolding extends beyond short-term, whole-class supports to address consistent patterns of learner variability. Whereas typical scaffolding might involve modeling a task or providing a shared writing frame, and gradually removing support over time, neurodiverse scaffolding requires responsive, ongoing scaffolds that remain available as long as learners need them.

Scaffolding begins with the teacher’s input through instructions and representation of new language and tasks. When giving important information to the class, it’s helpful to say and write the words at the same time, so students can process the information through both visual and auditory channels. Furthermore, dual-coding, which means

providing simple pictures or icons next to written words to support their meaning, can be effective in helping students understand what they're reading. When giving students a task, providing the separate steps in a diagram or list can help them to understand what they're required to do and organize themselves. It can also be very helpful to model crossing off each stage as it's completed so students can learn how to move through a task and achieve their final goal¹⁰.

A key element of scaffolding for neurodiverse students is designing for difference from the outset, rather than adding support when difficulties arise. In practice, this means offering tasks with multi-modal options for process and expression. For example, allowing students to plan orally before writing, to record spoken responses instead of written texts, or to use a variety of visuals. Again, this scaffolding remains over time, while expectations for thinking, language use, or conceptual understanding increase. By normalizing these tools, teachers create inclusive environments where support is seen as a legitimate learning tool rather than a marker of deficit.

“ One characteristic of effective teachers is their ability to anticipate students' errors and warn them about possible errors some of them are likely to make. ”

– Barak Rosenshine,
Author of *Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know*



Teachers can model expected errors themselves and have students identify them or use success criteria to either evaluate a model or use them for peer review¹¹. It's key that teachers always provide a positive framework for peer review, including clear success criteria to mark against. One framework that is a useful model is 'two stars and a wish': students find two positives and one improvement in each other's work.

Effective scaffolding includes:

- ④ Having both spoken and written instructions
- ④ Dual-coding: written words with picture support
- ④ Clear success criteria at the beginning of the task
- ④ Worked examples that show step-by-step reasoning
- ④ Using models and examples early
- ④ Partially completed models that students finish
- ④ Chunked tasks with visible sub-steps
- ④ Guiding questions and sentence stems
- ④ Partial frameworks for planning
- ④ Color-coded folders
- ④ Sentences starters

Permanent resources include:

- ④ Visual timetables
- ④ Color-coded task instructions
- ④ Step-by-step checklists
- ④ Sentence banks
- ④ Planning grids
- ④ Verb tables
- ④ Sound-supported vocabulary lists
- ④ Model texts
- ④ Flashcards
- ④ Reward systems
- ④ List of classroom rules
- ④ School bag checklists

Working Memory Support

Students with working-memory challenges often use significant mental energy before learning even begins—trying to remember instructions, keeping track of materials, or managing distractions. These students are not forgetful or inattentive; their cognitive workspace becomes overloaded more quickly. Teachers can help learners prioritize, sequence, and monitor their progress by using some simple tools.

Working-memory supports include:

- ① Checklists
- ① Exemplar rubrics shared at the start of a task written on the board or a sheet of paper
- ① Visual schedules
- ① Cue cards
- ① Key-word prompts
- ① Meaningful and consistent color-coded multi-step instructions
- ① Predictable routines



Movement and Doodling

Research shows that movement and low-load fidgeting help many learners with ADHD and other profiles maintain attention¹². Movement is not a distraction—it is a regulation strategy. Likewise, quiet doodling helps learners focus during listening tasks and stops them thinking about other things¹³. It's important to note that not all fidgeting is helpful. Items that draw visual attention, such as spinners, can be distracting. Tools should be simple, quiet, and unobtrusive¹⁴. As long as fidgeting and doodling are appropriate for the setting and don't become distracting, it is important teachers don't criticize students for using these coping methods. Doing so can further erode students' self-esteem¹⁵.

Movement and doodling activities include:

- ④ Standing or leaning
- ④ Quietly doodling
- ④ Chair-leg stretch bands
- ④ Discreet fidget tools that students aren't tempted to look at

Brain Breaks

Short, structured brain breaks help reset attention and reduce cognitive fatigue for all students, regardless of any learning needs. The most effective routines alternate between light physical activity and calming exercises. They work best when they are used regularly, are structured and predictable, and are an option for all learners in the class.

Brain break activities include::

Light physical activity:

- ④ Stretching or shaking limbs
- ④ Cross-lateral movements
- ④ Light aerobic activity

Calming exercises:

- ④ Box breathing (a breathing exercise that involves inhaling for a count of four, holding for a count of four, exhaling for a count of four and holding again for a count of four)
- ④ Counting breaths
- ④ Calm imagery e.g. floating jellyfish

Emotional Regulation, Over-stimulation and Safe Options

Emotional regulation is a soft skill that is beneficial for all students. It is also central to inclusive teaching because many learners—especially those with ADHD, DLD, dyslexia, or sensory sensitivities—shift into stress responses quickly¹⁶. A useful idea is to teach students about the ‘fight, flight or freeze’ reaction, so they understand what’s happening to themselves and each other.

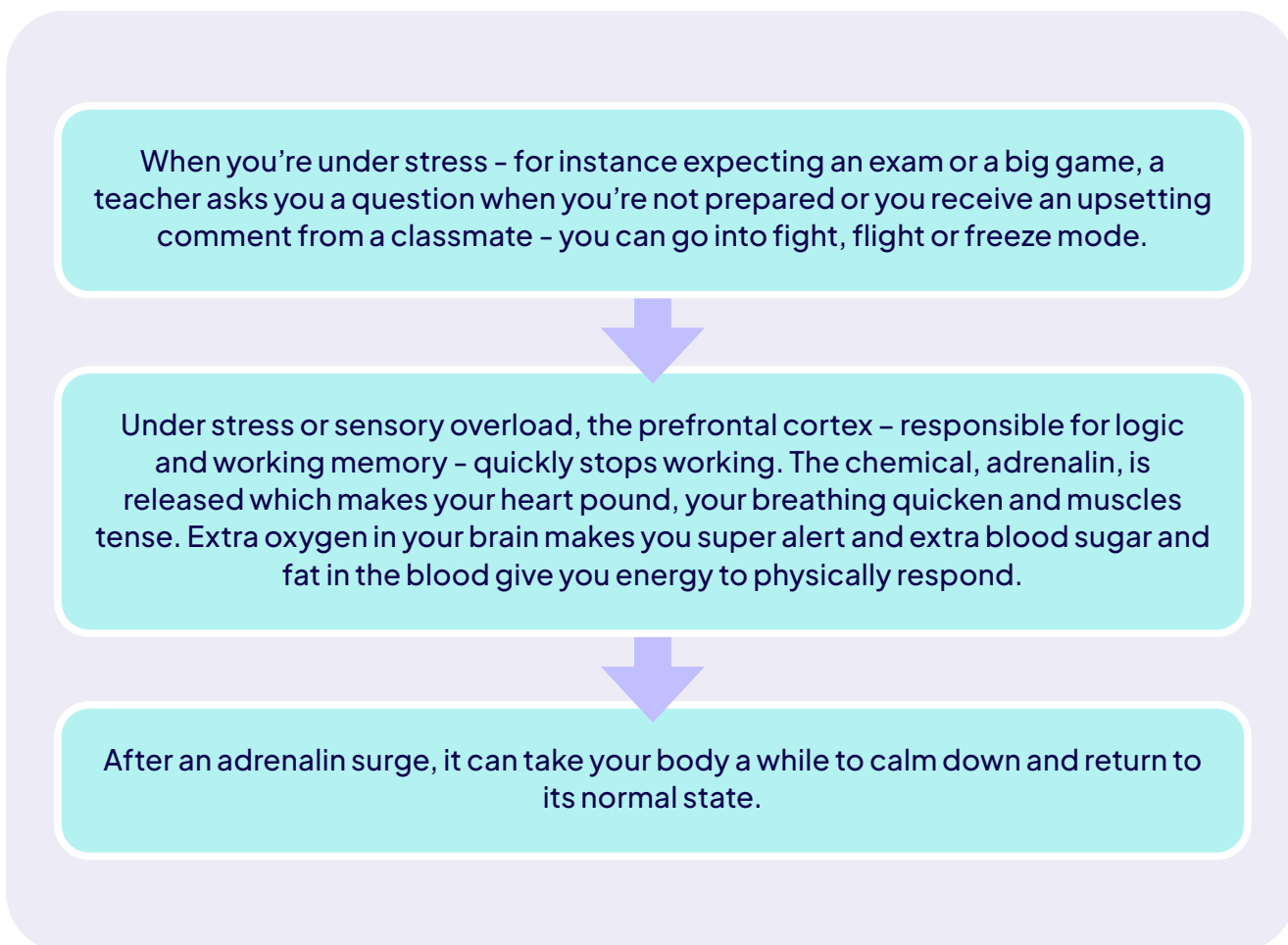


Fig 2. ‘Fight, flight or freeze’ diagram created from www.health.harvard.edu/mindscape/for-young-people/brain-body-connection/fight-flight-or-freeze

The next step is to teach students about emotions: reading them in others, reacting, and recognizing their own triggers. The ‘Zones of Regulation’ is an excellent framework to raise awareness of emotional states and how to deal with them¹⁷. They comprise four zones - blue, green, yellow and red - that denote an emotion state and provide a list of vocabulary to describe each one. It’s important for students to use the vocabulary to think about triggers and connect emotions with physical feelings, then monitor outcomes to ensure this becomes a life skill.

“

Did you know that many neurodivergent people have stronger reactions to emotional stimuli? They actually ‘feel more’. And where they have executive function challenges – and the vast majority do – this involves trouble regulating their emotions. In other words, your neurodivergent students feel emotions more, but can regulate them less. It’s a perfect storm of emotional dysregulation. ”

– Dr Martin Bloomfield,
Lecturer in Applied Ethics and Director of Beyond Inclusion

Calm-Down Corners and Safe Spaces

Calm-down spaces give learners a short break to reset when they feel overwhelmed¹⁸. They can contain breathing prompts on cards and posters, soft textures and grounding cards to help students return to learning quickly¹⁹. Clear routines (how to enter, how long to stay, how to rejoin the class) are vital. And as with all the suggestions in this article, these spaces should be available to everyone to help remove stigma and improve the classroom climate^{20,21}.

Heavy-Work Tasks

Short, physical tasks, such as carrying books, delivering equipment, moving boxes or stacking chairs can help some students reset their levels of emotions. Teachers should observe student responses and offer alternatives (wall-pushes, stretching) when heavy work is not suitable.



Assessment for Learning

UDL-aligned assessment keeps the learning goal constant but allows different ways to show understanding. Written-only tasks disadvantage many learners. Alternatives include spoken explanations, diagrams, recordings, models, and timelines to capture deeper understanding without lowering rigor. Sharing rubrics beforehand also helps to improve accuracy and fairness, ensuring students focus on the criteria rather than the format of the assessment.

Examples of assessment options:

- ④ Verbal demonstrations
- ④ Acting out
- ④ Building models
- ④ Comic-style storyboards
- ④ Posters
- ④ Miming activities
- ④ Growth Mindset

“

Assessment of learning is often high-stakes and stressful, and particularly so for neurodivergent students who likely have previous experience of misinterpreting or being misunderstood, even in their first language. To ensure that assessments are equitable and affirming, we should strive to incorporate the principles of UDL, so that all students are encouraged and empowered to demonstrate their linguistic competence in ways that work for them. ”

– Lisa Brennan,
Lead Consultant for Neurodivergent People

Growth Mindset

A growth mindset helps students see struggle as part of learning, not a sign of failure. At its core, it's a way of thinking that contrasts with a fixed-ability mindset by treating challenges as opportunities to learn, mistakes as valuable information, and feedback as a tool for improvement. For example, a student who finds learning new vocabulary difficult might assume they are simply 'not a language person,' and then they disengage. A growth-oriented approach reframes this: the vocabulary is challenging, but with strategies, the learner can make progress.

Teachers can model this mindset by using phrases like 'I haven't figured this out **yet**,' and offering process-focused feedback such as 'Try approaching this vocabulary in this way...' or 'The technique you used here worked really well.' This keeps attention on strategy, not talent, and shifts praise from outcomes to growth²².

Growth mindset strategies include:

- ④ Goal journals
- ④ Success trackers
- ④ Learning journey board
- ④ Mistake of the week
- ④ Peer teaching
- ④ Reflective check-ins

Needs and Strategies Across Age Groups

All learners have needs that change as they grow and develop. Differences in areas such as language development, attention, working memory and self-regulation can present very differently at early years, primary and secondary stages. Therefore, whilst effective SEN support must increase demands placed on students, teachers must continue to provide suitable support for the developmental stage²³.

The strategies outlined in this paper apply across all age groups, but they need to be used differently depending on the learners' cognitive, emotional and social development.

The following table highlights common SEN-related needs across different age groups and suggests practical strategies that can be integrated into everyday teaching and materials.

Age Group	Main Developmental Needs	Best Strategies for This Age
5–7 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Predictable routines ⦿ Clear instructions ⦿ Strong visual support ⦿ Help with emotional regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Use visuals, modeling, and step-by-step demonstrations ⦿ Keep tasks short and hands-on ⦿ Build routines and use visual schedules ⦿ Embed simple regulation tools (breathing, movement, calm corner)
8–11 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Support for organization and task management ⦿ Growing independence but still needs guidance ⦿ Developing emotional vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Teach planning explicitly (task steps, checklists) ⦿ Use multimodal tasks (diagrams, talk, videos) ⦿ Offer structured collaboration ⦿ Incorporate emotion-labelling tools (Zones of Regulation)
12–14 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Higher emotional intensity ⦿ Need relevance and autonomy ⦿ Struggles with organization and sustained motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Give meaningful choice and real-world connections ⦿ Use scaffolded independence (templates, exemplars) ⦿ Model metacognitive thinking ('how I think through this problem') ⦿ Provide predictable structure
15–18 years old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Desire autonomy and personal identity ⦿ Executive function still developing ⦿ Preparing for exams and future pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Offer flexible assessment options and ways to show understanding ⦿ Use planning tools (timelines, study organizers) ⦿ Make learning feel purposeful and connected to future goals ⦿ Keep instructions clear and explicit

Implementation Roadmap

Translating a growth mindset into everyday practice depends on coherent systems that support inclusive teaching at every level. This implementation roadmap outlines three interconnected areas for sustainable change. It's important to involve staff from all parts of an organization to ensure all experiences and needs are represented and incorporated into these tools.

Policy and Culture

Embedding inclusive design at a whole-school level has the greatest impact, transforming the way in which every member of staff teaches. This can include step-by-step instructions with visuals, multiple means of engagement, and choice of output in everyday tasks. Policies should emphasize flexibility and high expectations for all learners.

Professional Learning

Provide whole-staff training that builds a shared understanding of how to teach inclusively. Core elements should include the essentials of flexible, UDL-aligned instruction, awareness of working-memory vulnerabilities, and practical routines. Professional learning should also encourage a culture shift: teachers normalizing diverse learning methods and educational differences rather than special educational needs.

Starter Toolkit

Equip teachers with a practical toolkit that reduces planning load and ensures consistent implementation. This should include:

- **Templates:** step-by-step instruction slides, a bank of graphic organizers, choice boards for assessment and activities, simple regulation menus, and a low-cost calm-corner setup guide.
- **Protocols:** clear expectations for movement and doodling, guidance for the safe and discreet use of fidgets, short breathing scripts for brain-break transitions, and simple data-logging templates to track attention, engagement, and regulation.

Institutions can also embed Social and Emotional Learning, such as the 'zones of regulation' into their teaching schedule alongside safe spaces and calm down areas. Together, these tools create a structured yet flexible foundation that supports teachers in embedding inclusive practice every day.

Measurement and Evaluation

Effective implementation must be accompanied by thoughtful measurement and evaluation to ensure that inclusive practices are having the intended impact. Rather than focusing only on test results, it's important to evaluate inclusive settings through student engagement, access, well-being and progress over time. This section outlines approaches to monitoring and reviewing practice that supports improvement and recognizes diverse ways learners demonstrate success.

Schools can track progress through simple indicators:

- **Classroom indicators** may include on-task behavior, reduced requests for repeated instructions, work-completion rates, and brief anonymous check-ins on self-efficacy or happiness. Patterns in incident logs or attendance can also show changes, especially when movement tools or fidgets are being trialed.
- **Assessment indicators** should focus on progress toward learning goals. As barriers are reduced and students can express learning through multiple modes, results become a more accurate reflection of their understanding.
- **Well-being indicators** can be gathered through short social and emotional learning /self-regulation scales, student-voice focus groups, and feedback on whether accommodations feel useful and accessible.

A 6–8 week review cycle allows teachers to refine supports—adjusting brain-break timing, replacing ineffective fidgets, or re-teaching routines. This iterative approach recognizes that strategies vary across learners, and ongoing reflection is essential for impact.

Inclusive teaching is not about lowering expectations—it is about removing barriers so every learner has the opportunity to meet those expectations. By embedding strengths-first teaching, multimodal instruction, clear routines, and flexible ways of showing understanding, schools create classrooms where all students can access rigorous learning. When accessibility becomes the norm rather than the exception, learners are empowered to participate, progress and thrive.



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