

5 MM Episode Script

Episode: Inclusion is Not Assimilation

Welcome to Five Moore Minutes! Useful videos in about five minutes, that support the teaching and learning of all students! I am your host, Dr. Shelley Moore, and today's episode is called "Inclusion is not Assimilation!"

Hello friends, so I know we have spent a lot of time constructing what it means to be inclusive, but I gotta tell you, my understanding just keeps evolving! Remember the very first 5MM video! We were we talked about what inclusion is. And then! We made a video about evolving inclusion to be about responding to diversity. And then! we made this video where we talking about inclusion as being unified, and where we visualized inclusion as little trivial pursuit pies representing all of our multiple identities! Well now I gotta tell you what happened! So I was visiting a school and a teacher tells me this story...listen to this:

Ok, so there is a young student who had recently arrived as a refugee to Canada with his family.

Side note, it is also important to know that his family had moved in December to a place in Canada that was VERY cold...and VERY dark...and VERY different from his home country. So imagine this, it's December, its cold, its dark and it is recess, this little guy is like...where the heck am I?! And made this face... His teacher saw that he looked a bit overwhelmed and started to walk over to check in on him but as she approached he took off.

"We got a runner!"

BUT, when she looked to see where he ran, she noticed that he had run to another student. Another student who spoke his language because he was from the same place!!!!

Shhhooppp!

There were like magnets, being drawn together by a strength of identity that made it look like they were long lost family members! What made this kid feel a sense of belonging was seeing himself in another person!

It was a powerful example of something we all need.. communities of identity. And an example of the importance of not forcing students to suppress their identities! If they were not allowed to speak their home language, they wouldn't not have been able to find each other! We all have communities of Identity and we need them! We may have language, culture, race communities and disability communities. Heck! I am part of a queer community!

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So what if inclusion is finding belonging in communities of identity – where our identities, strengths and interests are similar AND finding belonging in communities of diversity where our identities, strengths and interests are different!

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Episode: People Are Not Supports

But here is the most important part. If we are advocating for communities of diversity, the goal is NOT to change what is different in another person or make them become like you.

We expect students with Disabilities to do this every day, and they are exhausted. They do not feel safe, let alone feel a sense of belonging. Inclusion is not forcing students to become someone else – I mean...can we just stop it with the forced eye contact already!

I swear, if there was one skill the whole world could be better at, it is this. How do we learn from each other, rather than trying to change or suppress each other. That is a community of diversity!

Kids learn the most from each other, in both their identities and diversities. Every single one of them are teachers and learners, and every single one of them has something to offer a community.

So...how can we help students declare their identities, how can we support them to learn from each other's identities, and how can we find ways for students to be a part of a community, without suppressing who they are, or making them become someone else.

Now, one thing we need to consider as we move forward is that acknowledging and valuing all identities is not just a goal for students. We also need to look around at the adults. I guarantee there is someone in your community who does not feel like they belong. And if the adults do not feel safe identifying in your community, neither will the students.

So here is your challenge for today...I want you to look around you. Your classroom, school, family – who is being forced to mask, who does not have the opportunity to shine, who is not feeling connected or a sense of belonging- look at the adults! And I want you to reach out to them. Learn more about them, learn more from them. Give them space to shine, help them feel that they can be exactly who they are – because if they are going to feel belonging, that is exactly what we need to do – for adults, for students, and for families.

Ok friends, go forth and continue to blow up the archaic systems and barriers of the past, and look forward to the bright inclusive future for all of our students, teachers and families!

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