Ten Tips for Special Educators

Collaborate to promote the participation of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom.

1. **Visit the inclusive classroom.**
   Assess student progress and participation in the classroom setting. Your lesson modifications, accommodations, and learning goals will be more meaningful.

2. **Define roles and expectations.**
   Tell classroom teachers your role, and explain how you can help. Specify what you will need to increase student participation. Discuss discipline and behavior expectations.

3. **Use the expertise of others.**
   Solicit the classroom teacher's participation. Ask for the syllabus, learning objectives, outcome standards, rubrics and any specific content information.

4. **Develop a rapport with teammates.**
   Talk with classroom teachers in person! Encourage others to voice concerns, hopes and fears. Even a two minute chat between classes can establish collaboration.

5. **Watch your language!**
   Avoid acronyms or language specific to your field. Good collaboration stems from good communication. Use people-first language.

6. **Friends are natural supports.**
   Peers can walk together between classes, record messages on communication devices or assist at lunch.

7. **Bolster student-teacher relationships.**
   Brag about your student's strengths! Tell the classroom teacher how your student participates. Never apologize for placing a student in an inclusive classroom or promise that a student will “not be a bother.”

8. **Supervise Paraeducators.**
   Give paraeducators explicit instructions. Outline duties in detail. Always follow up and monitor how things are going in the classroom!

9. **Invite students to IEP meetings.**
   Students who attend their own meetings, understand their role and responsibility as active learners. Ask peers, family, friends, and teachers to share their goals and expectations with the student.

10. **Promote active, experiential learning!**
    Assist in planning cooperative learning groups, centers, partner learning, and project-based lessons. Alternative methods encourage active learning for ALL students.