

Chapter 26: Integrating Special Education Students in Schools

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Abstract: This paper explores how the integration of special education students with the general education student population will affect their functional daily living skills, independence, and overall academic achievement. A review of the literature found that there are many positive effects of the integration for both parties, which is reflected in their personalities on multiple levels. The researcher found that the integration of the special education students with the general education students helps to develop and improve their daily functional independence skills and overall academic achievement. In conclusion, I would like to create weekly schedules and daily class schedules according to students' preferences and hobbies so that specialists will be able to increase these skills properly and support them. Thus, integration will be more easily accomplished in the schools. Data from pre- and post-surveys and questionnaires from parents, teachers, and specialists will be compared.

Integrating Special Education Students in Schools

In the focus of integration for all categories of special education students with the general education student population, there are some educational conditions that require improvement. When both students meet in one educational institution, such as school, and with a dedicated and collaborative staff, they can get to know each student's needs. This is important because educators can then provide quality education that achieves the goal and produces students who are psychologically and socially adapted to others; in addition, special education students can significantly improve in their abilities and skills in general. This study looks at the benefits and positive impact of integration on both parties (special education students and general education students). The question I am exploring is, "How will the integration of the special education students with the general education student population affect their functional daily living skills, independence, and overall academic achievement?"

Literature Review

Views on integrating special education students with the general education students has been discussed and debated frequently over the last several years. One of the central themes that has been researched and described by many educators is the expected benefit of integrating special education students with their peers in the general education school. Armstrong's (2016) study found the following:

Including children with disabilities in regular classrooms is important not simply because the United Nations says it is so, nor because it seems morally right to do so. Rather, there are some fundamental reasons why integrating students with disabilities into the mainstream of education improves the learning outcomes for all children.

Another essential point to consider is if there is a positive effect of inclusion on the special education side, does it affect the general education students as well? Armstrong (2016) found the following:

For instance, if we observe the positive side of students with disabilities in the classroom instead of focusing on their weaknesses, we will find that they are adding new strengths in the classroom. We will also find different positive points with students with Down syndrome who are known for their pure charming characters and creative thinking among students with hyperactivity and systemic abilities among autistic students known for their excellence with computers.

Some other positive effects were also observed on students, the most notable being the reduction of absences.

Views on inclusion of special education students with the general education population have ranged from positive to negative. Over time, it has been examined and analyzed with surprising results and this is in various aspects not only academically but on the personal and social adjustment levels, too.

There are many benefits to inclusive classrooms, and they extend to students with and without disabilities. In an article from *The Atlantic* (2017), middle school principal VaydaManzo says:

High expectations and instructional strategies are good for students with special needs, helping them be more successful than they would have been in a separate, self-contained environment. The publication cites research that shows “as many as 85 percent of students with disabilities can master general education content if they receive educational supports,” and notes benefits that include: more instructional time, fewer absences, better post-secondary outcomes, social benefits to non-disabled students as they learn to form

“positive relationships” and better relate to “a variety of people”.

In conclusion, the positive impact has been clearly shown for both special education students and general education students as it was presented through statistics and the opinions and expectations of those with expertise and specialization. One key aspect discussed in the inclusion of special education students is how the teachers will respond to this classroom arrangement. What will they need to do, and what resources will they need in order to teach and support the children?

One essay discusses collaboration as a major issue, which is focused on in special education classrooms. Teachers from all areas work together to help the students. According to Friend (2010), the definition of collaboration “Is a style for interaction between co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal” (p.10). It has been shown that all we need to create collaboration between teachers and parents is to understand the tasks and requirements of each party involved as they work together to help the students attain their potential. Some of these tasks and responsibilities are providing the appropriate environment. This includes the tools and means that each individual needs, as well as the specialized educational staff. Caring for the safety, security and familiarity of each student based upon their individual plans, is extremely important. In addition, reviewing their interests, hobbies, and scheduled activities that support and develop their needs has to be addressed.

To review, there are many benefits to integration for both parties, and that is when the staff cooperates fully with the assistant teachers, understands the needs of each party, and provides the necessary requirements for each. If this does occur, then we will see people with special

needs become more confident and independent. In addition, we will find new members active in all areas of society.

Discussion/Conclusion

The partial integration of the special education students with the general education student population will affect their functional daily living skills, independence, and overall academic achievement. This idea of integration means that special education students are included with the general education students in a general education school. When we speak about special education, we are referring to all students with special abilities, such as students with Down syndrome, learning disabilities, autism, severe, moderate, and mild intellectual disabilities, as well as deaf and blind students

The researcher overwhelmingly found that the state of special education is not what it used to be and that is a good thing. In years past, students with special needs were often segregated from those in general education classrooms. They did not receive the same benefits that inclusive classrooms offered. Integration is more the norm in schools today, and educators are learning to work together to meet the needs of every student in their care. Cooperation is what is required for this successful integration of teachers and staff as a whole to share in the decision-making as they work toward a common goal.

By giving all children, a chance to succeed with embracing diversity and inclusion in the classrooms, both special and general education students will be waiting for amazing results to happen. For example, we will observe the independence and self-confidence of special education students as they partake in everyday life experiences from independent travel, art classes, participating in sports, and more.

One of my daily observations during my school immersion at Camelback High School in Phoenix, AZ, was the complete harmony between special education students with different abilities and students of general education during both the breakfast and lunch breaks. I also saw this in the joint classes they attended such as art, music, and physical education, and while attending shows and various events in the school. In addition, I saw the simulation of special education students with others through their dependence on themselves in many things and their mastery of most daily life skills. This is a result of habituation and early integration.

The author of this project concludes that the integration of special education students with the general education population will achieve a very significant level of development in the lives of these special education students. This will be observed on the levels of personal and life skills as well as at the academic level. In addition, integration will improve their social communication skills with the students in the general education classrooms and society in general.

Based upon the information presented, when returning to my country, I want to do the same thing to ensure that each student's inclinations, hobbies, and academic achievements will be met on a daily basis. I will include those interests in my students' schedules, which will support them through other classrooms and other specialized teachers. In the beginning, I would like to hold a meeting with the principal and the specialized teachers. This meeting would consist of teachers of art, physical and family education and general education teachers. We will discuss the ideas and explain in detail about exactly what the integration of special education with their fellow students means according to their interests, inclinations and academic advancement in their classes. I saw the benefits to all students from this integration and I want to show and share the interest and positive effects that I saw on all the

students. I would like to begin on a small scale by beginning this inclusion with children who have learning disabilities and Down syndrome.

References

- [1] Armstrong, T. (2016). 6 Reasons for fully including children with special needs in regular Classrooms. Retrieved March 13, 2020, from <https://www.institute4learning.com/2016/10/16/6-reasons-for-fully-including-children-with-special-needs-in-regular-classrooms/>.
- [2] Friend, M. (2011). Successful co-teaching strategies increasing the effectiveness of your inclusive program (Grades 1-12). Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education & Research.
- [3] Vayda-Manzo, A. & Mader, J. (2017). Teacher training is failing students with disabilities. Retrieved March, 2020, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2017/03/howteacher-training-hinders-special-needs-students/518286/>.

Plan of Action

<u>What steps or actions need to be done?</u>	<u>Who will do this step or action?</u>	<u>Timeline When will you do this step? How long will it take to complete this step?</u>	<u>Resources: What do I need for this step or action?</u> Other teachers, Staff, supplies and materials, Time, PLC time	<u>Date completed</u> ✓ and write date when completed
Create an Attitude Survey to give to parents regarding integrating special education students with the general education students	Myself	June 2020 2 weeks	Faculty mentor, computer to create survey to give online, sample of data sheets from All Things PLC website	<input type="checkbox"/>
Start collecting websites, podcasts and resources about integrating special education students with the general education students	Myself and my team	May & June	Create a special paper folder for the information	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collect photos, videos, and information from meetings I attended	Myself	May & June	Create a special paper folder for the information.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Set up a meeting to share information with parents about my plan and get their email addresses	Myself, principal and counselor	Beginning of the school year	Computer, Action Plan, survey, email addresses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share my Action Research project with my principal for information, approval and encouragement	Myself	At the beginning of the school semester	Send a message and set up an appointment.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share my Action Research project	Myself	At the beginning of the school	Reserve the team meeting room.	<input type="checkbox"/>

with my team members for information, approval and encouragement		Semester.		
Give the pre-Attitude Survey to the Parents	Myself	Beginning of the school year	Computer, survey and folder for the data	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look at the data for their attitudes about integrating special education students with the general education students	Myself	Beginning of the school year	Data and create a special paper folder for the data	<input type="checkbox"/>

If approved by my	Myself,	Beginning of the	Principal, team	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give the post Attitude Survey to the Parents	Myself	At the end of the school year	Computer, survey and folder for the data	<input type="checkbox"/>
Analyze the observation checklist data throughout the year to see how the students interact with each other, teachers, and the support staff while focusing on their academic and social skills	Myself, team members, support staff and students	Throughout the school year and at the end of the school year	Observation checklist data from myself, team members, support staff and students and a folder for the data	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Results and Interpretation and Conclusion are to		parents and students			
	Create an observation checklist to see how the students interact with each other, teachers, and the support staff while focusing on their academic and social skills	Myself	Beginning of the school year to use throughout the year	Observation checklist and a folder for the data, sample of data sheets from All Things PLC website	<input type="checkbox"/>

be completed in Saudi Arabia

Results and Interpretation

Make sense of the data to answer the question “so what?” Organize using webs, graphs, charts, numbers etc.

Make observations about the data. Non-judgmental statements of facts.

- Search for themes and patterns
- Ask questions ● Look for gaps
- Display the data

Conclusion

Now that you have analyzed your data...

- What have you learned?
- How do you feel about what you have learned?
- How do your conclusions differ from what you thought you would learn?
- Do the conclusions seem believable?
- What actions might you take based on your conclusions?
- What new questions emerge for you from the data?
- Who else might be interested in these conclusions?
- What are strategies to share your conclusions with other

Appendix



Goals After this session, you will be able to:

- Define the Writing Program.
- Explain how to use the WP content to support the core curriculum of writing.
- Solve the struggling students' problems in writing through the WP.
- Analyze students' needs in writing.
- Apply the WP with students.
- Evaluate the students' writing quality before and after implementing the WP.

Importance This proposal is meet these needs:

- Develop students' writing skills.
- Identify students' needs of writing.
- Benefit from applying the WP to encourage students to share their writing.
- Train their students to accept their peers' feedback and use them in developing their drafts.
- Change their students' ideas about writing as something they can learn it and enjoy it.

Key understanding Keep in your mind that:

- The implementation of the WP will not be oversteering your schedule unless you use your time effectively.
- The WP is not a curriculum you can use it instead the core curriculum, but it will be followed the instructions of the Ministry of Education.
- The WP is flexible, and easy to change the content based on your students' needs.
- Whenever you need help or you have concerns, you're welcome to ask at the WP website.

Research For more information (1/2).

The writing instructions

The writing workshops

The writing process approach

Research For more information (2/2).

The national writing project (NWP)

Innovation fueled by research

Engaging What do you want to learn in this session?

Engaging In order to make my colleagues engage, I will use:

- Think of a problem you had faced in your writing class for 3 minutes.
- Discuss your problem with your pair for 3 min.
- Share your group, and talk about it for 5 minutes.

Engaging Introduction to the writing process

The image shows two activity cards side-by-side. The left card has a green header with the text "Engage Reflect with your group:". Below the header is a grid of horizontal lines for writing. In the center of the grid is an image of a small table with four colorful bowls (yellow, green, blue, red) containing what appear to be small objects or beads. Below the grid, the text reads "Discuss the video with your group for 5 minutes." The right card has a green header with the text "Engage For whom come on time.". Below the header is a grid of horizontal lines. In the center is a circular icon containing a door and a prize tag, with the text "DOOR PRIZES" written below it. Below the grid, the text reads "Door prizes' winners!"

