

TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER

By: Christina Alane Davis

Individual differences between children are a source of richness and diversity. Embracing the diversity of educational differences can be obtained in inclusive schools. Inclusive schools are important in order to send the message that each student has an inherent right to education based on the equality of opportunities. Schools and school districts should be structured in order to respond to the differences, needs, and abilities of disabled and non-disabled students.

I think the goal of inclusion is to make students with special needs successful. Inclusive schools challenge students. With inclusive education, the students can learn from each other. Students' being able to learn from each other gives them a better learning environment. Most importantly, involving non-disabled peers with disabled peers gives the students a positive attitude towards each other. Another benefit of inclusive schools is the social growth that would result for both disabled and non-disabled students. There is no city or state consisting of just disabled people. Attending a regular school would help disabled students interact better with non-disabled peers, and conversely would help non-disabled students learn to understand the special needs of students and be more sensitive to those differences. This assimilation would help all students function better in the future. Since students are the next generation, the time in the classroom with disabled and non-disabled students will equip them with skills that will allow them to communicate better in the workplace and other aspects of the real world.

There would be less prejudice among students with inclusive schools because students would learn to accept and/or understand other's differences, which would therefore help them to recognize the value of diversity. Non-disabled students can see that disabilities are not scary but a challenge to overcome.

I think having inclusive schools is a good education concept only if students are ready, and sufficient and appropriate services are provided. One characteristic of how my school shows students with and without disabilities that they are valued is the Honor Roll Assembly, where all deserving students are awarded for merit and good behavior. There's also "Student of the Month" recognition. However, there is still devaluation by non-disabled students towards disabled students. Non-disabled students label disabled

students “special ed kids”. Generally, students at my school need an awakening to respect disabled students and value them for their differences and challenges.

Despite disability, I have participated in general education courses, including Advanced Placement courses, and extra-curricular activities, such as marching band, concert band, student government, swim team, and the tennis team. I have also volunteered with the American Cancer Society.

Personally, I think I have benefited from being in a regular classroom. It has been a great social and personal benefit for me. My self-esteem has increased because I know I can compete with non-disabled students and I can surpass them. I don't have to be ashamed of my disability. I realize I may need certain accommodations, but I don't need to be in a separate, special education setting to learn and excel.

The Reformation of Perception

By: Kevin Hudson

Often, when one human looks at another, he does not see that both of them have veins with blood and hearts constantly in impelling exuberance. Some people have developed the mentality that members of the human race who are different, who have disabilities, are a nuisance and that outlook often lingers within the education system. Contrary to this notion, students without mental or physical impairment actually benefit from the presence of their different peers. In fact, this relationship is not only necessary, it is vital for the transcendence of the unscrupulous teenage view of the unusual and abnormal.

Every person has subconsciously manufactured a lens through which he views the world. This lens is formed from the repercussions of every experience that the person has gone through in life. For many young people, this lens needs to be reshaped in order to even think about achieving anything beyond what is in their school. If these people were to stumble into a mirage where they envision a pond of compassion in a desert of apathy, their dreams could be deemed surmountable. That is the advantage of challenged students in a regular school. They are the glimmer of hope and the key to unlocking the imprisoned aspirations of students who know nothing outside of their own world, which is incomplete and shows no representation of all facets of human nature.

Students who exhibit ignorance on a regular basis deny disabled students any sort of acceptance from the moment they exchange glances. Challenged students learn through the compassion and affection of their instructors and peers. When students are introduced to other students who are not as academically accelerated as they are, affection is required to bridge the gap. This heartfelt appreciation for one another benefits both students in the long run.

In previous years, the education system had special needs students in regular public schools, but they were in “special classes” and rode the infamous “short bus.” So, while the schools were integrated, the fact is, mentally or physically challenged students remained alienated within the system. One might ask: how can a special needs student be placed into regular classes without becoming a hindrance on the fast paced learners? It’s simple: both types of students must value each other because the presence of one another is a mutual situation where they each become the beneficiary of the other. Special students must be in an environment with regular learners so they know how to interact with them in order to prepare themselves to be self sustaining, contributing members of society, while regular students learn the values of tolerance and kindness in order to further themselves in human nature and American ideals.

Essentially, an education community requires a certain spectrum of individuals in order to become anything more than an ephemeral and insignificant era in a child’s life. It calls for people of all color, age, and ability, which makes inclusive schools crucial to the education of the child.

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By: Jennifer Kuo

“We all come from our own little planets. That’s why we’re all different. That’s what makes life interesting.” (Robert E. Sherwood, 1896-1955)

Students learn from one another all the time, and the reason for this learning is that we are all different. We each have our own personal experiences and our own opinions. Inclusive schools are important because they bring the community closer together and are more accepting of one another.

Students with disabilities contribute to schools and their community by showing other students how they have overcome many obstacles. This type of learning is something that cannot happen without inclusive schools. In fact, I have seen firsthand how strong students have to be to get through their disabilities, which is so remarkable and inspiring. A particular girl at my high school with dyslexia has taught me that there are always obstacles, but that everyone is capable of surmounting them. She is a very mature and hardworking individual because of her dyslexia and I admire her for her ability to keep striving to do her best.

Inclusive schools are so important for students because high school is never easy. It helps to have a welcoming and supportive environment for children to learn in. It is not always easy for students to get along, but inclusive schools play a key role in fostering a supportive environment where everyone is friendly towards one another. Inclusive schools also set high expectations for students, which is great for students to realize that they should set high goals for themselves and work to achieve them. Students should learn that they can succeed in their endeavors, which is just what inclusive schools do by providing a great support system to students.

I think that students with disabilities have also learned from those without disabilities as well. In my school, I have helped some students with disabilities who are in my art class do their ceramics project. I have taught them to pinch pots out of clay and to be more patient and determined to finish. Both students with disabilities and those without learn and benefit from each other. We both have lessons to teach one another and the mutual friendships we develop are what make inclusive schools so wonderful.