

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES & WITHOUT DISABILITIES

There are two views on whether students with disabilities and without disabilities benefit from Inclusive Education. One view is that both students with and without disabilities will not benefit and even that education for both groups will suffer. The other view is that both groups will benefit.

The following is the result of a quick scan of the literature on the benefit question. Information was gleaned from a brief google search. All responses were accepted. No response was ignored. The information collected includes responses from parent oriented organizations and from research studies. Information were from 3 parent-related organizations and 3 research sources. The responses represented 4 nations.

New Brunswick Association for Community Living (Canada)

The New Brunswick Association was the first parent and educator group which formed an Association focused on furthering Inclusive Education. The Province of New Brunswick education system was the first entire education system to move to Inclusive Education.

- All children are part of the community
- All children develop sense of belonging
- Inclusive Education provides better opportunities for learning
- Children with varying abilities are often better motivated when surrounded by other children
- Expectations for all children are higher
- Allows children to work on individual goals while being educated with other children of the same age
- Encourages parents to be involved in education of their children
- Fosters a culture of respect and belonging
- Provides opportunities to learn about and accept differences
- Provides all children with opportunities for friendship with each other

Benefits for Other Children, KIDS Together, Incorporated. (United States)

- Meaningful friendships
- Increased appreciation and acceptance of individual differences
- Increased understanding and acceptance of diversity
- Respect for all people
- Prepares all students for adult life in an inclusive society
- -Opportunities to master activities by practicing and teaching others
- Greater academic outcomes
- All students are better having met each other
- Greater resources for everyone

Research Findings on Typical Students (Henniger and Gupta, India)

- Typically developing children learn a great deal from their classmates with disabilities in inclusive environment
- Prompts typical peers to become more understanding and to develop positive attitudes toward their diverse counterparts
- Advantages from repeated interactions that can occur in an inclusive environment
- When children with disabilities or differing abilities attempt to engage their typical peers in social interactions, typically developing children learn to respond to these initiations and thus take further action in initiating interactions, negotiating sharing and develop an understanding of other children.

Disability Exchange (Boston, United States)

- Research shows that friendships give people with disabilities social, emotional and practical supports that integrate them in community life.
- People with disabilities bring certain gifts such as acceptance of spontaneity , trust, simple enjoyment of life's pleasures and honesty.

D. Konza, University of Wollongong (Australia)

- The inclusion model is consistent with the notion of social justice
- When students with disabilities are educated in the neighbourhood school as opposed to a special class or school some distance away, they become part of their local community
- Their school friends are more likely to live in their neighbourhood
- Weekend activities are more likely to occur with people they see every day when out in their own community.
- Students with disabilities also have regular peers as models of behaviour, problem-solving and other cognitive skills in cooperative groupings

What the United States statistics say about inclusive education (TASH) Congressional Briefing on Inclusive Education.(July 9, 2009)

- Students with disabilities show dramatically improved academic performance when included in the general education classroom
- Students with disabilities show dramatically improved academic performance when included in the general education classroom
- Students with and without disabilities, benefit socially and emotionally in inclusive classrooms

Students with, without disabilities recognize benefits of inclusive schools. School of Education, University of Kansas (March 29, 2016)

- In the debate about how to improve U.S. schools there is one missing voice among the researchers, scholars, policy makers, administrators and parents – and that’s the perspective of the students themselves.

- The University of Kansas conducted focus groups with 86 students both with and without disabilities to gauge their perspectives on inclusion.

- “This is a critical stakeholder group” said Karrie Shogren, leader of the research project.

- She said “ We also thought it was vitally important to get the perspectives of both students with and without disabilities. If we’re going to talk honestly about inclusion, sometimes students have more insights than we do”.

Together we learn better: Inclusive Schools benefit all children. (U.S., Inclusive Schools Network, June 2015)

- The interviews found that students with and without disabilities recognized and and felt a sense of belonging in their schools, recognized the effect inclusion had on all students and were keely aware of school and classroom practices used in inclusive schools.

- Among the most prominent findings, students repeatedly sense of belonging and positive school culture. They realized expectations were high and reported they had support to meet those expectations ad were connected to their teachers and peers. The fact that all students learned together was clearly evident. One students without a disability said, ‘This is the school where nobody can get picked on or judged by who they are – we have a variety of nice, different learners, and we’re unique and all creative and determined and responsible.”

Together we learn better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children

Inclusive Schools Network, U. S. 2015

- The journey to becoming an Inclusive School may be long and challenging at times, but ultimately this journey can strengthen a school community and benefit all children. “Inclusion does not simply mean the placement of students with disabilities in general education classes. This process must incorporate fundamental change in the way a school community supports and addresses the individual needs of each child.
- One of the most important principles of inclusive education is that no two learners are alike, and so inclusive schools place great importance on creating opportunities for students to learn and be assessed in a variety of ways. Teachers in inclusive schools therefore must consider a wide range of learning modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, etc.)
- It is important for educators to ensure that every student is addressing the appropriate standards and objectives
- It is important for educators to ensure that every student is addressing the appropriate standards and objectives across the curriculum. As such, inclusive education schools provide

academic supports (flexible pacing and grouping, reading and literacy specialists, tutoring, etc.) that can create a supportive environment for all students.

- Another important factor in effective inclusive education is the implementation of consistent behavioural supports throughout the learning environment. This consistency is essential for the success of students with emotional or behavioural disabilities in the general education environment, but school-wide behavioural supports also help to establish high expectations throughout the school community as a whole.
- Inclusive education for students with disabilities can only be successful when those students feel that they are truly a part of the school community. This requires open and honest discussion about difference, and an institutional respect for people of all backgrounds and abilities.

What Works for Students

- Having another person available to assist the teacher at times. First choice should be a nearby student, and not always an older person.
- Working in small cooperative groups on projects and other assignments.
- Having the classroom teacher personally check on how a student's work is going.
- Working in a group with diverse abilities.
- Having chances to show one's strengths through music, art, smiling, mathematics, paying attention, sitting up straight, sports and other individual recognition for all.
- Having chances to work with a variety of peers and not the same ones all the time.
- Being given responsibility.
- Being praised for work well done.