Inclusion Classrooms: A Positive Idea

Vaidya & Zaslavsky (2000) state that placing disabled students in a regular classroom can help build the students self-esteem and help them socially interact with fellow classmates as well as the other children in their neighborhoods. Inclusion classrooms will help push the disabled student to learn with the help of peers and teachers. Because the children are in one class, they don’t feel as if they are different from the other children in school. Students with behavioral problems will be more likely to settle down and not act out due to fear of embarrassment. Furthermore, behavioral problems will be decreased, and learning and obedience will be increased. Inclusion classrooms are good for the educational well being of special needs students.

According to Vaidya & Zaslavsky (2000), an inclusion classroom can be very successful. Teachers can be driven by student progress. Also, teachers can be satisfied that a student’s self-esteem will increase. “Inclusion takes the teaching and learning process forward” (pg 145) Benefits of inclusion include socialization and peer acceptance. Inclusion can motivate a special needs student to want to learn and make friends with fellow classmates. The relationship between special needs students and other students in the class is symbiotic. The special needs students experience an increase in self-esteem and their classmates learn how to work with all types of students. Parents of special needs students also reap the benefits of their child’s increased self-esteem.
Vaidya & Zaslavsky (2000) go on to talk about the importance of the partnership in an inclusion classroom. The goal of the proposed partnership is to collaborate as a team, and work towards the goal of the preparation of preservice and inservice to teach together in diverse classrooms. Teacher preparation programs are being restructured and at the same time special education is being reorganized into a unified system of service delivery. The special needs children are able to stay in the regular classroom for longer time periods instead of being moved to resource rooms or self-contained classrooms. Teacher philosophies are changing which enables them to teach special education students. Teachers at the preservice level need to have the chance to develop the proper knowledge, skills and positive attitudes concerning special education students. Often times it is the parents that push the idea for inclusive education (Vaidya, Zaslavsky, 2000).

Vaidya & Zaslavsky (2000) suggest a way for the teacher to keep track of the progress and goals of all the students in the inclusion class. During the class time the teacher has a designated time called Drop Everything And Read (R.E.A.D.). At this time the children stop what they are doing, and start to read a book of their choice. The kids that need help receive assistance from their peers or the teacher. This way if someone walked into the classroom it would be hard to tell which students were special needs because everyone is reading, or working together. This kept the special needs students from feeling like the outsider in the classroom.
According to Arllen & Gable (1995), most students now receive the biggest part of their education in a regular classroom. Inclusive classes tear down the barriers that separate general and special education. “Research has shown that students are capable of promoting academic, social, and behavioral changes in classmates and/or friends.” (pg 26)

Students will be cautious when it comes to their actions when there are students around to demonstrate more suitable actions for the occasion. (Arllen & Gable, 1995) A child that yells out inappropriate words or comments causing disruption during a class setting, may run into a physical confrontation with fellow classmates. Schools are still trying to figure out a way to deal with ways to deal with the challenges thrown at them from students with and without disabilities. Peer confrontation is one good way but is very limited.

Daniel & King (1998) state that the boundaries that used to separate general and special education are slowly fading as the education reform better know as Inclusion is incorporated into schools across the nation. This deals with the placement of student with disabilities into regular classrooms. The law states that special needs children will only be removed if the disability is so fierce that it has an affect on the learning ability of the student in a regular classroom. The federal legislature decided to incorporate all special needs students that showed the proper academic and social skills necessary to survive in an unrestricted environment. Academic achievements increased when special needs children are incorporated into the regular classroom and are expected to rise to the higher standers set. Facts prove that special needs students are far less likely to
graduate from high school than those with nondisabilities (Daniel & King, 1998 pg 69).

Barry (1994) suggests the easing into inclusion classrooms is the best way to make your special needs and general education students more comfortable. The collaboration of two teachers who understand each other and are willing to play off of each other in order to make the inclusion class come together. The teaming process decreased the workload and increased the pleasure of teaching (Barry, 1994, pg 4). When faced with the special needs class the children only had each other to learn from, there is where their behavioral problems developed. The special needs children were slowly distributed into the general education class. The special needs children were very timid and were afraid of embarrassment being involved in the inclusion activities. Once the ice was broke the general education students developed a passion for the special needs children and were willing to help those who struggled with daily work and projects. Slowly the behavioral problems decreased and the class was able to function as a regular education classroom.

Irby, Michel, & Ritter (1999) state that the students with disabilities should be treated like the members of society that they are and should be trained with the basic skills they will need to be successful in the real world. The parents as well as the special needs students felt more confident in the inclusive classroom as well as in the public eye. Low self-esteem was found in students in special education classes. Although these classes were instructed to carry out the
mandates of the law, the students were still segregated and left out of activities performed by the general education students. Students stated that homework and daily work is much harder than that in the special education but they were glad a preferred the regular classroom activities more. “It is not the job of the teacher to instruct some and not others. It is the job of a professional educator to teach all children-all individuals.” (Vaidya & Zaslavsky, 2000, pg 150)

References:


