

Final Debate Position Outline

Special Education: Pro- Inclusion

- The Importance of a Social Education
 - “In inclusive programs, children with special needs learn skills that help them become successful and independent” (Samuel, Odom & Sandall).
 - Special needs students should not be separated from the normal classroom because they need to learn how to interact with the general population, not just other children who also have disabilities.
 - Outside of school, special needs students need to be able to interact and communicate with the general population; they will not get this training if they are in a separate classroom.
- More effective after graduation
 - “Inclusion in general education classes, especially in vocational education courses, is associated with improved post-school outcome” (“Pros and cons”, 2010).
 - Special needs students who are part of an inclusion program have learned the skills to interact with people, which students who are mainstreamed have not learned as well.
- Separate special education classes have been ineffective.
 - “Some special educators believe that these separate classes are ineffective, because it is asserted that students with disabilities fare just as good, if not better, on scores on cognitive and social measures when they stay in the general education classroom” (McKinney, 2010).
- Better for the non disabled students, as well
 - ‘Research and anecdotal data have shown that typical learners have demonstrated a greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences, enhanced self-esteem, a genuine capacity for friendship, and the acquisition of new skills’ (Pros and cons, 2010).
 - In addition to the special needs student, the general education students also develop better social skills.
 - “Inclusion can benefit children with and without disabilities” (Samuel, Odom & Sandall).
- Some teachers believe that all students have “special needs”
 - They need a teacher who will love, respect and understand them as individuals, help them feel and be included (Mendoza, 2004).
 - These special needs are social needs that need to be addressed, not specific academic weaknesses.
- Being disabled by the title
 - “One argument for full inclusion is the idea that labeling people, especially those with disabilities is very harmful or dangerous. If students or young adults are labeled, even as "special education," the child can suffer from extreme deficits in self-esteem and self-determination. They

may think that they are viewed by the rest of society as a social or educational deviant, and they may grow to feel unworthy because of the label on them, and because they feel unworthy they go through a self-fulfilling prophecy and often times act the part of a social deviant. Those who are labeled as "special education" often see themselves as a minority and it can be very disabling in itself" (McKinney, 2010).

- The mere idea of being in a separate classroom can cause serious emotional and mental harm to the special needs student.
- "...the very act of labeling a student as "special" frequently lowers expectations and self-esteem" (Educational support for, 2010).
 - With a lower self-esteem, the child is less likely to have the courage to try and socially interact with other children.
- An analogous case is African American children before integration.
 - We talked in class about how the African American children who socialized with the white children in their neighborhood and had to go to a different school experienced mental and emotional dissonance. They didn't understand why they had to be separated from the other children.
 - This is similar to separating the special needs children because, a lot of the time, they don't think they are that different from the general education students.
 - Children play and socialize with the other children in their neighborhood, but if they don't see them in school the normal children will question why the disabled child is not in their class, which allows for the disabled child to feel self-conscious about his or her disability.
 - Even if they do see the special needs child around school, they question why he or she isn't in one of the classrooms like everybody else.
 - "Inclusion is not just a school issue -- it extends to the communities in which children and their families live" (Schwartz, Odom & Sandall).
 - Thus, the special needs child become socially ostracized in the community as well as in school.

Potential Rebuttal Points:

- Refute the idea that mainstreaming is more effective.
 - Total inclusion is the only way to ensure that all types of social interactions with general education students are available to children with special needs.
 - Simply seeing the other children at recess or lunch is just not enough.
- Refute the idea that mainstreaming does not help the child's self-esteem.
 - In fact, the opposite occurs. Mainstreaming makes the child feel even more disabled, which can be disastrous to a special needs child's self-esteem.
- Refute the idea that the general education students will get a better education if the special needs child is not in the classroom.
 - Actually, it is shown that the other students develop a "greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences, enhanced self-esteem, a genuine capacity for friendship, and the acquisition of new skills" (Pros and cons, 2010).
 - Also, the teacher is more likely to break down the material into smaller pieces, which benefits all children who are trying to learn.

Preparation for potential questions regarding the social aspect of inclusion:

Q: How do you know if a child is ready for inclusion? How do you prepare a child for inclusion?

A: Programs, not children, have to be "ready for inclusion" (Samual, Odom & Sandall).

Q: Will mockery of the special needs child in the inclusion classroom damage the child's self-esteem?

A: Although it's possible, the damage won't be as detrimental as the label of being "disabled" and being separated from his or her peers.

Q: Can inclusion weaken the education of the non-disabled students in the classroom?

A: No, in fact inclusion generally benefits all students in the classroom, including those who aren't recognized as having special needs. It is proven that these students develop a "greater acceptance and valuing of individual differences, enhanced self-esteem, a genuine capacity for friendship, and the acquisition of new skills" (Pros and cons, 2010).

Bibliography:

Educational support for inclusion. (2010). Retrieved from http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues43/support_for_inclusion.htm

This source provided strong evidence against special education (good for rebuttal). It pointed out the negative effects of special education, including how the label of “special” harms the self- esteem of the special needs students.

Pros and cons of special education inclusion. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.learningrx.com/pros-and-cons-of-special-education-inclusion-faq.htm>

This source provides helpful information on the benefits of inclusion based on how inclusion benefits both special needs students and the other students in the classroom. Also, it suggested that post- graduation outcome was bettered by inclusion, especially in vocational classes.

McKinney, B. (2010, June 2010). *Pros and cons of inclusion in american education.* Retrieved from http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/5474930/pros_and_cons_of_inclusion_in_american.html?cat=4

This source argues that special needs students score better on cognitive tests when they are included in the regular classroom, proving inclusion more effective than mainstreaming. Another major point of this source was about how labels can be disabling. Just the fact that the special needs students in mainstreaming systems are labeled as “special needs” or disabled” can be degrading to his or her mental and emotional state.

Mendoza, Alice. (2004, September). *A classroom where all students are learning.* Retrieved from <http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/teaching/mendoza.htm>

Mendoza argues that all students have special needs. Every student has individual needs that need to be addressed, not just special needs children.

Schwartz, I, Odom, S, & Sandall, S. (n.d.). *Including young children with special needs.* Retrieved from <http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/information/schwartz3.htm>

This source provides proof that inclusion provides special needs students with the skills necessary for success and independence while also benefiting children without disabilities. Also, the prove that inclusion is not just a school issue, it extends to the entire community.