

How to Create a Positive Classroom Environment for those with Disabilities.

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The field of special education is filled with perplexing questions which have a major impact on how we and others view students within our educational institutions. For the purpose of our Peer-Based Learning Project, we focused on the question: “As an elementary teacher, how can I help eliminate negative attention towards my students who have disabilities, and turn it into positive social attention from their peers?” We focused on topics which included teacher’s attitude, student’s attitude towards their peers with disabilities, and the impact of activities which mix students with and without disabilities on the atmosphere of their education and their experience.

Recent studies have shown that there are educational providers that do have a slightly negative view on students with disabilities, in the expectations pertaining to achievement and behavior. The research shows that educators have more of an inclination to think that children with disabilities will perform worse than a student without a disability, and the same is shown for the child’s behavior. In studies of educator’s opinion, they automatically expect a child with a disability to behave worse than a student without one, no matter the situation. When asked why they felt this way, educators responded with the feeling of not having enough training, which can lead to stress and come off as having negative feeling and/or attitudes towards or pertaining to a child a disability.

Student/teacher relations are crucial to education, but sometimes what it is just as important, or more is the relationship between students and their peers. However, this can be difficult for students with disabilities because others tend to shy away from them due to feelings of paramount differences in their actions and general tendencies. A method that is typically used to try to figure out why students without a disability do have negative attitudes towards their peers with disabilities. An assessment can be given to see how disabilities are viewed along with

the view of students with a disability. When the thought process of students has been assessed, one frequently used method to try to break negative thoughts towards students with disabilities is to do activities in mixed groups of students with disabilities and students without a disability. For these barriers to be broken, collaboration has been found to be one of, in not the most, important methods. This includes collaborative problem-solving groups and collaborative learning groups, attempting to be all students together to attempt to break negative thoughts pertaining to disabilities.

The mixing of students can also have effect on the students with disabilities. The students are able to learn from their peers through seeing how their peers behave. Studies show students with disabilities can learn anger management skills and empathy, this is why educators should keep students without a disability in visibility and vice versa.

We focused on topics which included teacher's attitude, student's attitude towards their peers with disabilities, and the impact of activities which mix students with and without disabilities on the atmosphere of their education and their experience. We, as a group, were able to answer our question of fully and adequately: "As an elementary teacher, how can I help eliminate negative attention towards my students who have disabilities, and turn it into positive social attention from their peers?".

The case study that we created was named John Doe. He is a second grader who has spina bifida. Until this point, he has not been accepted very well in school. His second grade teacher has now implemented a buddy system. This has helped reverse the negative social attention he has been getting. The buddy system has also created friendships among John and his classmates. John's parents have also enrolled him in a special Olympics hockey league. Through

this as well John has gained positive social attention as the teacher has taken John's classmates to some of his games.

References

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Table Title

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