

Advantages and Disadvantages of Special Needs Children in Regular Classroom

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ABSTRACT

The problem of education for special needs children has always been one to solve and debate. This essay aims to summarize the advantages and disadvantages of sending special needs children to the regular classroom and analyze the possible solution- "Separate Class." In this context, 'Special needs children' is defined as a group of children with difficulties in hearing, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations. To analyze the pros and cons of the regular classroom for special needs students, we summarized the recent statistics, official regulations, and reliable research. The results present the advantages of better social skills and childhood growth, while the disadvantages of the non-complete educational system for special needs and mental illness. The idea of "Separate Class" is analyzed by the definition, authority recommendation, and social support. It enlarges the advantages from the regular classroom to the special needs children, and meanwhile weakens the disadvantages. We conclude that regular class has both advantages and disadvantages, and separate class is a good choice for them to fulfill a customized professional plan and benefit from a special educational system.

Keywords: *Special Needs Children, Special Education, Inclusive Education, Separate Class*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

From the data offered by World Health Organization (WHO), more than 1 billion people are bothered by disability, of which one in seven are disabled children [1]. The category of impairments with the highest reported percentage of children receiving special education assistance under IDEA in the school year 2019–2020 was "specific learning disabilities." It may be an imperfect ability to hear, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations. According to the investigation of students who are serviced by IDEA, 33 percent of them had specific learning disabilities, 19 percent had speech or language disabilities, 2 and 15 percent had other health disorders. Besides, there were 5 and 11 percent of students had autism, developmental delays, intellectual impairments, or emotional problems. Hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, traumatic brain injuries, and deaf-blindness each accounted for fewer than 2% of individuals treated under IDEA [2]. Based on the educational environment

data for students aged 6 to 21 who had been served by IDEA, 95% of students aged 6-21 who received IDEA attended regular schools in 2019. Compared with the statistics in 2009 (59%), a student who enrolled in the regular class had increased to 65% in the fall of 2019 [2]. Thus, it can be seen that a great number of special needs children have already joined a normal class.

1.2. Teaching & Learning Difficulties

Teaching special needs students is a challenge for teachers, which includes three main difficulties: paperwork, communication, and behavior control. Firstly, according to the improvement and changes from special needs children, for the paperwork, teachers need to complete the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) in every period. Secondly, teachers need to communicate with parents to let them know the teaching progress and get more information about the children to create better teaching methods. Thirdly is to control the behavior of special students, as some of them cannot control their behavior, which strongly influences other students [3].

During the study in the regular classroom, special needs students have three difficulties: behavior, emotion, and social. Firstly, it is difficult for these students with disabilities to behave as same as the other regular students. In this situation, they need to split their attention from study to control their behavior. Secondly, because the difference between regular and special needs students is noticeable, looking at differently is inevitable. Thus, they need to manage their emotional issue to focus on studying. Thirdly, on the social viewpoint, the difference might cause difficulties for these special needs students to make friends. As a result, they might feel lonely in school life with social parts missing [4].

1.3. Pros & Cons for special needs children in the regular classroom

For the advantages, the researchers from the positive side believed that those children with special needs should include in the regular classrooms. First, proved by research, the regular class can help students integrate into society for the future with better social learning [5]. Second, organizations are calling for inclusive education so that all the kids have an equal chance in education, and it can improve the whole society [6].

For the disadvantages, first, for the special needs students, the regular classroom is not the best solution, while special class might be better for them. From the data provided by the National Centre for Education Statistics from 2019 to 2020, for the age group 3 to 21, there are 730 million students educated with special schools, which is 14% of the regular public education [7]. Second, there is a high possibility of bullying for special needs students, and it is the main cause of mental illness [8].

1.4. Possible solution - "Separate Class"

The regulation of "Separate Class" has been advanced by psychologists and educators, especially for special needs students in these recent years. With this regulation, students join the regular classroom for 60% of the school, and the rest is for their special classes [9]. Therefore, an "Individualized Education Program (IEP)" has been created by Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD). Options of special education placement are prepared for both children and parents, which are a mainstream, resource, and self-contained programs. Direct instruction, an assisting teacher, team teaching, co-teaching, an interpreter, education aides, changes or accommodations in lessons or instruction, or more instructors per student are some of the services that a student could get in a mainstream environment. In contrast, resource means that students could gain the supports and explanations ground on their special needs. There are only a few students in the class so that it can satisfy every student's unique needs. In addition, a self-contained program is a

comprehensive term for placements in which a student requires services outside of the regular classroom. A student's placement in a self-contained classroom must be based on their individual needs, not only their impairment [10].

At present, there are few studies in this area, and there is no clear understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of letting special needs students join the regular classroom. Therefore, in this review, with the current articles, we summarize the benefits and problems of special students' education in the regular classroom and explore the possible solutions.

2. SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN JOIN IN REGULAR CLASSROOM

2.1. Advantages and Disadvantages

2.1.1. Advantages

The advantages of the regular classroom could reflect in the viewpoint of normal students, special needs students, and educators.

For the aspect of normal students, a regular classroom is a perfect environment to promote and improve students' skills of adapting diversity and differences. Various students could be found in the regular classroom and each of them has different skills and weaknesses. Inclusion allows children to discuss how everyone learns in their unique manner. During the class, students may discover that other children have the same thought as themselves and even find more creative ideas from special needs students. For instance, high spatial ability from students who have dyslexia, creativity and innovation from ADHD, systemic functions from autism spectrum disorders, and so on [11]. Common ideas will help children accept differences and know that differences are a natural part of life. Regular classroom helps normal students learn diversity and also assist children in forming and maintaining friendships in the future [12]. What's more, students with impairments provide a giving culture in the classroom. Normal students are aware of contributing and having the responsibility to help others.

As for special needs students, incorporating children with intellectual impairments into normal classrooms may motivate and challenge them to succeed. People do not grow and improve their abilities unless they are given enough challenges. In a conventional classroom, these hard situations are more plentiful. In addition, mainstreaming provides a wealth of socializing possibilities because a natural environment is provided in the regular classroom and related to the real world in the future. Essential life skills are acquired in such an atmosphere. Many children with special needs have poor social skills. These societal constraints eventually stifle their ability to succeed in life. Social skills can only be

developed and acquired in a social setting. The optimum social atmosphere is created in a regular classroom. Observing and following their peers in a regular classroom is beneficial to these children [13]. Besides, high expectation helps people make great progress. When students with impairments are placed in an environment where more is expected of them, they do better. A fact has been proved by “Pygmalion in the Classroom”, when teachers demand more from their students, their achievement rises. When students are taken out of regular classes and placed in enclosed “special education” classrooms, the risk of stigmatization, humiliation, and self-condemnation increases, and teachers tend to consider these students as less able than “normal” children [11].

Although it is a big challenge for educators to provide comprehensive ways to help all children, educators are creating the groundwork for a future society that is resistant to fresh possibilities for change by helping both normal students and special needs students in the same regular classroom. During the teaching process, new technologies could be discovered for education, for example, Dragon Naturally Speaking could help oral and written problems, Proloquo2Go could translate special and specific needs into language [11]. Inside and outside of the classroom, teachers should learn how to create sociograms for each kid, showing positive friendships, hostile relationships, possibly beneficial ties, and avoid destructive relationships, such as school bullying. Similarly, potentially beneficial connections might be made. The emphasis should be on increasing the number of good interpersonal connections a student has each day while limiting unfavourable interactions. By incorporating complete inclusion into the classroom from the beginning of a child’s education, educators are assisting in the formation of attitudes of acceptance, tolerance, generosity, and human possibility that will last for generations [11].

2.1.2. Disadvantages

The disadvantages of letting special needs children join the regular classroom summarized two points: a better choice than the regular classroom and the negative effect of the regular classroom.

First, for special needs students, a regular class cannot provide them a complete educational system. Under this situation, a special school is a better choice for these students. In the special schools, teachers can adjust the teaching methods and daily schedule according to different situations of the students [14]. The classes also include special courses in addition to the necessary academic courses, for example sign language, recognition on colour and shape. Therefore, according to their disability, the costumed class makes it easier for enables special needs students to study and enjoy the course [15]. When special students are choosing the way

of education, they also need to consider their learning ability, because the teaching speed and difficulties in regular class is relatively intensive. From the data offered by The National Centre for Education Statistics, from 2019 to 2020, 730 million students from ages 3 to 21 chose the special school as their preference of education, which took 14% of the total regular school population [7].

Moreover, compared with the teachers in the regular class, teachers in special classes can be more detailed and professional on the special kids’ education. It presents three sides: paperwork, communication, and behaviour control. The paperwork is mainly on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which analyses the personal conditions thus gets the customized teaching plan. Based on this analysis, the class can be more efficient for all the special needs students. For communication, parents can understand their children’s behaviour in the class very clearly from the teachers. Also, getting more information about the special needs student’s daily life in the family could be helpful in teaching. The most crucial role of the teacher in special schools is behaviour control. As all these teachers were trained for special education, they can manage the behaviour of the special need students better than the regular teacher. Therefore, students can pay more attention to the course while not their disabilities [3]. Consequently, regular school is a choice for all the students, but with the data presented, a special class is still a popular choice for students with special needs.

Second, let special needs students join in the regular classes may lead to mental illness. The difference between normal children and special children is noticeable, especially at a young age. So that special needs children may be discriminated against or bullied by other students when they are in the regular class. According to the research, 32% of students have been bullied in school [16], and bullying in childhood is the leading cause of mental illness [8]. As a result, they not only need to overcome their disabilities but also to manage their emotions under the bullying of others. With this situation, it is difficult for the special needs students to study well. Even more serious, the mental illness caused by childhood can persist into adulthood [17]. Thus, as it is already difficult for special needs children to live with difficulties, people should protect them well, especially for childhood. Furthermore, for children with depression and anxiety, there is a high possibility of suicidal thoughts [18]. One of the most severe consequences was Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which occurred in 40.5% of girls and 27.65% of boys after bullying [19]. Although after the children grew up, even the special needs overcome, mental illness caused by childhood bullying might still affect their daily life. Therefore, people have to rethink how special needs children study in the regular class with other students to avoid the discrimination or bullying. Students with special needs may be better integrated into society by

attending regular schools. Still, there is also a high risk of harm for them, and the disadvantages of mental illness may outweigh the benefits of social integration.

In conclusion, the ideal educational environment is one that best assists a kid in achieving their IEP goals. Each child has unique objectives, abilities, and requirements. There is no specific solution for all youngsters. Parents and educators must assess the learning settings and resources available in their communities in a realistic manner. They may make an informed decision based on the child's needs and circumstances. Periodically, placement decisions should be reevaluated. The needs and situations of children vary with time.

2.2. Separate Class

Separate class is one of the education forms, it is designed to meet the different needs of special students. Congressional proponents of IDEA acknowledged that the mainstream may not provide all children with adequate education and may even damage certain special needs students. According to the principle of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the most significant federal legislation for educating special-needs children states that they should be educated in the "least restrictive environment" (LRE). From the aspect of law, "least restrictive environment" must fulfil two standards: (1) offer disabled children with education adapted to their specific learning requirements and (2) ensure that they are as near to the age-appropriate peers as feasible to grow normally. First, it requires teachers to ensure social connect between students with special needs and normal students during the class and make sure that disabled children are educated alongside non-disabled children to the greatest degree possible. Second, it necessitates that special-needs children obtain an adequate education, which in some circumstances may take precedence over the aim of social interaction: Special classes, separate schools, or other removal of disabled children from the usual educational environment happens only when the nature and severity of the impairment are such that instruction in regular classrooms with the use of extra aids and services is insufficient. Individualized special education teaching is typically achieved via trial and error. Special educators that are well-trained employ a range of teaching approaches, curriculums, and motivating strategies, as well as evaluation systems that evaluate student development. Teachers can create effective teaching plans by carefully mixing and recombining these aspects while evaluating individual student development [20]. During the class, students have possibilities for full participation through the use of language or other kinds of communication, the access to instructors and staff who have the necessary expertise and resources to provide a meaningful educational experience and the capacity to participate in a social

context that provides significant time to connect with value and dignity among peers of the same grade level [21].

According to IDEA's annual collection of educational information for special needs students aged 6 to 21, "Separate Class" is on the list. It is primarily for students who need special education, services, or therapy outside of the regular classrooms. Under the regulation of separate classes, these students join the regular class with 60% of the school day. The situation is different for each school and student that uses this approach. Students can study in a separate special classroom set up in a regular school, or they can choose to study part-time in a regular classroom with other students together. In this class, special needs students can learn social skills from the regular class and be able to join the special class [9].

From the legal and scientific basis for special education services, the results performed better when students with special needs were appropriately integrated into regular education. However, according to the survey, students with special needs, especially autism or intellectual disabilities, are not treated equally in education. Although separate classes can be an excellent option for students with special needs, many schools still do not have such a policy. As for the separate class, there needs to be more practical evidence to prove its value to win the government's support. Many regular schools are willing to offer such courses for children with special needs while meeting their educational level, but this still tends to be an exception rather than a rule [22].

To sum up, according to the LRE proposed by IDEA and related analysis. First of all, the education system needs to provide a suitable learning environment for special children. Secondly, in the process of learning, these students need to have more contact with peers. Thirdly, researchers need to collect more practical examples to prove the value of separate classes in meeting these requirements. Therefore, and finally, with the government's support, educators can provide the best education for these special needs children.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, every kid has the right to the same chances as others no matter what challenges they have. Even though there are both advantages and disadvantages of special needs students in regular classroom, it should be committed is special education is critical for children with learning impairments because it allows them to get quality education tailored to their specific requirements. Research statistics reveal that disabled children spend 80 per cent of their time in general education, meaning that they are educated on a regular basis [23]. In other words, they have been taught the same knowledge just in different methods. Every student may acquire a high degree of independence and succeed with the help of

special education. Special education trains a new generation of scholars to enhance the understanding of the causes of and attitudes toward disability. It motivates innovation to enhance techniques for early detection of learning disparities and to develop innovative supports to assist all learners in reaching their full potential and participating fully in society [24]. Learning disability education which is of high quality and well-designed has a favourable influence on a child's psychological development. Regardless of disabilities, students will not be rejected or alienated if the appropriate strategy is taken, and he or she will have a meaningful social life. Other children's greater awareness of their impairment will lead to their acceptance as equal members of society. The most essential objective of special education is to give growth chances and a learning process to children with special needs that will improve their quality of life. This process is of significant importance to society since children in special needs have the chance to be welcomed into the mainstream community, which enables them to grow more independent and more self-confidence, surrounded by others who understand and support them in every stage of the process [2].

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