



5 Benefits of General Education For All

In general education for all, general education teachers and special education teachers work together to meet the needs of every student. All students can benefit from the additional resources and supportive techniques used in a classroom that includes students of all abilities.

Benefit #1: Differentiated Instruction

All students learn differently. This is a principal of inclusive education. One key teaching strategy is to break students into small groups. By using small groups, teaching can be tailored to the way each student learns best. This is known as differentiated instruction.

Teachers meet everyone's needs by presenting lessons in different ways and using Universal Design for Learning (UDL). For example, they may use multisensory instruction. In math, that may mean using visual aids and manipulatives like cubes or colored chips to help kids learn new concepts. (See more examples of multisensory math techniques.)

Some classrooms may have an interactive whiteboard. On it, kids can use their fingers to write, erase and move images around on the large screen. This teaching tool can also be used to turn students' work into a video, which can be exciting for kids and help keep them engaged.

Benefit #2: Supportive Teaching Strategies

In an inclusive classroom, teachers weave in specially designed instruction and support that can help students make progress. Kids may be given opportunities to move around or use fidgets. And teachers often put positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) in place.

These strategies are helpful for all students—not only for students with learning and attention issues.

Benefit #3: Reduced Stigma

Inclusive classrooms are filled with diverse learners. That lets kids talk about how everyone learns in their own way. They may find that they have more in common with other kids than they thought. This can go a long way in reducing stigma for kids with learning and attention issues. It can also help kids build and maintain friendships.

Benefit #4: Effective Use of Resources

In more traditional special education settings, many kids are “pulled out” for related services, like speech therapy or for other specialized instruction. An inclusion class often brings speech therapists, reading specialists and other service providers into the classroom.

These professionals can provide information and suggestions to help all students. If your child isn't eligible for special education, but still needs some extra support, it can provide him with some informal support.

Benefit #5: High Expectations for All

If your child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), his goals should be based on the academic standards for your state. Those standards lay out what all students are expected to learn in math, reading, science and other subjects by the end of the school year.

Differentiated instruction and co-teaching in a general education classroom make it easier for students with standards-based IEPs to be taught the same material as their classmates.

In some schools, only certain classrooms are inclusion classes. In that case, schools may assign general education students randomly to inclusive or non-inclusive classes. Other schools may choose students who benefit from the emphasis on meeting the needs of all learners at all ability levels.

Talk to your child's school about the supports and services that might be available in an inclusion classroom. Learn more about teaching strategies that work well for students with learning and attention issues. And read about the various models of collaborative team teaching.

And for the record...

Studies show that all students benefit from the resources available in an inclusion classroom.

The special education teacher can help all kids in an inclusion classroom, not just special education students. A key teaching strategy in an inclusion classroom is to break students into small groups and teach kids according to their specific learning needs.

By The Understood Team