



## Special Needs Students' Inclusion

Student's Name

Institution

### Introduction

This paper aims at reviewing the current situation of the inclusion of students with special needs in the mainstream learning institutions (Hornby, 2014). The current world has changed as far as education is concerned, with the most changes occurring within the last two and a half decades (Karten, 2010). Significantly, these changes have rendered all students equal in the classroom set up irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability, or disability (Karten, 2010). In other words, all students within a school are equal individuals, with similar rights to receive an inclusive education (Hugan & Carter, 2008). Every child in the classroom has the right for full inclusion in classroom learning activities and receiving ample opportunities for learning (Hughes & Carter, 2008). In a current learning setting, the teacher must create a universal classroom setting. The inclusion of students with special needs entails ensuring quality learning experiences and participation in school life (Sarma, 2008).

### Special Needs Education

The problem of ineffective inclusion patterns for students with special needs is associated with the misunderstanding of the term itself. As stated in the 1944 Education Act, students with special needs should be grouped based on their disabilities defined by their medical records (Armstrong, Armstrong & Spandagou, 2011). In simple terms, some students have extreme health issues and hence, are too disabled to be educated in mainstream education facilities. In this regard, educators tend to go an extra mile of labeling pupils into groups such as 'educationally sub-normal' and 'maladjusted,' and provide them with special education treatments in special schools (Perez, 2014).

### Inclusion

Over the last 25 years, integration and inclusion policies have created a lot of controversy in the education sector. The term inclusion was rarely used before 1990. Instead, terms 'mainstreaming' and 'integration' were used to stand for what 'inclusion' means today (Smith et al., 2015). The two words were used to indicate the act of placing students with special needs in mainstream schools. Specifically, introduced in 1978, 'integration' was used to mean including students with special needs into a standard education framework. According to Smith et al. (2015), initially, when integration was introduced into the education sector is featured in different modes. These modes ranged from full-time placement or full inclusion of pupils with special needs to enrollment of such learners into a learning unit that is attached to a mainstream one (Ross?Hill, 2009). By 1991 integration policy gained momentum becoming a requirement of the law when viewed from a human rights perspective (Ross?Hill, 2009). However, confusion and misunderstanding still arose, since the intergraded students were isolated from their peers,

primarily when working with a support worker in a one-to-one session (Sarma, 2008). Therefore, the effect was minimal as far as inclusion is concerned.

## **Importance of Inclusion**

Inclusion is the best way to cater to the needs of learners with disabilities. Unlike the traditional approaches, mainstreaming and integration, it is a universal approach, meaning that it provides for a full range of students at the same time (Tang, Morrow-Howell & Hong, 2009). Inclusive education brings diverse learners in the same learning environment. As a result, it reduces the stigma of learners with special needs. By using this approach, teachers can easily incorporate intermediary procedures that will allow each learner to study at his or her best.

## **Summary**

Studies reveal that inclusion of learners with special needs into a mainstream education setting poses challenges due to various factors. One, some teachers still lack enough understanding of the concept of inclusion and associated effective approaches. In addition, some teachers also believe that learners with disabilities should be taught in special schools and not mainstream ones to avoid disrupting the teaching process. However, what most of such teachers do not know is that including students with special needs in a mainstream school or class provides them with significant opportunities to develop their social skills. However, evidently, inclusion is not an easy process and it requires special skills, knowledge, and approaches to be effective.