

4-18-2012

# Research exercise: Social Integration and Implementation in the Classroom

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## Recommended Citation

"Research exercise: Social Integration and Implementation in the Classroom" (2012). *Stander Symposium Posters*. 168.  
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# Social Integration and Implementation in the Classroom

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## Abstract

Social learning and interaction in regards to students with disabilities, is a crucial aspect towards creating full integration in the classroom. Social integration is a term used to describe “a student’s full participation in the social interactions of the school community, including their acceptance by others as an integral part of the school’s social network” (Webster and Carter, 2007, p. 200). Not only students with disabilities, but general education students as well, will benefit from social interactions. Friendships are important and the impact it has helps to redefine social skills, creates support systems, and helps students to learn values (Carter and Hughes, 2005). It is important to find ways to incorporate social interactions into the classroom, so that students with disabilities feel more comfortable and can improve on their social skills.

## Impact of Social Interactions

- Increased social competence
  - It is important for students to become more independent and capable of asserting themselves through social interactions
- Attainment of educational goals
  - Researchers have found an 11% increase in academic achievement when there are programs that measure social-emotional learning
- Friendship development
  - Students with disabilities want a sense of helpfulness out of friendships whereas typical students want a feeling of intimacy development
- Enhanced quality of life
  - When students can communicate and socialize they feel more accepted and included as well as they are not bullied or harassed as much
- More assertive in initiating, leading, and terminating play interactions
  - Students know the appropriate social ways to interact with peers which can help to build their self-confidence

## Social Skills

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision making

## Limitations for Social Interactions

- Peer can have a tough time getting over stereotypes
  - Students with disabilities tend to be bullied, harassed, and judged.
  - It can be hard for peers to get over stereotyped behavior and accept students
  - It is important to educate the peers and to not pressure them into being friends
- Classes tend to be centered around lectures
  - It is important to make sure there is time in class for social interactions such as cooperative grouping
- Communication
  - It is important for the teacher to educate themselves on how to communicate with students who are non-verbal (use picture cards, sign language, or show them their options)

## Strategies for Teachers

- Schedule time during the day for students to converse
- Use peer interviewing during literacy instruction
- Picture prompt booklet
- Use priming to prepare students for social events
- Summer camps and other summer activities

## Overall Goal

- To not just increase casual interactions between students, but to set the foundation for meaningful friendships

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