

Absent, Incapable, and “Normal”: Understanding the Inclusiveness of Visually Impaired Students’ Experiences in Integrated Physical Education

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The purpose of this study was to examine the inclusiveness of visually impaired youths’ experiences in integrated PE.



Participants in this study included twenty-two visually impaired youth aged 12–17; 14 boys and eight girls.

Semistructured video conference call interviews, via Zoom, were the primary source for data collection for this study. Each participant completed a one-to-one, audio-recorded interview in September 2021 with one of the researchers.

Based on the data analysis, three themes were constructed:

- (a)** I’m not there, so how could I: The absent person
- (b)** I can’t see, so I can’t do it: The incapable person
- (c)** It’d be nice to feel like everyone else: The “normal” person

The "Absent" Person	The "Incapable" Person	The "Normal" Person
Participants felt absent from integrated PE spaces and activities, which they felt were clearly linked to the unavailability of feelings of inclusion.	Participants expressed that their feelings of inclusion were restricted because they felt like they were viewed as, and treated as, being incapable of adequately engaging in activities during their PE experiences.	Participants described the importance of feeling, being treated as, and being viewed as, “normal” and its influence on feelings of inclusion.

These findings highlight the problematic nature of conceptualizations of inclusion as a physical space, given the challenging experiences students had within and around that space. Thus, we challenge stakeholders and scholars to consider if they are supporting or encouraging enrollment in integrated classes to benefit students or in manners that exploit disabled students to celebrate what they deem to be “inclusive.”

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