

ARGUMENT MAP MIXING EDUCATION

What are the various important arguments for and against mixing students in primary education?

FOR

AGAINST

Mixing increases students' opportunities to develop

- Weaker students can benefit from the support of stronger students.
- Stronger students can learn more by explaining lesson materials to weaker students.
- Students with diverse backgrounds get the same opportunities for good education.
- Students get more attention at mixed schools, with smaller classes, than at non-mixed 'white' schools.
- Mixing increases opportunities for disadvantaged students, while retaining these for advantaged students.

STUDENTS

Mixing can reduce the social and cultural gap between students

- Students come in contact with societies' diversities at an early age.
- Students learn to get along with people of varied cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

Parents want the best for their child

- Parents want their child to grow up in an environment that has the least amount of segregation possible.
- Parents feel that it is important for their children to learn to cope with diversity.

PARENTS

Mixing has advantages for parents

- With a mixed school in the area, parents don't have to 'flee' to a non-mixed 'white' school elsewhere.
- Mixed schools sometimes have shorter waiting lists than non-mixed 'white' schools.
- Parents from diverse backgrounds come in contact with one another.

Mixing prepares schools for the future

- Mixing increases eligibility of (formerly) non-mixed 'white' schools for more funding.
- Through mixing, non-mixed 'black' schools can attract parents and students from advantaged backgrounds.

SCHOOLS

Mixing encourages schools to make conscious educational policy choices

- By mixing, school boards engage with educational policy, which leads to quality improvement.
- Acceptance policy agreements between schools guarantee the continued existence of all schools.
- By mixing schools fulfill their obligation to pay attention to 'active citizenship and social integration'.

Mixing makes teachers' jobs more rewarding

- Mixed classes provide teachers with challenges.

Mixing has (local) political priority

- Segregation is a high-priority issue on the political agenda – mixing is a means to address this issue.
- Mixing helps to prevent the closure of neighbourhood schools, and other facilities along with them.
- Existing buildings are better utilized when students are distributed more evenly.
- Mixing contributes to the Netherlands' international reputation as an integrated society.

GOVERNMENT

Mixing is a way of fighting segregation

- Mixing promotes the acceptance of diversity in society.
- Mixing promotes integration and social cohesion.
- Mixing contributes to the emancipation of cultural minorities and disadvantaged groups.

Mixing reduces students' opportunities to develop

- Stronger students' cognitive development and ambitions are curtailed.
- Weaker students lose the specialized guidance they need.

STUDENTS

Mixing can increase the gap between students

- Students form small groups with their 'own kind', discouraged by differences in (cultural) background.
- Differences become more obvious, making students more conscious of them.

PARENTS

Parents want the best for their child

- Parents of advantaged children are afraid that their child's academic achievements will deteriorate.
- Parents feel as if their children are being exposed to a social experiment.
- Parents want their child's school to be aligned with their own way of life and childrearing beliefs.
- Parents don't want their children to be influenced by the norms and values of others.

Mixing has disadvantages for parents

- Parents feel at home with people of similar backgrounds, and do not feel comfortable in mixed schools.

Mixing creates unrest in schools

- Non-mixed 'black' schools could lose funding if they accept more advantaged children.
- Non-mixed 'white' schools fear losing advantaged students, and/or losing the ability to attract them.

SCHOOLS

School boards do not see the necessity of mixing

- School boards at non-mixed 'white' schools think that things are going well at their schools.
- School boards at non-mixed 'white' schools think mixing is just another trend they don't want to follow.
- High goals (achieving the best results for one's own non-mixed school) are not compatible with mixing.

Mixing makes teachers jobs more complex

- A mixed school demands a lot from teachers: specific skills, affinities, time and energy.
- In addition to being an educator, teachers need to fulfill childrearing and social worker tasks.

GOVERNMENT

Politicians think that mixing is unnecessary

- Politicians are afraid that too much attention is being paid to mixing and not enough to good education.
- Solving the problem of segregation is not the primary responsibility of education.
- Society cannot be 'shaped', and class differences will therefore always exist.

Mixing does not combat segregation

- Mixing primary schools can only be successful if neighbourhoods are mixed as well.
- Only primary schools are mixed – secondary schools are not.

Mixing is difficult to achieve

- Freedom in education is threatened by enforced mixing.

This Argument Map gives an overview of the arguments for and against mixing students in primary education. The arguments are arranged per stakeholder: students, parents, schools (and school boards) and government.

For the purposes of this map, mixing is defined as the (voluntary) mixing of students from different cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. A premise that is often chosen is that the mix of students in a given school should be a reflection of the school's neighbourhood.