

THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

**Integrating Special Needs Learners
into the Regular Education Classroom**

***A Brief Overview of the Differences
Between Inclusion and Co-Teaching***

*Adapted from the work of
Lois S. Barbour*



*Much learning does not
teach understanding.*

– Heraclitus, *On the Universe* (540 B.C.-480 B.C.)

What is Inclusion?

- The belief or philosophy that all students should be welcomed members of a learning community/classroom even if their abilities differ
- Inclusion may or may not involve co-teaching

(Friend & Cook, 2004)



Co-Teaching

- Two or more educators or other certified staff, sharing instructional responsibility for a single group of students, primarily in a single classroom for specific content (objectives) with mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability
- Individual participation level may vary

Presentation to the New Mexico Public Education Department at the Quarterly Special Education Meeting in Albuquerque, NM, on April 29, 2004



Collaboration and Inclusion

- Collaboration generally refers to interaction of individuals with other educators, staff, service providers, and/or administrators
- All co-teaching may not be collaborative
- Collaboration is not necessarily co-teaching, but co-teaching is generally collaborative



Team Teaching

- Teach together: GenEd teachers combine classes and share instruction
- Plan together: GenEd teachers share planning and development of subject or interdisciplinary units, but teach separately
- Student Benefit: Different teaching approaches and styles



Legal Requirements

- **FAPE in the LRE**
 - **IDEA, 2007**
 - **NCLB**
 - **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**
- **IEP:** Individualized Education Plan to address unique needs of the student
- Student access to the general curriculum

Inclusion Benefits to Students

- Climate to foster learning communities
- Peer interaction, tolerance, and cooperation
- High expectations for content acquisition
- Skill and knowledge acquisition strategies
- Student engagement in learning

Student needs must be the top priority



Inclusion Benefits to Educators

Teacher collaboration promotes

- Understanding of student needs to
 - Provide a balance of supports
 - Monitor the student's IEP goals
 - Promote student independence
- Sharing of teaching resources
- Sharing of content knowledge and professional experiences



Roles of the Special Educator

- **Consultant:** provides **direct and/or indirect services** to students with disabilities in regular education classes and/or to regular education teachers
- **Academic Learning Center** (Resource Room): provides **supplemental** regular classroom instruction of students with disabilities
- **Integrated Co-teaching** (Collaborative Team Teaching): provides specially designed academic instruction to students with disabilities and non-disabled students and minimally includes a special education teacher and a general education teacher

Definitions adapted from a New York State Education Department Memo, April 2008



Special Educator Responsibilities

- Write student IEP goals and objectives
- Monitor student progress toward IEP goals
- Consult with General Educators
- Develop strategies to implement accommodations for students in the general education setting
- Understand the academic and behavioral characteristics of student disabilities and impacts on educational progress
- Fulfill role as consultant, service provider outside the GenEd classroom, and integrated co-teacher



Responsibilities and Roles of the General Educator

- Content delivery to all students
 - Thorough knowledge of content area
 - Knowledge of curriculum, scope and sequence, and learning goals
 - Develop lesson plans and activities to meet course goals
- Consults with Special Educator for
 - Effective strategies to meet student IEP accommodation requirements
 - Delivery assistance
 - Modification of assignments or assessments
 - Progress monitoring
- Integrated co-teaching collaboration



Educators' Shared Concerns

- Student Access to the Curriculum
- Differentiating Instruction
- Evaluating and Assessing Progress
 - Student's standing relative to class criteria
 - Degree of progress over a stated time period
 - Student work habits
- Student Competency and Mastery



Co-Teaching Prerequisites

- *Flexibility and Attitude*: Willingness to work effectively with another adult
- *Knowledge and Training*: Common and/or complementary knowledge and skills
- *Professional Relationship*: Parity, respect, cooperation, communication, and trust
- *Common planning time*: 1 hour/week min.
- *School Culture*: Administrative support and expectations



Co-Teaching – Models for GenEd and SpEd Teachers

- One Teaches, One Observes
- One Teaches, One Drifts (Monitors)
- Parallel Teaching
- Station Teaching
- Alternative Teaching (Re-teaching)
- Team Teaching

IMPORTANT NOTE: Effective inclusion teaching professionals will critically utilize various methods to promote positive student learning and for stated educational purposes and benefits understood by those professionals.

Classroom Dynamics

- GenEd and SpEd Teachers must have orchestrated roles and responsibilities
- Instructional flow to support **all** students
 - Whole class instruction
 - Differentiated flexible group activities
 - Individual accommodations applied
 - Minimize individual student wait-time
- Progress monitoring



The Priority: Student Success

GenEd and SpEd Teachers need:

- **Shared Planning Time:** 1 hr/wk minimum
- **Instructional Roadmaps:** clearly defined expectations of teaching responsibilities
- **Differentiate Instruction:** multi-modal approach to activities and content delivery
- **Joint Assessment of Student Progress:** various methods used to assess knowledge



Leadership Support

- Scheduled common planning time
- Defined instructional goals and objectives
- Professional development opportunities
- Regular departmental team meetings
- Other opportunities for peer and self-evaluation, reflection, and improvement
- Integrated curriculum supports; e.g., curriculum maps, resource inventories, etc.



RESOURCES

- Council for Exceptional Children:
<http://www.cec.sped.org//AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home>
- FREE - Federal Resources for Educational Excellence:
<http://free.ed.gov/index.cfm>
- Inclusion of Students with Special Needs - Teaching and Learning:
http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/teaching/front_teaching.html
- LD OnLine: www.ldonline.org/educators
- National Institute on Student Progress Monitoring:
www.studentprogress.org/summer_institute/default.asp#WE
- Power of 2: www.powerof2.org/ (not currently maintained)
- US Office of Special Education Programs - Tool Kit:
www.osepideasthatwork.org/toolkit/index.asp



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