



## **Research Brief**

### **Inclusion/Least Restrictive Environment**

**Question:** Describe different types of inclusive structures?

#### **Summary of Findings:**

I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) states that “each public agency shall ensure – (1) That to the maximum extent appropriate children with disabilities ... are educated with children who are nondisabled; and (2) That special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” The purpose of inclusion is to prepare all students to interact with and respect others in a world where everyone is different and has their own unique talents. According to the literature, inclusion is not strategy but a philosophy "...of supporting children in their learning that undergirds the entire system" ( Fisher, Sax, & Pumpian, 9).

A student's I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan) must include how they will participate in the regular education program as well as in extracurricular events. If a student who is on an I.E.P. is not going to participate in the general education program, the reasons why must be stated. Whatever reasonable assistance and/or aids that are needed to support a student with special needs so that they can be successful in the regular education program, legally must be provided.

#### **Synthesis of Studies:**

1. Students who have been in inclusion programs achieve better academically and socially than students who have been mainstreamed or are in pull-out programs.
2. Low achieving and students determined to have mild disabilities, did better in reading achievement in an inclusive setting rather than those who were in resource room programs.
3. In one study, the academic and behavioral progress of students who were considered to have moderate intellectual disabilities were monitored. Some were in an inclusive setting and others were in a special class. Although the academic progress was the same in the settings, it was reported that those in the inclusive setting made more behavioral progress than those who were not in that environment.
4. Another study found that the I.E.P.s of students who were in inclusive situations had more objectives that referred to "best practices" than those who were not.
5. A few studies indicated that when students with special needs were placed into the general education program where the necessary support and aids were not in place and/or the teachers had not been trained, that students did not appear to make academic or behavioral progress.

#### **Major Conclusions:**

1. The district and school must buy into and support the philosophy of inclusion prior to its implementation.
2. Teachers must have on-going training in appropriate methodologies for meeting the needs of this population.



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3. Teachers must have time to plan and meet together to determine how to best meet the needs of this population.
4. Each school has its own culture and its clientele mirrors that culture. Because of this, there is no template for the perfect inclusionary program.
5. Implement the philosophy slowly and with teachers who are open and willing to try it.
6. Educate the parents and community about inclusion.

#### Suggested Teaching Structures/Strategies:

1. Consultant: This is recommended in a small school with low numbers of students with special needs. The special educator works with students to reteach skills and concepts. Both teachers need to meet to plan.
2. Teaming: A special education teacher is assigned to one group, team, content, or grade level to provide information to the regular education teacher(s) about the students with special needs, suggest instructional strategies and possible modifications, and/or propose behavioral strategies. The teachers need to meet regularly to plan.
3. Co-teaching: The regular and special educators teach together in a shared setting. They are responsible for the entire instructional program.
  - two teachers: teach as a unit
  - parallel: class is divided in half and each teaches half of the class
  - station: each teacher teaches small groups of students at the end of a unit and the students rotate.
  - alternative: one teacher teaches enrichment while the other re-teaches the concept

#### **Online Resources:**

- Benefits of Inclusion  
A general list of the benefits of inclusion is given.  
<http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/philosophy/benefits.html>
- Block and traditional schedules: Effects on students with and without disabilities in high school  
This article describes the results of a study conducted that indicates that neither block or traditional schedules have an academic effect on students with disabilities.  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3696/is\\_200309/ai\\_n9266111](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_200309/ai_n9266111)
- Content and Behavior [sic] Strategies  
A brief overview of behavior to expect in an inclusive setting is provided.  
[http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/strategies/content\\_behavior.html](http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/strategies/content_behavior.html)



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- Educating Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: A Summary of the Research  
Results of the outcome of research regarding students with disabilities in the regular classroom are described.  
<http://education.uoregon.edu/>
- Inclusion Specialists: Are they really fostering inclusion?  
This article explores the definition of an inclusion specialist and different ways in which they approach their jobs.  
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>
- Inclusion models for the building level  
Descriptions of several different teaching models in an inclusive setting.  
[http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/preparing/building\\_levels.html](http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/preparing/building_levels.html)
- Inclusive Learning Environments for Students with Special Needs  
An overview from Washington State on inclusion programs.  
[http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/front\\_inclusion.htm](http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/front_inclusion.htm)
- Least restrictive environment coalition  
A list of definitions for special education is provided on this site.  
[http://www.lrecoalition.org/06\\_definitionsAcronyms/](http://www.lrecoalition.org/06_definitionsAcronyms/)
- Least restrictive environment: How do we educate both our special educators and general educators to comply with the provision?  
This article provides a working definition of "Least Restrictive Environment."  
[http://www.ldonline.org/ld\\_indepth/legal\\_legislative/complying\\_with\\_provision.html](http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/legal_legislative/complying_with_provision.html)
- Philosophy  
This provides several different definitions for inclusion.  
<http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/philosophy/philosophy.html>
- Slow Learners: Are Educators Leaving Them Behind?  
If a student does not qualify for special education services, yet is a low achiever, is the issue explored in this piece.  
[http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3696/is\\_200412/ai\\_n9483591](http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_200412/ai_n9483591)
- U.S. Department of Education  
Access information on IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).  
<http://www.ed.gov/help/site/expsearch/index.html>



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- What does an inclusive classroom look like?  
A brief description of the hoped for environment of an inclusive classroom.  
[http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/strategies/inclusive\\_classroom.html](http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/strategies/inclusive_classroom.html)

#### Book

- Fisher, D., Sax, C., & Pumpian, I. (1990). *Inclusive high schools*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.: Point Pleasant, NJ.  
3 high schools with different types of inclusion programs are described.

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