



## Research Brief

### Inclusion Models for Students in Special Education

**Question:** What are some successful inclusion models for SPED students?

#### Summary of Findings:

According to IDEA the definition of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), is that as much as possible "...students with disabilities, to the greatest degree possible, must have access to the general curriculum and be taught with their nondisabled peers" (Turnbull). Inclusion encompasses the philosophy that all students can learn and the environment, staff, and IEP support that belief. It also means that students who do not qualify for special services will also be supported in an inclusive environment. The recent literature provided several models that are currently being used, some different teaching methods that can be utilized and suggested some general characteristics that should be in place in order for inclusionary programs to be successful. Prior to and throughout the process of implementation, stakeholders should be educated about and supported through the change process including how it is connected to the overall goals and vision of the school.

#### Major Findings and Conclusions:

##### Suggested models

1. Case by case: Students with special needs are assigned to particular programs and/or classes as determined by the assessment team. The positive aspects include a seamless transition of the student into an inclusive program and it eases teachers into the concept of inclusion. The down side is that there is a smaller chance that the district and/or the school is not practicing or talking about inclusion; the money to support the system may not be as available as it would be if the whole system were in an inclusive model; the needs of students who have more active and involved parents, have a better chance of getting met, than those of students with uninvolved parents; and often this model is used to stave off a confrontational action.
2. Pilot programs: There are staff who are interested in and/or willing to try inclusion, so they will test it out for a specified period of time. The pluses include data to support the implementation and/or continuation of the program and it can be used as a model for the district/school. Some of the negative aspects can include the program being viewed strictly as a special education program, not as a program for the whole school; pilots are often specially funded through grants and once the money is gone, the support for it is no longer there; changes in leadership can rearrange priorities; and it might be viewed as an additional, not integral program.
3. Phase-In: The structure will become an integral part of the overall program. It is often implemented into specific subjects. The positive side is that will become a component of the school's programs and through exposure, students will become comfortable working together. On the minus side, there can be a lack of understanding of what the phase-in process will mean and look like in the general program.
4. Complete conversion: Usually there has been exhaustive planning and implementation that has taken place over a one to two year period. On the plus side, it will become part of the entire district's/school's program. On the other side, there is a very high learning curve due to the "rapid" change in the school's overall program.



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Suggested Structures: This is based on the premise that classes are heterogeneously structured and there is more than one educator in the class.

1. Interactive teaching: (whole class) Partners work together to teach and present concepts.
2. Station teaching: (small groups) One teacher teaches a small group, while the other teacher monitors and supports students who are working with the concept at different learning stations.
3. Parallel teaching: (small groups) Each teacher presents the same information/content to small groups.
4. Alternative teaching (whole class; small groups) One teacher is with small groups providing specific information/skills, while the other teacher monitors the rest of the students while they are working on the concept.

#### General Characteristics that should be in place:

1. Input from stakeholders: Especially in regards to the utilization of resources, funds, and the type(s) of program(s) to be offered. Stakeholders should include: faculty, administration, parents, students, and community.
2. Leadership: This must come from more than just the director of a district's special education program, it needs to include the site administrators and representative members from the stakeholders group, who should make decisions based on what is academically sound in order to meet the needs of every student.
3. Curriculum organization: Curriculum should be based around appealing and stimulating topics that tie into the students' lives and areas of interest. It should include a variety of pedagogy.
4. Collaboration: Quality time for staff, including paraprofessionals, to work together to develop their skills, as well as design and develop curriculum, should be an integral part of the school's schedule.
5. Staff development: This should be continuous and long term. It should address the staff's needs and interests as well as the diverse needs of students, and the school's goals and priorities. Paraprofessionals should be active participants in this.
6. Parental support: Encourage parental support through more than just meetings. Activities such as plays, sports, academic awards, and special presentations can be venues to help make parents feel comfortable about coming to school.
7. Partnerships: To become an integral part of the community, schools should work to develop active and meaningful partnerships with local businesses and universities.

#### **Online Resources:**

- The Coexistence of High Standards and Inclusion  
Suggestions to blend high standards and the guidelines from No Child Left Behind for students who qualify for special education services are explored.  
[http://www.findarticles.com/cf\\_dls/m0JSD/3\\_60/98255579/print.jhtml](http://www.findarticles.com/cf_dls/m0JSD/3_60/98255579/print.jhtml)



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- **Making Inclusion a Reality for Students with Severe Disabilities**  
Integration of content to the students' IEPs is described in this article. It provides practical suggestions for this for both the students in the general education and special education programs.  
[http://journals.cec.sped.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=TEC\\_archive\\_toc&ID=39](http://journals.cec.sped.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=TEC_archive_toc&ID=39)
- **Turnbull. Reaching the Ideal**  
This article examines and discusses the six major principles of IDEA and how they are being implemented. It also explores options about what can be done to get the principles instituted at deeper levels.  
<http://www.educationnext.org/20031/32.html>

#### Books/Periodicals

- Bauer, A. M. & Brown, G. M. (2001). Adolescents and Inclusion. Transforming Secondary Schools. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.: Baltimore, MD.  
This book describes the journey taken by a school in moving from a homogeneously organized setting to a heterogeneously mixed one with a full inclusion program as an integral part of its structure. It provides an overview of inclusion, how inclusive high schools work and ways to get the most benefit from an inclusive program.
- Choate, J. S. (2004). Successful Inclusive Teaching. Allyn & Bacon: Boston, MA.  
A description of an inclusive program, along with legislation is provided here. The crux of the book examines how to work with students to develop literacy in language and math in an inclusive setting.
- Fisher, D. Sax, C., & Pumpian, I. (1999). Inclusive High Schools. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.: Baltimore, MD.  
This book lays out the characteristics that need to be in place in order to begin exploring implementing inclusion. It also describes different schools that have implemented each model.
- Jorgensen, C. M. (1998). Restructuring High Schools for All Students. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.: Baltimore, MD.  
An overview of the varied components needed to implement an inclusive program are described. There is a strong emphasis on curriculum integration and the use of varied pedagogy.
- Smith, T. E. C., Polloway, E., Patton, J. R., & Dowdy, C. A. (2004). Teaching Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Environments. Allyn & Bacon: Boston, MA.  
The emphasis in this book was to examine various ways to reach students who have specific needs and ways in which to work with them in an inclusive environment.



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- Williams, G. J., Reisberg, L. (2003). *Successful Inclusion: Teaching Social Skills through Curriculum Integration*. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, V. 38, No. 4.

This article provides a brief description of how to combine social and behavioral skills with an approach called Violence is Preventable. This was written for the teacher working in a general education program.

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