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# Inclusion : Why? What now?

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## Inclusion : Why? What now?

### **Abstract**

The delivery of education to special needs students has changed over the years. The majority of classroom teachers and special education teachers have worked in separate classrooms to deliver the educational needs of special needs students. Now they are being asked to share a classroom so the special needs students can be included in the regular education classrooms. The purpose of this paper is to present research on strategies that will change the delivery of education for special needs students.

This paper will explain why the change is occurring, how it affects teachers and students, and the best practices for the delivery of education for special needs students and regular education students. The results of the research will be used to make suggestions for bringing about the change in the delivery of education for special needs students.

Inclusion

Why?

What Now?

A Literature Review

Presented to

Department of Educational Psychology and Foundations

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Robert Michael Bolick

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Advisor

Dr. John Henning

Inclusion

Why?

What now?

By Robert Michael Bolick

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The delivery of education to special needs students has changed over the years. The majority of classroom teachers and special education teachers have worked in separate classrooms to deliver the educational needs of special needs students. Now they are being asked to share a classroom so the special needs students can be included in the regular education classrooms. The purpose of this paper is to present research on strategies that will change the delivery of education for special needs students.

This paper will explain why the change is occurring, how it affects teachers and students, and the best practices for the delivery of education for special needs students and regular education students. The results of the research will be used to make suggestions for bringing about the change in the delivery of education for special needs students.

### Statement of the Problem

I teach second grade in an elementary school of 448 students with 98 of these students identified as special needs students. In my classroom of 24 students, 7 students are identified as special needs students. I was paired with a special education teacher who I have shared a classroom

with for the last 8 years. We had no training on how to deliver education to either our regular or special needs students in the regular education classroom. We were simply told we would be working together 8 years ago and have been together ever since.

What would have happened if our personalities clashed? What if our philosophies of teaching in an inclusive classroom were completely different? Were we just lucky?

This year the district combined two elementary schools and opened a new building that is larger with more special needs students and special education teachers. Most of the classroom teachers have no experience teaching special needs students in the regular education classroom. Two other special education teachers, who asked to go into the regular education classrooms, have never taught in a general education classroom in their careers.

There are regular education teachers and special education teachers who feel uncomfortable about having special needs students included into the regular education classroom. There are also many special education and regular education teachers who support the idea of full inclusion.

Most teachers and principals have had no preservice or postservice training on how to educate in inclusive

classrooms. Why do educators need to successfully include special needs students into the general education classroom? How do they navigate this change? What delivery models of special education are the best and for students?

### **Significance of the Problem**

Why is learning how to pair up regular education and special education teachers important? Once they are teamed, why is it important that they learn to apply best practices? In the elementary building where I work, almost 18% of the students in the regular education classrooms are identified as special needs students. In *A Legal Analysis of Inclusion* (Yell, M., & Drasgow, E. 1999, p. 118) the authors concluded

The LRE mandate of the IDEA sets forth a clear congressional preference for integrating students with disabilities in general education classrooms. The LRE mandate has two specific components. First, students with disabilities must be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Second, the mandate requires that a student with disabilities be removed from integrated settings only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, an appropriate education cannot be achieved satisfactorily in the general education setting. Congress recognized that at times an integrated setting will not provide an appropriate education and a more restrictive setting may be necessary. (Yell, M., & Drasgow, E. 1999, p. 118)

The old pull-out, resource room is becoming harder to justify under the law. The court cases cited in the article

do allow students to be placed in settings outside the regular classroom. These placements can only be made when the schools can show that the placement in the regular education classroom is not appropriate. The full inclusion of most special needs students is considered the Least Restrictive Environment {LRE}. Because of this, full inclusion of most special needs students is being mandated by the school district where I work.

It is not appropriate to waste time debating whether full inclusion is the best way to educate special needs students. The law states it is what must be done for most special needs students. The time needs to be spent on what are the best ways to accomplish this goal.

Change to the delivery of special education cannot be based on mandates alone. In the article *Co-Teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices*. (Cook, L. & Friend, M., p.1) the authors define co-teaching. They then raise many of the issues and concerns that can guide the thinking and practice of professionals as they strive to design and implement responsible co-teaching programs. They do not so much provide a single set of "right" answers as they do try to insure that the questions were asked so that professionals planning to co-teach can make deliberate and reflective choices concerning this service delivery option.

This article was used in this paper as a guide to find research to verify or refute their guidelines.

*School Change and Inclusive Schools: Lessons Learned From Practice* (McLeskey, J., & Waldron, N. 2002, p.65) described 10 of the most important lessons they learned as they worked with professionals and other stakeholders in a school district to develop inclusive programs. These lessons have helped the authors to better understand why and how some schools in the district changed their practices and became more inclusive, while other schools made few changes. Equally important, the lessons now provide a framework for making an educated guess regarding whether or not a school is prepared to undertake the changes that are necessary to develop a successful inclusive school program. Using the authors' framework as a guide for the research to include in this paper, I hope to be able to help my school and district successfully navigate this change in the delivery of special education.

#### **Definition of Terms**

##### **Special Needs Student**

A child must be diagnosed as having a disability and the disability must be found to "adversely affect

educational performance" so as to require special services.

## IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. Infants and toddlers with disabilities (birth-2) and their families receive early intervention services under IDEA Part C. Children and youth (ages 3-21) receive special education and related services under IDEA Part B.

## LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)

LRE means that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services, "along with their non disabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student's IEP requires some other arrangement. This requires an individualized inquiry into the unique educational needs of each disabled student. This inquiry determines the possible range of aids

and supports that are needed to facilitate the student's placement in the regular educational environment before a more restrictive placement is considered.

Mainstreaming

Generally, mainstreaming has been used to refer to the selective placement of special education students in one or more "regular" education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must "earn" his or her opportunity to be placed in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to "keep up" with the work assigned by the regular classroom teacher. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of special education service delivery.

Resource (Pull-out)

Special education students are placed in general education classes for at least 50% of the day. They are then pulled out into a special education classroom for instruction in identified areas for special instruction.

Inclusion

Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child

(rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students). Proponents of inclusion generally favor newer forms of educational service delivery.

#### Full Inclusion

Full inclusion means that all students, regardless of handicap condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting.

In addition to problems related to definition, it also should be understood that there often is a philosophical or conceptual distinction made between mainstreaming and inclusion. Those who support the idea of mainstreaming believe that a child with disabilities first belongs in the special education environment and that the child must earn his/her way into the regular education environment.

In contrast, those who support inclusion believe that the child always should begin in the regular environment and be removed only when appropriate services cannot be provided in the regular classroom.

## Co-teaching

Co-teaching is two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation for a classroom of students.

## Collaboration Models

Collaboration Models - *The Lead Teacher Model*: In classrooms with a lead teacher, often the regular classroom teacher delivers the instruction in the subject area. The special education teacher is an observer who works with children after instruction to provide specially designed instruction, provide adaptations and modifications.

Collaboration Models - *Stations or Centers*: Each teacher is responsible for instruction in a specific area of the room. Students are assembled into groups that rotate through the centers for instruction. Special education teachers may deliver instruction in areas of their certifications and may also serve as support to other teachers without special education background.

Collaboration Models - *Resource Services or Alternative Setting*: This involves pulling students with disabilities aside from the group or into a resource classroom where they work one-on-one or in small groups

with a special education teacher and possibly with instructional assistants for part of the instructional day. Even when students are placed full time in special education classrooms, teachers may communicate with each other to ensure students' programs include appropriate instruction. Separate settings are typically used with students who have more significant need for direct instruction.

Collaboration Models - *Team Teaching*: This involves both teachers simultaneously working together to teach a classroom of students. Either teacher who has the necessary background knowledge in the subject introduces new concepts and materials to the class. Both teachers work as a team to reinforce learning and provide assistance to students as needed. Special education teachers provide specially designed instruction to students with individualized education plans (IEPs) and regular education teachers can assist with this as well.

Consultation Models of Collaboration: A special education teacher may provide some instruction to students, but the majority of service is indirect. The special education teacher mostly provides guidance to the regular education teacher on how to modify instruction to meet the student's needs.

## Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 has an introduction, statement of the problem, significance of the problem, and definitions. Chapter 2 will provide a rationale of why and how inclusive classrooms are becoming more common as the educational setting for special needs students due to legislation and court cases. Chapter 3 will provide a historical perspective of the delivery of education to special needs students. Chapter 4 will examine research in attitudes, successes, problems, and implementation as related to the use of inclusive classrooms for special needs students. Chapter 5 will use the research to set forth a proposal on how to successfully teach special needs students in an inclusive classroom setting.

## Chapter 2

### Introduction

It is important to know where, when and why educational reform of students identified as in need of special education started and evolved so that we can see why we are where we are in the educational delivery of these students. In chapter 2 the history of special education in the United States will be discussed. I will present a chronological order of the legislation and court cases that have shaped the delivery of special education in the public schools. I will then show the trends in the delivery of special education today.

### Historical Background

#### 1800's-1950

After the Civil War there were acts in the early and mid-1800s making grants to the states to promote education of the blind and "asylums for the deaf and the dumb." But after these early efforts, the federal government had limited involvement in public schools regarding educating the "handicapped."

Congress passed the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA), which provided grants to improve science and math teaching in the earlier grades. The NDEA opened the

door for federal involvement in elementary and secondary education. Within a week President Dwight Eisenhower signed Public Law 85-926, that provided financial support to universities and colleges for training leadership personnel in teaching children with mental retardation.

#### 1960's

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the first major federal effort to subsidize direct services to selected populations in public elementary and secondary schools. In the second year of that Congress, Public Law 89-313 provided that children in state-operated or state-supported schools "for the handicapped" could be counted for entitlement purposes and special Title 1 funds could be used to benefit this relatively small population of children in state schools.

Congress in 1966 mandated a Bureau for the Education of the Handicapped (BEH) under Title VI of the ESEA, which also provided grants to states to initiate, expand, or improve programs for educating children with disabilities.

#### 1970's

In 1970, Congress passed the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA). Fifteen percent of the ESEA's Title III (which funded innovative and exemplary local programs) was set aside in 1970 for programs and projects serving

children with disabilities.

In 1973, Public Law 93-112, the Rehabilitation Act, at Section 504, provided that any recipient of federal financial assistance (Including state and local educational agencies) must end discrimination in the offering of its services to persons with disabilities. All children were guaranteed Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), this was passed because of some Supreme Court cases and it mandated that school districts must educate students with disabilities. This was the first law that gave students with disabilities a legal right to public education.

In 1977 the regulations for EAHCA is released providing a set of rules for school districts to adhere to when educating students with disabilities.

#### 1980's

Legislation effective in 1982 required that 10% of each Head Start program's enrollment be available to children with disabilities, without requiring these children to meet other Head Start eligibility criteria. A similar program earmarked 10% of the funds under the Vocational Education Act.

In 1986 the EAHCA was amended adding the Handicapped

Children's Protection Act. This amendment clearly states parents and students have rights under the EAHCA. Two important two important legislative acts are passed. The first was the American Disabilities Act (ADA) which adopted the section 504 and the second was another amendment to the EAHCA and it now became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This required school districts to look at outcomes and help in transitioning students to postsecondary life.

*Daniel R. v. State Board of Education* (1989), was a court case that determined that students with disabilities have a right to be included in both academic and extracurricular programs of general education. The Fifth Circuit Court created a two-part inquiry to determine the child's placement. First, the school must determine whether placement in the regular classroom, with supplementary services, could be achieved satisfactorily. To make that determination, the school must ask the following questions:

Has the school taken steps to provide supplementary aids and services to modify the regular education program to suit the needs of the disabled child?

Once modifications are made, can the child receive an educational benefit from regular education?

Will any detriment to the child result from placement

in the regular classroom?

What effect will the disabled child's presence have on the regular classroom environment and, thus, on the education the other students are receiving?

Second, if the decision is made to remove the child from the regular classroom for all or part of the day, then the school must also ask whether the child has been mainstreamed (spending some time in the regular classroom) to the maximum extent possible.

As the court stated, "The [IDEA] and its regulations do not contemplate an all-or-nothing educational system in which children with disabilities attend either regular or special education. Rather, the Act and its regulations require schools to offer a continuum of services."

This case helped to define the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

#### **1990's-Present**

Sacramento City Unified School District, Board of Education v. Rachel H. (1994) the court The Ninth Circuit Court examines four factors in determining appropriate placement:

(1) The educational benefits available to the child in the Regular classroom, (2) the nonacademic benefits of

interaction with children who are not disabled, (3) the effect of the disabled child's presence on the teacher and other children in the classroom, and (4) the cost of mainstreaming.

This court case continued to define what the LRE is for a student with disabilities.

In 1997 IDEA was reauthorized and amended. The amendments stated that students with disabilities were to be included on state and district-wide assessments. It also said that regular education teachers were required to be on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams. This brought IDEA in line with NO Child Left behind (NCLB).

### **Historical look at the Delivery of Special Education**

#### **Separate Classroom**

Because of federal legislation and court cases, there have been changes in the way special education in public school has been delivered over time. Kavale and Forness(2000) stated that special education was historically categorized as a "special class." They cited Johnson (1962) who concluded that the special class had 5 advantages. They were:

1. Low teacher pupil ratio
2. A specially trained teacher

3. Greater individualization of instruction in a homogeneous classroom
4. An increased curricular emphasis on social and vocational goals
5. Greater expenditure per pupil

### **Mainstreaming**

In 1975 with the passage of the EAHCA mainstreaming became the new way to deliver special education to the identified students. Kavale(2002) cited Kaufman, Agard, & Stemmell, (1986) that mainstreaming was difficult to define operationally as the law was theoretical. The law stated that students should only be placed in special classes or schools if the nature or severity of the disabilities would not allow the child to receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and services. Students would then be "mainstreamed" by leaving the special class and spending time with the general education class.

### **Resource Rooms**

This delivery model changed again when the IDEA of 1990, 1992, and 1997 was legislated. LRE was mandated for identified students. The new delivery system was now the resource or pull out model. In this model the special education student was placed in the general education

classroom for at least 50% of the time. The special education student was then pulled out of the general education classroom for specified time periods by a special education teacher to provide academic instruction.

### **Inclusive Classrooms**

Kavale (2002) cited (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987) Regular Education Initiative (REI) calling for more inclusive instructional placements for special education students.

The REI was based on the following assumptions:

- a) Students are more alike than different, so truly special instruction is not required
- b) Good teachers can teach all students
- c) All students can be provided with a quality education without being classified according to traditional special education categories
- d) General education classrooms can manage all students without segregation

Based on these assumptions physically separate education is inherently discriminatory and inequitable. REI was not met with unanimous positive responses (Davis, 1990). Today with the court cases the LRE for identified students must be the general education classroom (full inclusion) first and then inclusion, mainstreamed, special

class, and finally a special school. Thus, most identified students are included in the general education classroom with the trend heading toward full inclusion of the majority of students.

Yell and Drasgow (1999) stated that the LRE and IDEA clearly show a congressional preference for integrating students with disabilities into the general education classroom. Two legislative mandates were credited to LRE. They are:

1. Students with disabilities must be educated with students without disabilities whenever possible.
2. Removal of students with disabilities from the general education classroom can only happen when even the use of supplementary aids and services, an appropriate education cannot be achieved in the general education classroom.

Kliewer (1998) wrote that by early in the 1990's evidence in support of inclusive schooling was so overwhelming that it became absurd to oppose the creation of opportunities for children with and without disabilities to learn together.

### **Conclusion**

The education of identified students with disabilities has changed dramatically over the years. It

started with exclusion from public education. Through government legislation and mandates all students have the right to FAPE. How that is delivered has changed again and again over time. Today with the Federal mandates and court cases most identified students are being educated in the general education classroom. This is the law. The debate over whether this is fair, good, or bad may be argued in courts and in the legislatures. Schools shouldn't waste their time in this debate, but should look at what is the best way to make the change to a more inclusive delivery of education to the identified special education student. The models of delivery schools should use to comply with the law will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### Introduction

As stated in chapter 2 classroom teachers of special education, schools, and school districts need to educate the majority of their special education students in the general education classroom. Inclusion is the term that is being used for this new delivery of special education. There are different models of delivery that have used in an inclusive classroom. Some of those models are the consultant model, teaming model, instructional assistants model, and the collaborative/co-teaching model. These will be defined and explained in this chapter.

#### Consultant Model

According to Daack (1999), who cited Gartner and Lipsky (1997), the consultant model is a model of delivery where the teacher of special education students or the special education consultant work with the general education teacher and student to make sure the IEP is met. Meetings should be scheduled on a regular basis to set times for reteaching and practice of skills. This model allows the teacher or consultant of special education students to come into the general education classroom and work with the special needs student. Idol (2006) called this the collaborative consultant model. This model of delivery

of special education services would be best for schools with a low incidence of special needs students and a low student population overall. This model of delivery is a good way of providing an identified special needs student with special education services by a trained teacher of special education in the general education classroom. The drawback of this delivery model is that if too many students have been identified or if the school is too large, the scheduling of these services becomes impossible.

#### **Teaming Model**

The teaming model is when the teacher or consultant of special education is assigned to a grade level team. They would meet during a shared planning time once a week. The teacher or consultant of special education would provide instructional strategies, ideas for modifications and accommodations, and provides information on the identified special needs students. This model was later referred to as the Consulting Teaching Model by Idol (2006). The strength of this model is rooted in the collaboration of teachers. All team members work together. They broaden their knowledge in many areas both from the general education to the special education fields. The disadvantages of this model are:

- a) There is no direct contact from the teacher or consultant of special education and the identified special needs student in the general education classroom.
- b) Help for these students might have to be delayed until after the next team meeting.
- c) There may be resistance of general education teachers to implement the modification and accommodations for the identified special needs students.

#### **Instructional Assistants Model**

In this model paraprofessional aides come into the general education classrooms with the identified special needs student. This model is the easiest and quickest to implement according to Idol. The disadvantage is the paraprofessional is not a trained certified general education teacher or a teacher of special education students. They cannot be counted on to have the same impact on the education of special needs students as a certified teacher.

## Collaborative, Co-teaching Model

The collaborative, co-teaching model is having the general education classroom teacher and teacher of special education working together in the general education classroom setting to provide services to all students in the classroom. This includes both the identified special needs students and the general education students. A number of researchers (e.g., (Bauwens, Hourcade ,& Friend, 1989; Idol et al., 1986) have stated that the collaborative , co-teaching model takes the best of the consultant model and takes out the problems of scheduling. This model provides a minimum of scheduling problems, continuous and ongoing communication between educators, and lower student to teacher ratio than the teaming or consultant models. It can be a more expensive than the other models.

**Collaborative teaching can be organized in a number of ways:**

Friend and Cook (1996) and Gartner and Lipsky (1997) use the same 5 ways that the collaborative/co-teaching model can be used. They are:

- **One teacher, one support** - This organization works well for teaching a unit where one teacher is more

expert than the other. Students still have two teachers to ask questions of and get help.

- **Parallel teaching design** - The teacher divides the class into groups and teaches them simultaneously. The student to teacher ratio is low, more time is devoted to learning versus students waiting for help, opportunities for re-teaching are immediate, support for the teacher is present, communication is constant, and behavior problems can be minimized.
- **Station teaching** - This collaborative teaching model divides up content and students so that teachers or students rotate at the end of a unit. It is ideal for subject matter taught in units with no particular sequence. Benefits include the opportunities for re-teaching are immediate, the student to teacher ratio is low, teachers become experts with material, and communication among teachers is constant.
- **Alternative teaching design** - In this model, one teacher leads an enrichment or alternative activity while a second teacher re-teaches small group of students if they are having difficulty with content. Math is compatible with this design where a lot of re-teaching is done.

- **Team teaching** - Teachers work together to deliver the same material to the entire class. Teachers circulate around the class providing immediate re-teaching and a lower student to teacher ratio.

### **Conclusion**

In chapter 3 I showed the models for the delivery of special education, how each model worked, and some pros and cons of each model. The model that is being promoted the most is collaboration/ co-teaching. This model seemed to have the most pros and the least amount of cons. In Chapter 4 I will share studies on how this model is perceived by teachers, administrators, students and parents. I will also share studies that show the effectiveness of inclusion.

## Chapter 4

### Introduction

Inclusion, because of legislation and court cases, is here in our public schools today. The co-teaching/collaboration model is the model that is being recommended. The purpose of this chapter is to share a few studies that show teachers attitudes, perceived problems, and benefits of inclusive classrooms. In the beginning of the chapter studies by D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997), Heflin and Bullock (1999), and Hammond and Ingalls (2003) show teachers saw few benefits and many problems. In the middle of the chapter studies by Walther-Thomas (1997) and Austin (2001) show a change in attitudes and a better understanding of benefits of inclusive classrooms while still acknowledging possible problems and supports. The last article cited is "Co-Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms: A Metasynthesis of Qualitative Research" by Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007). I share their finding about teachers' attitudes, students' benefits, administrative supports, needs for success, and teacher compatibility.

### Few Benefits, Many Perceived Problems

In a study by D'Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) the authors cited only four perceived benefits of inclusion taken from a survey of teachers. The four benefits are:

1. Exposure of students without disabilities to students with disabilities
2. Exposure of students with disabilities to students without disabilities
3. Opportunities for cooperative teaching
4. Removal of students with disabilities from isolated environments

The majority of the teachers in the survey had strong confidence that many problems would occur because of inclusion. Here are some of those problems:

1. Problem with inclusion of students with severe disabilities
2. Problem of teacher stress
3. Increased difficulties with classroom management
4. Problems with instruction
5. Problems with class size

6. Conflicts for personnel working in inclusive classrooms
7. Co-teaching and aides
8. Increased costs

This study showed that in 1997 teachers did not have confidence that inclusion was beneficial.

Another study by Heflin and Bullock (1999) stated teachers have six major problems:

1. Insufficient support and training (i.e., dumping)
2. Non proportional ratios
3. Being unable to meet the educational needs of included students
4. Behavior management
5. Finding extra time to make curriculum modifications
6. Finding time to talk with teams members

The study also identified four variables that the participants felt are critical for inclusion to be successful. These are:

1. A natural proportion of identified students to regular general education students.

2. Training for working in an inclusive classroom.

This would emphasize collaboration.

3. Instructional support for all students in the classroom.

4. Careful planning and systematic implementation, not administration mandating it and stuffing it down their throats.

The study showed that teachers felt that there were many problems with inclusion and that overall they were skeptical about it working. This was a top-down initiative for the participants and not one they chose for themselves. Even with the negative perception, the participants felt it might work if certain things would happen.

In a study published in 2003 teachers' attitudes had not changed much from the previous studies mentioned above. According to Hammond and Ingalls (2003) elementary teachers in rural schools had mainly negative feeling about inclusion. They cited three major finding in their study:

1. The majority of participants had inclusionary programs in their schools and the majority of those

- participants had negative or uncertain feeling about those programs.
2. Respondents in the study felt there was a lack of collaboration time for them to implement the inclusion program correctly.
  3. The last of the finding was that the teachers participating in this study felt they had insufficient training to teach in an n inclusive classroom.

### **Changing Attitudes**

A study published in 1997 found many differences in teachers' attitudes compared to previous mentioned studies. Teachers have a high efficacy in classrooms that are inclusive and use co-teaching. Walther-Thomas (1997) stated in her study that teachers found it professionally rewarding to have another adult in the classroom. Teachers grew professionally working with another teacher. They also felt that they increased collaboration among the professional staff. The author stated that problems also were cited by teachers in the study. Planning time was insufficient according to most of the teachers in the study. This was even more

prevalent in the elementary schools. Case loads for special education went up for some special education teachers. The last problem cited by Walther-Thomas was a lack of professional development for co-teaching/collaboration in an inclusive classroom.

Austin (2001) found that even though the majority of participants had not volunteered for co-teaching in an inclusive classroom they felt it was beneficial to all students both socially as well as academically. They also felt it benefited them professionally. There were exceptions to the majority that felt that inclusion was not beneficial to students or themselves.

Attitudes seem to be changing in the way teachers feel about inclusion. The vast majority of elementary teachers in Austin's study felt that an inclusive general education classroom was the best placement for all students. It was not harmful and sometimes beneficial to the regular general education students and the identified special education students. Some interesting findings were that the teachers perceived their principals as educational leaders and administrative leaders. All the principals in this study fully supported inclusive classrooms. The teachers had high efficacy on their abilities to teach in an

inclusive classroom.

### **Another Look at Research**

Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie (2007) wrote an article using a meta synthesis of qualitative research to come to some conclusion about co-teaching in inclusive classrooms. The following conclusions reflect the authors' findings with respect to teachers' feelings, benefits for most students, and needs for successful implementation of inclusive classrooms.

#### **Teachers' Feeling**

They found that the majority of teachers felt they benefited professionally by co-teaching in an inclusive classroom. They learned from each other. The one variable needed was the teachers needed to be personally compatible.

#### **Students' Benefits**

An interesting find was that students without disabilities benefited. The majority of discussions in all studies were with the social benefits of students with disabilities. Some studies cited showed participants felt that co-teaching was a good model for student cooperation. Others studies including (Hammond, Helen, Ingalls & Lawrence 2003) showed improved academics for all students.

Students with disabilities according to studies show an overall success compared to programs they were placed before inclusion. Only a few students were not successful in all the studies. The reason stated in most articles was the fact of having two teachers in the room to help students learn.

The study did say that although the majority of studies supported the idea that co-taught inclusive classrooms were beneficial to both teachers and students a number of participants in many of the studies did feel that it was not the right placement for all students with disabilities. The reason given was that the needs of certain students could not be met in the inclusive classroom. Many studies also cited that certain students disrupt co-taught inclusive classrooms.

#### **Administrative Support**

The article showed that the majority of studies deemed that administrative support was the number one need for inclusive schools to be effective. Many studies' participants also felt that teachers should be asked to volunteer for co-teaching positions and not have them just told that is what they will do now. Other studies felt that if it was top-down mandated that it should be implemented slowly over a period of years

along with training and support.

### **Needs for Success**

Another need that the studies showed was planning time for the teacher of special education and the general education teacher. This planning time goes hand in hand with administrative support. The administrators are the ones who allocate planning time.

Training was cited in many of the studies as a need of teachers. Many studies pointed out that this is an environment that many teachers have not had any experience. They also had little experience teaching all students in an inclusive classroom. They were never trained in college for this new environment.

### **Teacher Compatibility**

The final variable was teacher compatibility. If the teachers were compatible things usually went well. If the teachers were not compatible it could be a disaster. Mutual trust and respect along with appropriate attitudes were the components most found as needed for compatibility.

### **Conclusion**

The studies cited in chapter 4 showed teachers were apprehensive about inclusion. It was new and they felt it was something that was being forced on them. They

felt negatively about inclusion. As time went by and inclusion was being implemented in more schools, teachers' attitudes started to change. The majority of teachers now feel that co-taught inclusive classrooms are professionally rewarding. Inclusive classrooms are beneficial for almost all students. This includes both students with and without disabilities. It does not include all students.

Administrative support, training, planning time/collaboration, and compatibility are the variables cited most in the success or failure of an inclusive classroom.

In chapter five I will present a systematic approach to implementing inclusive classrooms in an elementary school.

## Chapter 5

### Introduction

After the decision has been made to become an inclusive school, how do administrators and teachers make the changes needed for successful implementation? Mclesky and Waldron (2002) state that there are 10 lessons learned for school change and inclusion. They are:

1. Change must be supported from both the top and the bottom.
2. Change must be tailored to each school. There is no model.
3. Schools must be empowered to manage their own change.
4. To develop a successful inclusive school requires major changes in the entire school.
5. Substantive change should transform current school practices and is not simply an add-on.
6. Change should seek to make differences ordinary in the general education classroom.
7. Change has a ripple effect. It is systemic.
8. Professional development must be provided as needed.
9. Resistance should be expected

10. The work of developing an inclusive school is never done.

**Change must be supported from both the top and the bottom.**

Most schools in the Waterloo Community Schools are implementing more inclusive general education classrooms. This is a top down mandate. Teachers in these classrooms need to discuss the vision for inclusion with their principals. This paper is an example of the why inclusion is being done. Everyone needs to know this is not a choice but it is the law. In these discussions the principals should find out which general education teachers and teachers of special education are willing to work in an inclusive classroom. The teachers need to discuss the support they want and need from the principal to be successful in the inclusive classroom.

**Change must be tailored to each school. There is no model.**

I wish I could tell you that you could go down a list and check things off and have a successful inclusion program. This is not the case. Just like we take students where they are schools must be taken where they are. Each school needs to look at their resources. This includes their staff, clientele, budget, and buildings. Schools also

need to look at their beliefs, values, and understanding in how all students should be taught. It may be, as in my building, that all grades in the school are not ready to have co-taught inclusive classrooms.

**Schools must be empowered to manage their own change.**

Teachers need to have ownership of their inclusive classrooms. They need to have a say on what students are included. How the general education and the teacher of special education will work together for the benefit of all students in the classroom. The plan doesn't have to be an all or nothing in the beginning. It does have to be their plan. A plan they feel will work for the students and themselves. In my building, each teacher of special education seems to be able to decide what they want to do for the identified students.

**To develop a successful inclusive school requires major changes in the entire school.**

Teachers of special education, general education teachers, and principals need to change the schedules for planning and availability for the co-teaching to be effective for all students. Teachers need figure out who is going to do what and when in the inclusive classroom. These

classrooms will no longer be a single teacher working autonomously in their room. This is not just a new model for delivery of special education, but a new model of delivery of education for all students. When I first started teaching in an inclusive classroom we were given a reduced classroom size. This increased the size of the other grade level teachers. This has changed with a new administrator. I have seen an increase in inclusion and less pull-out in my wing of the building. The other wings still use the pull-out resource or push-in resource to deliver a separate educational experience for their students.

**Substantive change should transform current school practices and is not simply an add-on.**

Inclusion is not a push-in, moving the resource teacher's room into a general education classroom, approach. It is two teachers sharing a classroom and students. Teachers will need to collaborate and get out of the familiar autonomous professional life they are were living. This will allow more professional growth for these teachers. Changes in their teaching will occur as they collaborate and learn from one another. I have seen both changes in my teaching and the teachers of special

education that I co-teach within our inclusive classroom. It has not always been easy, but it has been professionally rewarding.

**Change should seek to make differences ordinary in the general education classroom.**

In today's world there is such a large range in both social and academic skills in every classroom. There is also a wide range of acceptance of this wide range from classroom to classroom. Inclusive classrooms openly accept these ranges and work on taking students from where they are and moving them forward. The general education teacher will get a new perspective from the teacher of special education and vice versa. Since all the students are their students it becomes normal to have many differences among students. Teachers and students will eventually see this as the norm and not something to be afraid of or complain about.

In my building I don't think there is one classroom that does not have a wide range of students. I would also say there is a difference from classroom to classroom on how teachers handle those differences.

**Change has a ripple effect. It is systemic.**

Every change made in one place will affect something else in another place. This is true of going to an inclusive classroom. Teachers, students, and the physical layout of the classroom will change. As stated earlier, teachers will need to collaborate and co-teach in an inclusive classroom. Students will be working with two different teachers in the same classroom. The classroom itself needs to have a place for both teachers to call their own. This should all be planned out and not done haphazardly. I have seen it done haphazardly in my building and it can cause resentment among staff.

**Professional development must be provided as needed.**

Teachers need to be prepared for successfully implementing an inclusive classroom. This paper could be a start to the professional development. It explains why inclusion is here. It contains studies that show the effectiveness of inclusion. It goes over models for teaching in an inclusive classroom. There is still much more that needs to be done in the professional development. This would include instructional strategies, curricular adaptations, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, discipline, conflict resolution, social skill training,

along with many other possible subjects. The teachers should take ownership of this professional development so it will be more meaningful to them. I have had the opportunity of having only one professional development class for inclusive classrooms. This was a class on co-teaching and lasted less than 8 hrs.

**Resistance should be expected.**

Every time that change comes there will be some who resist it. My first attempt at an inclusive classroom I worked with a teacher of special education who did not want to teach in an inclusive classroom. She didn't have time to collaborate. She didn't feel that all the students were ours. She felt she had her students and I had mine. She also would find reasons to pull-out the students to work with them in her office where she had always worked with students before. Inclusion was not working with this teacher. I could have blamed her or criticized her for being so resistant to this top-down change. But I knew her as a good teacher before the change came. She was still a good teacher but didn't understand the reason for change and didn't think it was necessary. Resistance to change will occur and it is not always a bad thing. It causes reflection. Reflection is good. My next attempt at

inclusion I was paired with a teacher of special education who wanted to teach in an inclusive classroom. This was a change my principal made after seeing the resistance. She now made her decisions after looking how the teachers felt about inclusion.

**The work of developing an inclusive school is never done.**

I have been working in an inclusive classroom for the past 8 years. We are constantly learning and changing how we do things. It is not easy and I still am not sure if how and what we are doing is right. I do know that we do care about all of our students and want the best for all of them. I also know that as long as I'm teaching I will be evolving and changing. To stay the same is to be left behind.

### **Conclusion**

The law says that the inclusive classroom is here and that most of the identified students need to be educated in an inclusive classroom. The law does not say all identified students, but only a small percentage of students will meet the courts' requirements for not being placed in an inclusive general education classroom.

Most of the move to inclusion has been top-down mandated. The move to inclusive classrooms does not happen all at once and there is not an exact way to accomplish it successfully. Successful inclusive classrooms need support from the administration and the teachers in both general education and special education. Professional development is important as this is new to many that are involved with this change in the delivery of education.

The model that is being touted as the best delivery model is the co-teaching/Collaboration model. This model can't be just thrown together. The compatibility of the teachers working together is a strong indicator of the success in an inclusive classroom. Some teachers are just not compatible either personally or professionally.

Administrators need to educate their staffs about the laws. They need to find out who is ready to make the jump from working in an autonomous classroom to working in a shared classroom. They need to then match up the teachers of special education with the general education teachers by their compatibility and interest in teaching in an inclusive classroom. If they can find one pair of compatible teachers they have a start. Further studies and research are needed on schools with the greatest success using inclusive classrooms.

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