

# **Inclusion: Practices for Administrators**

## **Course Transcript**

## **Home: Inclusion-Practices for Administrators**

Welcome to the online course Inclusive Practices for Administrators. In this module, we will review the impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act on schools and its guiding principles. We will also review examples of how inclusion may look on your campus.

A glossary of terms can be accessed from the Glossary tab located on the top banner of the page. Also on the top banner is a Resources tab where you can access the audio transcript of the course and resources associated with our topic.

## Introduction

In 1975, the United States legislature enacted one of the most impactful changes in the history of education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, as it is now known, forever changed the landscape of education equality for all students. Before IDEA, many children were denied access to education and opportunities to learn. For example, in 1970, U.S. schools educated only one in five children with disabilities, and many states had laws excluding certain students, including children who were deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, or intellectually disabled. Today, over 6 million children receive special education and related services to meet their individual needs. In Texas, nearly half a million students, or 1 in every 11 students, receives services.

Let's review some of the major impacts IDEA has had since its implementation.

In 2015, nearly 95 percent of the 6 million students, ages 6 through 21, receiving special education services were educated in regular classrooms for a portion of the school day. On average 6 out of every 10 students were educated in a regular classroom more than 80 percent of the school day. Less than 6 percent of students were educated outside of the regular classroom in "Other environments."

High school graduation rates and employment rates among youth with disabilities have increased dramatically. For example, graduation rates increased by 14 percent from 1984 to 1997. Today, post-school employment rates for youth served under IDEA are twice those of older adults with similar disabilities who did not have the benefit of IDEA.

Post-secondary enrollments among individuals with disabilities receiving IDEA services have also sharply increased. For example, the percentage of college freshmen reporting disabilities has more than tripled since 1978.

## **Misconceptions about Inclusion**

When it comes to values and attitudes about inclusion, research conclusively demonstrates that most stakeholders favor inclusive education. Yet, misconceptions remain a threat to understanding the least restrictive environment provision of the law. The facts however, are clearly supported by educational research evidence.

As educators, we must make sure that all students have equal access to the general education curriculum. Students who receive special education services are general education students first.

Improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities requires a continued focus on the full implementation of IDEA. IDEA ensures that each student's educational placement and services are determined on an individual basis, according to the unique needs of each child, and are provided in the least restrictive environment. The focus must be on teaching and learning, using individualized approaches to accessing the general education curriculum, and supporting learning and high achievement for all.

As we move through this module, it is necessary for us to have a common understanding of the guiding principle in IDEA, known as Least Restrictive Environment or LRE. LRE means that

student's placement must be individually determined and based on student's individual needs.

This means that we should always consider the general education classroom as the first choice for a student. Consideration and use of supplementary aids and services to make the general education class a first and viable option is necessary.

We can achieve this outcome by documenting services in the IEP, or Individual Education Plan. The IEP creates the opportunity for teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and when appropriate, students to work together to improve educational results for children with disabilities. The IEP is the cornerstone of a quality education for each child with a disability.

We hope this module will help educators and leaders effectively provide the best services to students through planning and implementation.

## **Self-check**

It is time for a quick self-check. Answering the following questions will help you gauge your understanding of inclusion. Remember, you can always go back and review the content if needed.

## **Inclusion Models Introduction**

Something we often hear from educators is “Wait, don’t we already do inclusion?” Sometimes, teachers do not want additional training because they feel like this is a subject that has already been addressed. Others feel that this is a single practice that can be implemented by placing students who receive special education services into general education classrooms, however just placing students in general education classes is not inclusion.

Students receiving special education services should receive support based on their needs. As we look at some of the inclusion models, keep in mind that your school district may use different terms to describe a certain practice. For example, co-teaching may be referred to as instructional facilitation, or instructional support. While the language can be unique, each model has parameters that should be followed.

Let’s look at these inclusion models.



# The Inclusion Models

## Co-Teaching

Co-teaching occurs when two or more certified teachers, one general educator and the other a special service provider, share physical space in order to actively instruct a blended group of students, including students with disabilities. For more information, a how-to guide for Co-Teaching in Texas is provided for download in the Resources tab. The guide includes six approaches to co-teaching and guidelines for administrators to consider when implementing a co-teach program in their campus or district.

## Facilitated Support

In the Facilitated Support model, the special education teacher provides support directly to the general education teacher. Support is provided to the general education teacher and the students through co-planning, co-instructing, or co-assessing.

## In-Class Support or Itinerant Support

In the In-Class Support or Itinerant Support model, the special service provider gives support directly to the students in the

general education classroom. The special educator may be in the classroom for all or part of the instructional period, every day or just for a few days a week according to the student's IEP. The special educator provides support to the students through accommodations or modifications. In-class support may be provided through special education teachers or trained paraprofessionals.

### Consultation

In the Consultation model, a special service provider consults with the general education teachers regarding the student's progress and provides strategies for differentiation, suggestions for changes in instruction, and modified materials for use in the classroom.

When looking at these models, some students who receive special education services might be in a co-teach classroom, but also receive related services that fall into another category. This is common and a natural part of inclusion. Related services are supportive, corrective and developmental services included on the IEP and required for students with disabilities to benefit from special education. Examples include, but are not limited to, transportation, speech and language, occupational and physical therapy, adapted physical education, school

psychology services, interpreter services, mental health or behavior specialist support, work-study services, and aide support.

## Curriculum Continuum

As mentioned, placement of students always begins in the general education classroom. This image gives a visual representation of services for students. As we can see, all decisions are made from the point of reference of general education curriculum. In Texas, we use the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS.

It is here that we decide what supports must be in place so that the students who receive special education services can access and make progress in the general education curriculum.

The curriculum continuum begins in the general education curriculum for a student to be able to work at grade level with no accommodations. As it moves further to the right, the support from special education grows. At the end of the continuum, the majority of the support comes from the special education service provider as the student with disabilities accesses alternate achievement standards aligned to the grade-level general education curriculum.

## Misconceptions about Inclusion

There are many misconceptions as it relates to Inclusion. Let's take a look at some of those now.

**Myth:** Inclusion is costly and complex. While growing an inclusive schooling model requires problem solving, attention, and support, some of the most lasting and powerful changes can happen by making small adjustments, by having different conversations, by asking the right questions, and by thinking outside the box and outside the special education classroom.

**Myth:** Inclusion is co-teaching. Co-teaching is a service delivery option, or a way to provide students with disabilities or other special needs the specially designed instruction they need while ensuring that they can access the general curriculum in the least restrictive environment.

**Myth:** Inclusion means we are unable do pullout interventions. Highly inclusive schools have some pull out services available to students for whom it is necessary, but that pull-out is guided by data-based decisions, revisited often, and continued only for as long as necessary as evidenced by the continuum graphic from earlier.

## Potential challenges

Anticipating some of the frustrations teachers may have can also be beneficial. Let's take a look at few.

Distortion of Continuum:

Schools might only use part of the continuum because of the availability of services. The ARD committee must keep the availability of services and resources in mind while making placement decisions. Keep in mind that each student's plan is individualized and should be designed to meet their specific needs.

Tension:

Who is responsible for the success of students receiving special education services on state assessments? Sometimes teachers have a difficult time sharing ownership of students.

Failure to Engage in Authentic Collaboration:

Educators in the classroom need time to collaborate and plan for the needs of each student.

Need to Redesign Specialized Support:

What will support of students look like in a general education classroom? Students who receive special education services should have Specially Designed Instruction or SDI in place. If they do not, we need to ask ourselves why is the student

receiving special education services, and how does that student qualify as the student must have both a disability and a need for SDI. Specially designed instruction is the instruction provided to a student with a disability who has an IEP in order to help him or her master IEP goals or objectives based on the impact of the disability.

Many of these frustrations can be avoided by embracing the values behind inclusion. School leaders should clearly communicate to educators and families that best practices to facilitate inclusion are identical to best practices for educating all students. Inclusion is not merely an add-on, but a natural extension of promising research-based education practices that positively affect the teaching and learning of all students.

## **Inclusion and Student Outcomes**

Now that we have covered many of the most important pieces of inclusion, let us talk about how inclusion affects student outcomes. High accountability standards have increased the pressure put on districts and campuses. Almost every single indicator throughout the A to F accountability system is tied to student achievement. No longer can we look beyond any single demographic group as each individual student outcome has an impact on our overall measure.

Knowing this, we are tasked with improving our instructional practices and ensuring we meet the needs of all students. While differentiation is included in our teacher appraisal system, teachers should purposefully make content, processes, and outcomes more accessible to mitigate the effect students' race, gender, ethnicity, language, and differing abilities may have on their learning experiences.

Beyond differentiated instruction, specially designed instruction is the individualized instruction provided to a student with a disability who has an IEP in order to help him or her master IEP goals and objectives. Specially designed instruction is not a part of the Response to Intervention or Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act processes, but is specific to a student who qualifies for special education services, specified in each student's IEP, and ensures access to and progress in the



general curriculum. Specially designed instruction goes beyond differentiated instruction and addresses the unique needs that exist because of a student's disability. Specially designed instruction should be implemented in addition to, not in place of differentiated instruction.

## Case Study

Lets take some time to take a look at a case study that represents a real world situation.

Susie is a 5th grade student who receives special education services. She qualifies as a student with a learning disability in reading. Susie's learning disability is defined through IDEA as a disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. This may manifest itself in the inability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Susie's learning disability means she has a significant weakness in decoding and spelling which impairs her reading accuracy, reading rate or fluency, and reading comprehension.

Susie also receives speech therapy. Mr. Thomas, speech pathologist comes to Susie's classroom and supports her there. Through observations, he can identify strategies and/or SDI and document progress, as well as consult with Susie's teachers to determine effectiveness of the services. In a traditional special education setting, many students may be pulled out for a related service like speech therapy. With inclusion, the service comes to the student and those providers can engage and provide informational support that benefits all students.

Susie's disability presents great challenges in text-heavy content areas. As text becomes more important for essential learning, many times students with a learning disability in reading become discouraged, and teachers become frustrated.

Susie's general education teacher, Mrs. Keller and special education teacher, Mrs. Jones are following the plan in Susie's IEP which lists specific strategies or SDI and classroom supports that can minimize the impact of her disability across all content areas. In Susie's IEP, it states that Susie will receive a special education instructional service during specific parts of the day. Remember, when looking at the service delivery options, or a way to provide students with disabilities the instruction they are entitled to, it is important to consider all possibilities when making decisions.

Mrs. Jones provides co-teach support in Susie's classroom during the reading and math portions of the day. Mrs. Keller and Mrs. Jones are able to meet one time per week to discuss the lessons, activities, and interventions used during class. Both agree on a specific co-teach model, like team teaching, and then plan accordingly. Mrs. Keller and Mrs. Jones are looking at evidence-based strategies to enhance student understanding of the vocabulary. For example, they may choose vocabulary strategies that uses graphic organizers and visualizations for each new vocabulary term or key concept.

This technique requires students to define target vocabulary and apply their knowledge by generating examples and non-examples, giving characteristics, and/or drawing a picture to illustrate the meaning of the word.

Mrs. Keller uses a multisensory approach to reading, call VAK. VAK stands for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic and aids in processing and retention. She has built in anchor charts with vocabulary and comprehension strategies as well. Other strategies such as visualization, small groups, strategic pairings, station teaching, and others can be very effective in all content areas. By embedding strategies like graphic organizers and anchor charts, Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Keller know that all students will benefit when it comes to learning new vocabulary.

This example represents a typical scenario that educators are faced with when it comes to serving students who receive special education services. Susie receives support from multiple service providers at different times. By providing services in a way that coordinate with instruction rather than interrupt, Susie receives the same amount of instruction as other students and should have higher outcomes.

## Conclusion

As we have learned, inclusion also benefits general education students as well. Often the stigma of being different for a student receiving special education services is negated as students recognize the diversity and unique challenges everyone may face in a classroom.

As you can see, inclusion practices truly benefit all students. As school leaders, we can ensure that our vision of a successful campus addresses inclusion. Education cannot truly be “inclusive” if the focus is only on students with disabilities and not on whole school practices with all groups who may experience isolation due to differences such as race, socioeconomic status, appearance, or sexual orientation. Inclusion is a process. With support, collaboration, and effective classroom practices, we can make inclusive education work so that students with disabilities have the same access to the general education curriculum as any other student as well as the same opportunity for academic, social, and emotional success.

## **Final Self – Check**

It is time for a quick self-check. Remember, you can always go back and review the content if needed.