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ABSTRACT

This document reviews the research on achievement and successful practices related to educating students with disabilities in inclusive general education classrooms. First, it examines the meaning of "inclusion" and distinguishes inclusion from mainstreaming and integration. The following section explains legal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that mandate student placement in the least restrictive environment and the relationship of inclusion to school reform. The research on inclusion is reviewed separately for its effects on students with mild disabilities, for students with more significant disabilities, and for students without disabilities. The review examines the impact of inclusion on achievement and on attitudes and relationships. Although the review finds that the majority of the available research supports inclusive education, it also notes studies which suggest that inclusion does not work, especially when students with disabilities in the general education setting do not receive necessary support services. The paper concludes with four recommended educational principles: (1) diversity as the new norm, (2) collaborative teaching arrangements, (3) flexible school structure, and (4) performance-based and alternative assessments. A list of seventeen resources is included. (Contains 58 references.)

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ED 419 329

# Educating Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: A Summary of the Research

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# Educating Students With Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: A Summary of the Research

"Education contributes to an individual's journey toward self reliance and independence. Schools and instruction must be designed and organized to meet the varying needs of individual learners....Alaska is striving to improve educational outcomes for all students."
*(Dr. Shirley Hollaway, Commissioner of Education for Alaska, in a speech given to the Special Education Directors' Conference, Anchorage, AK, September 1996)*

"The entire context of American education is changing. We need teachers skilled in using computers as a powerful teaching tool, and many more teachers well-versed in teaching English as a second language. Our teachers need to teach to a higher level of achievement, and be prepared to teach all of America's children—the gifted and talented, our many new immigrants, the college-bound achiever, and the disabled child who is learning so much more because he or she is now included."
*(Secretary Richard Riley, United States Department of Education, in a speech on the State of American Education, February, 1997)*

We hear and read a lot about school improvement, school reform and restructuring. However, educators still have many questions about how to provide a quality education for students with disabilities in school. This document shares current research on achievement and successful practices, related to educating students with disabilities in inclusive general education classrooms.

## What is Inclusion?

For the purpose of this document, inclusion is defined as providing specially designed instruction and supports for students with special needs in the context of regular education settings. It means that all students in a school's attendance area are full members of that school community and each student participates equitably in the opportunities and responsibilities of the general education environment. Those involved in inclusion efforts understand that classrooms are becoming more and more diverse and that the teacher's job is "to arrange instruction that benefits all students—even though the various students may derive different benefits" (Rogers, 1993, p. 4). Past assumptions about special education and general education as separate systems are giving way to a challenge to work together (Moore, 1996).

After looking extensively at the research on placement of students with disabilities, Hocutt (1996) concludes that instruction, not setting, is the key to achievement of success as measured by student outcomes. Further, she reports that case-by-case approaches are the best way to make decisions about student instruction and placement. Intensive and reasonably individualized instruction, close cooperation between general and special education teachers, and careful, frequent monitoring of student progress are very important (p. 97).

Special education is not a place. It is specialized instruction and supplementary aids and services provided to students with disabilities who need

specialized instruction. Some students (labeled as receiving special education or not) may need, or want, to spend some of their time learning in a quieter place with fewer people or with additional help from others. The vignettes that are placed throughout this booklet illustrate how special education services are being delivered in more inclusive ways in actual schools and classrooms in Alaska and Oregon. "Inclusion" looks different in each case. The vignettes demonstrate some of the salient features of good inclusion. At the conclusion of the document resources are available that may help you as you work toward quality special education in Alaska.

### Mainstreaming, Integration or Inclusion?

Inclusion is different from integration or mainstreaming. Mainstreaming brought students with special education needs into general classrooms only when they didn't need specially designed instruction—when they could keep up with the "mainstream." Integration presumes that "segregation" exists and students are with their peers without disabilities part-time. In reality, students who were integrated part-time were not truly a part of the class and were often involved in activities very different from the other students in the class. Inclusion, a philosophy of acceptance, belonging and community, also means that general education classes are structured to meet the needs of all the students in the class. This is accomplished through educational strategies designed for a diverse student population and collaboration between educators so that specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and services are provided to all students as needed for effective learning.

Several recent studies have found that inclusion is more effective than either integration or mainstreaming. Ferguson's (1992) project to achieve both social and learning outcomes for students in general education classrooms resulted in the finding that "integration doesn't work, but inclusion does." Schnorr's (1990) seven month investigation of the way in which a classroom of first graders viewed and interacted with a student with moderate disabilities who was mainstreamed only on a part-time basis revealed that the part-time student was considered an "outsider" by the other students in the class. A study of 16 secondary students placed in nine Oregon high schools (Hilton & Liberty, 1992) demonstrates that placing students with severe disabilities in integrated settings does not ensure that either integration or inclusion will take place. In this case, there was little interaction between students with and without disabilities, teachers did not foster integration when opportunities presented themselves, schedules often minimized integration opportunities and students' records indicated they were not making progress toward independent adult functioning. These studies lend support to the contention that, for successful inclusion to occur, the general education classroom needs to be a place where a range of student abilities is supported and accepted.

### We All Work Together

A fourth grade class is on a cycle of success. As teachers make accommodations and provide specially designed instruction in the regular class, Kelly, who has Down Syndrome, succeeds. As she succeeds her teachers work harder and are eager to try new teaching strategies and supports. Kelly's mom says, "The key is we all work together." The principal makes sure Kelly is assigned to a class in the fall that includes some of her best friends. The physical therapist, occupational therapist, parents, vision teacher and speech therapist provide consultation, direct individual instruction, small group instruction and informal suggestions. The special education teacher and fourth grade teacher are close partners in Kelly's education. The IEP team meets quarterly and regular communication is the norm. Instead of saying "We can't do that" this staff asks "How can we do that?" The collaboration is paying off in great dividends. Kelly is succeeding in fourth grade.

## Legal Requirements

The federal law that assures students with disabilities have access to school and a free appropriate public education has recently been reauthorized. The new Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) contains requirements that will strengthen progress toward inclusionary practices. Like the old law, the new IDEA does not use the term inclusion, but rather requires school districts to place students in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Judy Heumann, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, describes how the general education classroom should be the first option considered: "In implementing IDEA's LRE provisions, the regular classroom in the school the student would attend if not disabled is the first placement option considered for each disabled student before a more restrictive placement is considered. If the IEP of a student with a disability can be implemented satisfactorily with the provision of supplementary aids and services in the regular classroom...that placement is the LRE placement for that student" (1995). The Alaska Department of Education provides encouragement and support to all Alaskan schools to meet this federal perspective on LRE.

The new IDEA calls for involving students with disabilities in general education curricula, assessment activities and classrooms, with supplementary aids and services and specially designed instruction, as appropriate. Not only must the IEP contain a statement of how the child's disability will affect participation in the general curriculum, but it must explain why any student will not be participating in the general education classroom, as well as extracurricular and non-academic activities. The Committee Report that accompanied the new law to Congress explained the intent behind the changes: "The new emphasis on participation in the general education curriculum...is intended to produce attention to the accommodations and adjustments necessary for disabled children to access the general education curriculum and the special services which may be necessary for appropriate participation in particular areas of the curriculum..." (U.S. Senate, 1997, p. 17).

Court decisions have played a role in defining inclusion in the past six or seven years. Different circuit courts have applied slightly different tests for determining whether a school district has complied with the LRE provision of the law. The Ninth Circuit Court, which has jurisdiction over Alaska, ruled that a school district must show that it has made a good faith effort to enable a student to participate in the general education setting. The factors to consider are: "1) the educational benefits of the regular classroom with supplementary aids and services balanced with the educational benefits of the special education classroom; 2) the non-academic benefits of integration with students who are not disabled; 3) the effect of the student's presence on the educational environment and on other children in the classroom; and 4) the cost of

### Just One of The Class

There are quite a few "identified" students in this general education fourth grade class, but only one has an obvious disability. Toby is blind and uses a Braille writer and printer. Math is the subject—three place multiplication. Holly's teaching approach for this new lesson is to work the problems on an overhead projector so that all the students can see what she is doing. Toby has entered the problem in his Braille writer. He listens and thinks as Holly asks students what answer they got. When she asks how they worked the problem, Toby listens to several students attempt but fail to fully explain the procedure. He waves his hand eagerly and Holly calls on him. Standing and fingering his Braille machine, he steps through the procedure. After two or three steps, Holly prompts and he realizes he has messed up. Anxious to get it right, Toby backs up and starts again. This time, he makes it through the problem, ending up with the right answer. The class moves on to the next problem.

## Common Recommendations of National Curriculum Reports

- LESS whole-class, teacher-directed instruction, e.g., lecturing
- LESS student passivity: sitting, listening, receiving, and absorbing information
- LESS prizing and rewarding of silence in the classroom
- LESS classroom time devoted to fill-in-the-blank worksheets, dittos, workbooks, and other "seatwork"
- LESS student time spent reading textbooks and basal readers
- LESS attempt by teachers to thinly "cover" large amounts of material in every subject area
- LESS rote memorization of facts and details
- LESS stress on the competition and grades in school
- LESS tracking or leveling students into "ability groups"
- LESS use of pull-out special programs
- LESS use of and reliance on standardized tests

- MORE experiential, inductive, hands-on learning
- MORE active learning in the classroom, with all the attendant noise and movement of students doing, talking, and collaborating
- MORE emphasis on higher-order thinking; learning a field's key concepts and principles
- MORE deep study of a smaller number of topics, so that students internalize the field's way of inquiry
- MORE time devoted to reading whole, original, real books and nonfiction materials
- MORE responsibility transferred to students for their work: goal-setting, record-keeping, monitoring, evaluation
- MORE choice for students; e.g., picking their own books, writing topics, team partners, research projects
- MORE enacting and modeling of the principles of democracy in school
- MORE attention to affective needs and the varying cognitive styles of individual students
- MORE cooperative, collaborative activity; developing the classroom as an interdependent community
- MORE heterogeneously grouped classrooms where individual needs are met through inherently individualized activities, not segregation of bodies
- MORE delivery of special help to students in regular classrooms
- MORE varied and cooperative roles for teachers, parents, and administrators
- MORE reliance upon teachers' descriptive evaluation of student growth, including qualitative/anecdotal observation

(from Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993)

Figure 1

mainstreaming the student" (Yell & Shriner, 1996, p. 103). In the case that generated this test, *Rachel H.*, the burden of proof was on the district to show that the disadvantages of inclusion would outweigh the advantages. The court ruled that the district had not demonstrated that the academic benefits of the special education class were better or even equal to those of the general education class. Rachel was making good progress in the general education class, and was not disruptive. Finally, though the district tried to show that the inclusive placement was too expensive, the court ruled that the evidence was not persuasive and determined that the general education classroom was the appropriate full-time placement for Rachel. This case confirmed IDEA's strong presumption in favor of a general class placement.

## School Reform

School reform is about identifying, understanding, and using practices in schools that have a sound basis in research. It is about making a difference for students and helping them achieve success in school. A common consensus is beginning to take shape across experts and practitioners from a variety of educational disciplines about what really constitutes "best practice." Figure 1 (see pg. 4) lists common recommendations that have been gleaned from national curriculum reports (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 1993). The reason for listing these recommendations is to support the notion that much of what is being called for in general education reform is highly compatible with strategies for inclusion supported by many special and general educators.

The power of special education has been, and continues to be, its emphasis on individualized instruction. As general education becomes more diverse itself, educators are recognizing the need to view all students as individuals. Consequently, at the same time special educators are seeing effective general education practices and environments as appropriate for students with disabilities, general educators are looking to special education for strategies to teach challenging students.

## The Research

The research base on inclusion is relatively small and quite varied in its methods. In general, it tends to support the continued need for special education and its particular focus on individualizing instruction, while showing positive benefits of inclusion. In Alaska, the goal is to provide specially designed instruction and supplementary aids and supports in general education settings to the greatest extent possible for effective education of students identified as needing special education. The LRE for most students is the regular classroom.

Now that many schools have been using more inclusive practices for a few years, teachers, administrators, parents and others are interested in what the research has to say about how these practices have affected the students involved. To help provide an understanding of current research, this summary is organized into two main categories: (1) the impact of inclusion on the achievement of students with and those without disabilities; and (2) the way in which inclusion impacts attitudes and relationships of teachers and students.

### 1. What is the Impact on Achievement?

Much recent research focuses on results for one of three groups of students: students with mild disabilities; those with more significant disabilities; or students who have not been identified as needing special education.

#### For Students with Mild Disabilities?

Several studies have found that students with mild disabilities who have been included in general education classrooms make better gains than those in pull-out programs or control schools. During the 1992-93 school year, a Montana school district implemented full inclusion of students with disabilities in one of their elementary schools and more limited inclusion in other interested schools (Fishbaugh & Gum, 1994). Identified students progressed toward IEP goals in all but one or two cases, and phenomenal two- to three-year gains were realized by several. Achievement test data demonstrated consistent academic gains made by general education students.

Deno, Maruyama, Espin, and Cohen (1990) studied efforts in Minnesota schools to modify general

education classrooms in ways that enhance inclusive opportunities for students with mild disabilities. Student achievement comparisons in reading revealed that both low-achieving students and those with mild disabilities did better in integrated programs. Special education students demonstrated no differences in reading achievement in integrated or resource programs. The special education students performed relatively poorly in both integrated and resource programs when compared with their low-achieving classmates but had more social success in general education settings.

Jenkins, Jewell, Leicester, O'Connor, Jenkins, and Troutner (1994) studied reading achievement in a school that introduced a combination of other changes simultaneously with introducing inclusion and dropping pull-out programs. In comparison to a control school, students in the inclusive school "demonstrated significantly superior gains on several...scales, including reading vocabulary, total reading, and language, with a marginally significant effect on reading comprehension. These positive effects were spread across all student types—regular, remedial and special education" (p. 355). In a recent study (England, 1996), achievement test scores in co-taught classrooms (by special and general education teachers) were found to have held steady in the first year of a district's inclusion efforts, while students whose services were delivered in a pull-out model lost ground. Social and behavioral benefits were noted as well.

Robert Slavin (1996) has concluded that, for students with mild disabilities, powerful prevention and early intervention programs are preferable to later mainstreaming when students have already fallen behind their peers. Good, intensive, individualized instruction is the key.

### For Students With More Significant Disabilities?

For students with more moderate or severe disabilities, studies have demonstrated that participation in general education environments results in some academic increases and behavioral and social progress. Cole and Meyer (1991) studied intellectual and social functioning and student-environment interaction for students in 43 different classrooms from 14 schools. No significant differences were found between integrated and segregated students in the traditional domains of self-help skills, gross and fine motor coordination, communication, and adaptive behavior. In the functional domain of social competence, however, children from integrated sites generally progressed (improving their ability to manage their own behavior in social situations, provide negative feedback to others, etc.). Conversely, children from segregated sites generally regressed in each of the traditional skill domains and social competence. Contrary to expectations at the initiation of this study, students in segregated sites did not receive a greater concentration of special educational resources than those in integrated settings.

Saint-Laurent and Lessard (1991) evaluated differences in progress between students in special classes and those in regular classes. Also, in the special classes, they evaluated learning with a functional curriculum compared to a traditional curriculum. The 41 students participating in the study were considered moderately intellectually

### You Might Not Be Working on Reading in a Reading Group

A small group of fifth graders sits in a circle taking turns reading aloud from a story in a basal reader. When Stephen's turn comes, the teacher reads the first phrase and Stephen repeats after her. They continue this call-and-answer until it is someone else's turn. Stephen can't read. While the other kids work on reading, Stephen works on intonation, articulation, vocabulary, comprehension, and following along in the book, all IEP goals. Though their goals are different, Stephen benefits in many of the same ways the other students do. They are all learning about taking turns, being patient, listening, working in a group, speaking to be understood. Some of them are also learning to read.

handicapped and were between the ages of six and 10. Results of the study showed that none of the three models resulted in greater academic progress for the students. However, teachers of regular classes reported more behavioral progress among the students with disabilities placed in their classrooms. Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, and Goetz (1994) conducted a comprehensive effort to evaluate different program placements for students with severe disabilities. Sixteen elementary students, eight receiving educational services in regular classrooms and eight in special education classes, participated in the study. Programs were chosen that met selected criteria for best practices and models for teacher training. Findings consistently revealed the superiority of regular class placements over special education classes, including IEPs with more academic objectives, greater social interaction, and less time spent alone! Results of the study, the authors write, "suggest that there are important differences in the quality and curricular content of written educational programs for children with disabilities who are full-time members of general education classrooms; and there are significant differences in the levels of student engagement in school activities, the type of activities in which they are engaged, the type and level of participation in integrated school environments, and the degree to which they initiate and engage in social interactions with peers and adults" (p. 212). In an earlier study, Hunt and Farron-Davis (1992) found that students placed in inclusive classes had IEPs that contained more references to best practices than students in segregated classes, and were less likely to be engaged in isolated activities and more likely to be engaged with other people in the classroom.

### We Had to Take Our Kids Back

A small, rural school has seen major resource cutbacks in the past five years. When they thought morale was at its low point, staff was further reduced. When the number of special education teachers was down to one, the only choice was to have the kids stay in the regular classroom, with the one special ed teacher acting as a consultant to the regular teachers. The general ed teachers now explain that they never really felt like these were their kids when they were pulled out for their "special" education. One teacher said, "I never used to worry about their learning because I didn't have to grade them and someone else would teach them to read." Now, though, they take full responsibility for these students' education, and the kids themselves have become members of the classroom community. "Now these are my kids," this teacher added.

A summary of three meta-analyses of effective settings demonstrated a "small-to-moderate beneficial effect of inclusive education on the academic and social outcomes of special needs students" (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994/95, p 34). Lipsky and Gartner (1995), in their annual national study on inclusion, cite numerous schools and districts that report generally positive academic, behavioral, and social outcomes for students with disabilities, and no reports of negative effects academically.

### For Students Without Disabilities?

The fear that inclusion may result in a "watered down" curriculum for students without disabilities, or that less time will be devoted to learning, is not borne out by the research. None of the studies examining outcomes for students without disabilities has found any negative impact for students who are not identified as having disabilities. Fishbaugh and Gum (1994) found that achievement test data demonstrated consistent academic gains by general education students in inclusive classrooms. Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, and Palombaro (1995) found that the quantity and level of time spent on instruction for students without disabilities was not adversely affected by the presence in class of students with severe disabilities. In a study of cooperative learning groups (Hunt, Staub, Alwell, & Goetz, 1994), students without disabilities who facilitated interactions of their peers with severe disabilities did not have their level of achievement affected. Standardized test and report card measures used to determine impact revealed no significant negative academic or behavioral effects on classmates who were educated in classes with students with

disabilities in an elementary school of 640 in rural Minnesota (Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994).

### 2. What is the Impact on Attitudes and Relationships?

Numerous studies have examined various aspects of attitudes and relationships resulting from inclusion. For the most part, these studies document that efforts to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom have resulted in positive experiences and improved attitudes on the part of students, both with and without disabilities, and teachers alike. Studies by Helmstetter, Peck, and Giangreco (1994) and Stainback, Stainback, Moravcek, and Jackson (1992) found that students develop positive attitudes toward students with disabilities based on the experience of having disabled students in their classrooms. Helmstetter, et al. (1994) also noted that student friendships and relationships seem to be enhanced by inclusion, with greater understanding and empathy evidenced. Staub, Schwartz, Gallucci, and Peck (1995) noted, too, that inclusion facilitated peer friendships. Friendship networks and social relationships were enhanced for students with severe disabilities placed in general education in Fryxell and Kennedy's (1995) study. Both Hall (1994) and Evans, Salisbury, Palombaro, and Goldberg (1994) studied young children's social relationships. Hall (1994) identified reciprocal, positive relationships between children with disabilities and their classmates. Evans, et al. (1994) found that children who attended classrooms with fully included peers with severe disabilities were able to display sophisticated judgments and suggestions when presented with scenarios of common situations.

Students with disabilities participating in a student aide program experienced increased independence, more socialization opportunities, growth in academic skills, and improved behavior. The aides without disabilities experienced greater awareness and appreciation for people with disabilities and better self-esteem, and an increase in responsible behavior (Staub, Spaulding, Peck, Gallucci, & Schwartz, 1996).

**Parallel Instruction or Not?**

Mary, the speech therapist, comes into this general education classroom three times a week to work with three students who have speech and language goals on their IEPs. For each visit, Mary comes with "surprises" in her suitcase. As she enters, the three students who need to work with her frequently move to a small group table, and on Monday, so do Tamara, Jose and Charles. On Wednesday, it will be Ian, Dylan, and Theresa who get to enjoy what's in the surprise box—and to talk, sign, and listen to their three classmates who need extra attention to their communication skills. All the children benefit from the communication skills practice; it's something they can use not just in school, but at home and at play, too. And they all look forward to a pleasant "surprise."

Teachers have positive attitudes or develop them over time, especially when inclusion is accompanied by training, administrative and other support, help in the classroom; and, for some, lowered class size, and use of labeling to obtain special services (Phillips, Alfred, Brulli, & Shank, 1990). In one school, reaction of the teachers was overwhelmingly positive toward inclusion; the author suggests that inclusion may not have produced new effects but merely amplified attitudes, philosophies, and practices that existed in the school prior to the start of inclusion (Rainforth, 1992). Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) studied teachers who had a student identified as having a severe disability in their class for a year. Results indicate that most teachers reacted to the initial placement cautiously or negatively, but 17 of the 19 teachers "...experienced increased ownership and involvement with the student with severe disabilities in their classes over the course of the school year" (p. 364). Teachers indicated attitude improvement and a willingness to do this again. They also reported "...that the participation of a student with severe disabilities in their class had a positive impact on the child with disabilities, as well as on the child's classmates" (p. 368).

An attitude survey was conducted with high school staff, students and their parents in the Chicago

School District (Butler-Hayes, 1995). Principals were most in agreement with the basic goals of inclusion, followed by special education teachers and regular education teachers, respectively. An important implication of this study is that more knowledge, exposure, and experience led to greater acceptance of inclusion. Villa, Thousand, Meyers, and Nevin (1996) surveyed 680 certified special and general education teachers and administrators in 32 schools that had experience in providing inclusive educational opportunities for all children. The professionals surveyed generally believed that educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms results in positive changes in educators' attitudes and job responsibilities. Also, administrative support and collaboration were powerful predictors of positive attitudes toward full inclusion. In another study, 158 teachers in one state returned questionnaires on their perceptions of the supports available to them and needed by them for inclusion (Werts, Wolery, Snyder, & Caldwell, 1996). Training was one of the identified needs. Special and general educators reported similar levels of need for resources, but special educators reported greater availability of resources than general educators. Feedback to York, Vandercook, Macdonald, Heise-Neff, and Caughey (1992) generally indicated that the inclusion experience was positive for students and teachers.

A synthesis of 18 investigations of general education teachers, some teaching in inclusive classrooms, others not, found that about two thirds of them support the concept of mainstreaming/inclusion; half felt mainstreaming/inclusion could provide benefits (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

### Greater Gains Than We Had Ever Hoped

A teacher reports, "The exciting thing is that we didn't realize all the potential. By including the children in my class, we saw greater gains than we had ever hoped." Jacinda's IEP listed objectives to repeat words, point to letters and understand the meanings of words. When working on these skills, Paula, the teacher, realized that Jacinda recognized some of the words in print. By the following year she was reading in class. Other students in the same class are far surpassing their IEP goals and teachers' previous expectations for them. Justin is learning to communicate. He and his classmates are learning some sign language so he has an alternative method of communication. One day as he is responding in class through sign, he speaks the words! How exciting for the students and their teacher to hear this boy speak when they thought he couldn't!

### What About Research that Says Inclusion Doesn't Work?

Even though the majority of the research available today supports inclusive education, there is a handful of studies that take an alternative position. For the most part, these studies report situations in which students are placed in general education classrooms without proper supports (Baines, Baines & Masterson, 1994), or they are in regular classrooms but not receiving special education, as defined by law (Zigmond & Baker, 1995). Such studies should definitely raise concerns. It is most inappropriate to "dump" students in classrooms where teachers are unprepared and lack resources to support special education needs in the regular class. These issues reflect the concern stated earlier that both of the terms "special education" and "inclusion" frequently become confused with a program or a place. When this happens, the discussion moves away from a focus on the goal of education, which is to create a successful school experience and to prepare students for life.

### Features of Inclusive Practices

Although the research presented in this paper has focused on inclusion of students with disabilities, our intent has been to call attention to good, sound educational practices that can benefit all students. Some of these are highlighted here:

- *Diversity as the new norm* – clearly, the student population has changed and is continuing to become less and less homogeneous.
- *Collaborative teaching arrangements* – teachers working together not only create more energy around problem-solving and effective strategies, but they also model people skills for students.
- *Flexible school structures* – schools need physical arrangements that are adaptable to a variety of student needs as well as instructional approaches. Scheduling approaches should also reflect a similar flexibility.
- *Performance-based and alternative assessments* – there are many ways to demonstrate learning, and student performance expectations should be as individualized as their instruction.

## Do you want to know more about inclusive education for all students?

A binder of the original articles cited in this bulletin is titled "Educating Students with Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: Research Articles" and is in the Reference section of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) Library. Phone: 907-562-7372; Email: afreitag@sesa.org

There are many resources available on inclusive education; following are a few favorites.

- Winners all: A call for inclusive schools (1992) *(Contact: National Association of State Boards of Education, 1012 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 684-4000; cost $10.00.)*

- Creating an inclusive school (1995) *(Contact: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1250 Pitt Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; ASCD Stock #195210; cost $15.95)*

- Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools (1992) *(Contact: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Box 10624, Baltimore, MD 21285-0624; ph: 410-337-9580; fax: 410-337-8539)*

- Toward inclusive classrooms (1994) *(Contact: National Education Association Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516-9904)*

- Inclusion: A guide for educators (1996) *(Contact: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., see above.)*

- Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices "Issue Briefs." *(Contact Child & Family Studies Program, Allegheny University; 412-359-1654)*

- Student with Special Needs. Educational Leadership, Vol. 53, No. 5, February 1996

- The Inclusive School. Educational Leadership, Vol. 52, No. 4, December 1994/January 1995

Newsletters:

- Inclusive Education Programs: Advice on Educating Students with Disabilities in Regular Settings *(LRP Publications: 800-341-7874, ext. 275)*

- Inclusion Times for Children and Youth with Disabilities *(National Professional Resources: 800-453-7461)*

Visit the Following Web Sites:

- Consortium on Inclusive Education - *http://www.pgh.auhs.edu/cfsp*

- Inclusion Press International Home Page - *http://www.inclusion.com*

- Alaska Department of Special Education - *http://www.educ.state.ak.us/tis/sped/home.html*

- Western Regional Resource Center - *http://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/wrrc.html*

- WRRC's online searchable database on Inclusion - *http://interact.uoregon.edu/filemaker/inclusion.qry?function+form*

- National Center to Improve Practice - *http://www.edc.org/fsc/ncip*

- Special Education Service Agency (SESA) - *http://www.sesa.org*

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