

## **Inclusion at the High School Level**

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## Preface

The following paper was submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements in Advanced Educational Psychology, a Graduate level course, at Millersville University, spring 1996. If anyone would like to use it in their research please e-mail [me](#).

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## **Introduction**

Inclusion is the new wave not only in Special Education but in Education as a whole, and while so much has been written about Inclusion at the Elementary level, why it should be implemented, how it should be implemented, and the social benefits of the Inclusive classroom for all students the educators and people discussing Inclusion have almost overlooked Inclusion at the High School Level. This paper will discuss Inclusion at the High School Level in detail and as clearly as possible given that there is no one set way to implement Inclusion. First, it will discuss what Inclusion is at this level, and how it differs from Mainstreaming; second, some problems within a Full Inclusion Model; third, the place of Mainstreaming in any Inclusive Model; lastly, the use of a Partial Inclusion Model at the High School level. In the end, this paper will show that, like any idea, Inclusion at the High School level has strong and weak points.

### **What is Inclusion at the High School Level?**

Before discussing the Full Inclusion Model, it is necessary to look at the base idea of education, which is, all students are entitled to an education in the least restrictive environment. The Full Inclusion Model addresses the above with the following points:

1. There is a natural proportion of students with learning, and/or physical disabilities at a school and assigned to general education classrooms.
2. The general education classroom should be age-appropriate for the students.
3. No Special Education classroom should exist, except as a place for integrated activities.
4. IEPs for students with learning, and/or physical disabilities should be written and implemented by both the regular and Special Education teacher, and support staff.
5. Students with learning, and/or physical disabilities should receive support from Special Education staff.<sup>a</sup>

It is necessary to point out, there may be as many Full Inclusion Models as there are school districts in the United States the above model does, however, have many important points that are critical for Full Inclusion to take place.

### **Inclusion differs from Mainstreaming**

Around the mid 1970's through 1989, there was only one option for students with learning, and/or physical disabilities and their parents. A student with a learning, and/or physical disability was, on the basis of testing which is too detailed to discuss in this paper, placed in the least restrictive environment and an Individual Education Program (IEP) was created the end goal of such a program for some students of the time was to build skills that allow those students to meet the essential elements of their grade level in a general education classroom or in the mainstream with Special Education support for those who need it outside of the general education classroom. Moreover, that support period was in the place of a study hall. Thus, Mainstreaming does not allow for a Special Education teacher to offer support in the home classroom, and students with learning,

and/or physical disabilities in such programs must meet the essential elements of their grade level.<sup>9 9</sup> On the other hand, Inclusion allows a Special Education teacher to offer support in the home classroom, and in the inclusion setting students with learning, and/or physical disabilities must meet only the Individual Educational Program goals which may or may not include the essentials of their grade level.<sup>1</sup>

### **Problems with the Full Inclusion Model**

Under the above Full Inclusion Model there is no place for students who need greater support. In the model, no Special Education classroom should exist, except as a place for integrated activities. Students who do not succeed academically in an Inclusive setting, and do not meet the goals set in their IEPs for whatever reason must have a place where they can work on their problems. According to Ryan:

When a child's academic success is threaten by the Inclusion setting or when a child does not develop the desired social behaviors conducive to the General Education classroom, then everyone involved must reevaluate the situation and make necessary changes.<sup>11</sup>

With no Special Education classroom to fall back on students and teachers alike are left twisting in the wind, and the Inclusive classroom is nothing more than a dumping ground, which does not meet the needs of students no matter what their level.

### **The place of Mainstreaming in any Inclusive Model**

If inclusion is not effective for all students with learning, and/or physical disabilities and there is a need for a Special Education classroom for those students. There should be a place for students with learning, and/or physical disabilities who can meet the essential elements of their grade level beyond the Inclusive classroom. That is, the above students should be Mainstreamed, for it does not allow a Special Education teacher to offer support in the home classroom, and students with learning, and/or physical disabilities in such programs must meet the essential elements of their grade level. Mainstreaming by definition calls for the students to adapt to the General Education classroom, and to express and explain their needs to the General Education teacher. As stated above, support from Special Education teacher or IST teacher, if needed, would be given in the place of study hall.

Some would say that the Inclusive classroom is meeting the above students' needs. They simply do not need the support of the Special Education teacher. While they are meeting the essential elements of their grade level, there is the question of learning to express and explain their needs to others. Students with learning, and/or physical disabilities who no longer need support of the Special Education teacher in the Inclusive classroom may not learn to express and explain their needs to others, for they expect the Special Education teacher to explain their needs for them. Learning to express and explain their needs to others is something all students with learning, and/or physical disabilities must do, for when they leave school and go on to a job, the military, or college there will be no support unless they can express and explain their needs to others. Mainstreaming the above students gives them the ability to adapt and the skills to ask for help when they need it.

## Partial Inclusion Model

Many High Schools use a Partial Inclusion Model, for it meets the needs of all students. The Partial Inclusion Model addresses the following points:

1. There is a natural proportion of students with learning, and/or physical disabilities at a school and assigned to general education classrooms.
2. The General Education classroom should be age-appropriate for the students.
3. There is a Special Education classroom for those students who have problems with the inclusive classroom.
4. IEPs for students with learning, and/or physical disabilities should be written and implemented by both the regular and Special Education teacher, and support staff.
5. Students with learning, and/or physical disabilities should receive support from Special Education staff.
6. Mainstreaming should be the place for students who can meet the essential elements of their grade level beyond the inclusive classroom.

Note the two major differences between the Full Inclusion and the Partial Inclusion models the existence of a Special Education classroom and the option of Mainstreaming. School Districts such as Council Rock in Buck County Pennsylvania use the Partial Inclusion Model in some form. According to Jill Shurtleff, Assistance Director of Special Services for Secondary Education:

Secondary Inclusion is currently a co-teaching model in Biology and American Civics and World Cultures. Others are Mainstreamed with accommodations. §

In addition, for students who find the Inclusive classroom to be a problem Council Rock still has Special Education classrooms to meet their needs. At the High School level, the Partial Inclusion Model seems to meet the needs of all students by a combination of Inclusive, Special Education, and Mainstreaming classrooms.

## Conclusion

This paper has discussed Inclusion at the High School Level, found some problems with a Full Inclusion Model, found a place for Mainstreaming in any Inclusion model, and discussed the use of a Partial Inclusion Model at the High School Level. All the above styles have their strong and weak points; thus, it is the job of educators to find a balance among the three styles. Only then will they meet the needs of all students.

## End Notes

<sup>a</sup> Beckstead, S (1992). An Analysis of Students Outcomes Associated with Educational Programs Representing Full Inclusion and Special Class Models of Integration. San Francisco State Univ., 5.

<sup>a a</sup> Ryan, D.F. (1994). Inclusion: The Key to Success. ED 369 617-RC 019 587, 261.

<sup>1</sup> Ryan, D.F. (1994). Inclusion: The Key to Success. ED 369 617-RC 019 587, 261.

<sup>11</sup> Ryan, D.F. (1994). Inclusion: The Key to Success. ED 369 617-RC 019 587, 262.

<sup>§</sup> Shurtleff, J (1996). Faxed Note 15 April 1996.