

1

Inclusive Mind-Sets and Best Practices for Adolescents



This chapter magnifies the value of collaborative teams of administration, staff, students, and families all being on the same page to assist adolescents to “capitalize” on and maximize their potential within inclusive classrooms. Detailed examination of available organizations and resources; a review of scheduling, preparation, reflection, and student responsibility; and a discussion of how to include students with varying ability levels using whole-class dynamics are offered.

Before inclusion strategies can be applied to adolescent classrooms, everyone involved needs to have an inclusive mind-set that says, “*We can make inclusion work with the right strategies!*” If that successful bottom line is the ultimate goal, then the objectives, materials, and procedures will be aimed toward achieving winning results. Peers, educators, administrators, families, and the students themselves are the ones who collaboratively need to believe that with guidance, practice, and perseverance, inclusive players win! Disabilities vary, but believing in abilities and planning lessons for student progress are essential. Yes, inclusive mind-sets precede the inclusive strategies and in turn yield inclusive winning results. Inclusion strategies for adolescents are complex, but they are also that simple.

Inclusion sequence:

1. Inclusive Mind-Sets	2. Inclusive Strategies	3. Inclusive Winning Results
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Now, adolescents are unique individuals who sometimes try to exert control, never admit to losing control, test the people in control, and even create their own controls. Adolescents today are living in a world that at times through their eyes also appears *out of control*. How different their world is from ours! Just ask them!

Here is how some adolescents view life:

Adolescent World	Other/Adult World
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Fact to share with adolescents: *We live in the same world!* Sharing this knowledge means teaching adolescents that the people who chronologically preceded them are intelligent, caring, trustworthy people. Establishing global adolescent connections is an ongoing inclusive mission that goes beyond individual classrooms into connective communities, cultures, and countries!



Philosophy to share: Here’s where the school system comes into play. We as educators must share the controls with the adolescents in our care. We figuratively and literally need to teach adolescents how to drive their own destinies. First, teach the rules of the road; next, practice with test drives; and then follow through with the actual driving test. Metaphorically speaking, classroom objectives lead to effective instructional strategies, which then yield meaningful assessments with passing grades on those *classroom road tests* or curriculum lessons for students of all abilities!

One Global World
with As +As together
(Adolescents + Adults)

ADOLESCENT DYNAMICS

The plot thickens, due to adolescent issues in the foreground and background, for students with and without disabilities: adolescent tug-of-wars occur on a daily, hourly, and sometimes minute-by-minute basis. Students with more learning, emotional, behavioral, social, physical, perceptual, and communication needs often struggle to achieve cognitive acumen and peer acceptance in general education classrooms. Adolescents with disabilities in inclusive classrooms require inclusive practices that are able to focus on both background and foreground issues, with tailored strategies that address the diverse personalities and abilities of each adolescent. The following table gives some facts about student differences that may present themselves in inclusive classrooms, along with sensitive classroom strategies. More delineation of inclusive strategies with additional curriculum connections are offered as the book progresses.

Some additional foreground and background issues include adequate yearly progress (AYP), No Child Left Behind (NCLB), individual educational program (IEP), and response to intervention (RtI) which means that adequate yearly progress is expected for all students, legislatively not leaving any child behind. In the past, many students with disabilities were left in the background; now, yearly progress with more accountability is put into the foreground for all students.

IEPs—individualized education programs—are written with specific goals, outlining supports and appropriate accommodations to help students with disabilities to achieve many inclusive successes, if the general education classroom is determined to be the least restrictive environment. RtI—response to intervention—is also implemented in classrooms to help students receive assistance with direct academic training, smaller groups, or more outside help with classifications given as warranted. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDE, 2006) indicates that there are two main goals of RtI. The first is to deliver evidence-based interventions, and the second is to use students’ responses to those interventions as a basis for determining instructional needs and intensity. RtI involves lower student-teacher

(Text continued on page 8)

Adolescents With	Inclusive Strategies
<p>Above Average Skills</p> <p>Online Resources: www.cectag.org www.nagc.org</p>	<p>★ Match the student’s maturity/social level without assuming it is the same as higher cognitive abilities indicate; challenge students to explore all multiple intelligences to stretch their stronger and weaker ones; offer students classroom opportunities for acceleration to circumvent boredom; include activities with higher-level thinking skills across a well-organized curriculum and units of study; include open-ended assignments; allow creativity to be displayed; be cognizant of emotional needs; coach as necessary; allow students to expand their knowledge, rather than completing repetitive assignments on same content or always tutoring their peers.</p>
<p>Some facts about students with above average skills: There are approximately 3 million academically gifted children in grades K–12 in the United States—about 6 percent of the student population (www.nagc.org).</p>	
<p>Deafness and Hearing Impairments</p> <p>Online Resources: www.hearingloss.org http://gri.gallaudet.edu/Literacy</p>	<p>★ Talk in a conversational tone and face the student if the student is reading lips; use appropriate facial expressions and meaningful body language; be certain to talk to the student, not his or her interpreter; ask a student to repeat responses or questions to increase clarity; offer the student a copy of your notes, lesson plan, or teacher’s manual to follow along; avoid standing near a window to reduce glare if student is lip reading or if you are signing; understand the emotional frustrations that may manifest behaviorally; cushion chairs; avoid noisier environments; coordinate with the speech and language pathologist and home environment to preteach and review content vocabulary.</p>
<p>Some facts about deafness and hearing impairments: 250 million people in the world have disabling hearing impairment, defined as moderate or worse hearing impairment in the better ear, with two-thirds of these people living in developing countries (www.who.int/pbd/deafness/facts/en).</p>	
<p>Learning Differences</p> <p>Online Resources: www.idanatl.org www.ldinfo.com www.interdys.org www.dyscalculia.org www.ncl.org www.rfb.org</p>	<p>★ Establish students’ prior knowledge, interests, and strengths to connect the learning to their lives; be aware that some students with information processing difficulties may have poor social skills; know that a student with a learning difference may have the same or higher intelligence than his or her peers; model and monitor steps and expectations with direct instruction and guided practice; verbalize learning steps; review informal, formative, and summative assessments and observations; adjust pacing to students’ levels to diminish frustrations; allow students opportunities for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile expressions; increase metacognition; teach study skills, e.g., note taking, calendar organization, highlighting facts during curriculum lessons; offer realistic praise and feedback, but be sensitive to students’ reactions to correction and feedback in front of peers to avoid embarrassment or unwanted spotlighting; keep in mind the needs of individual students; honor accommodations and modifications in IEPs; allow students to celebrate their successes in different ways.</p>
<p>Some facts about learning differences: More than 38.7 percent of children with learning disabilities drop out of high school, compared to 11 percent of the general student population (25th Annual Report to Congress, U.S. Department of Education, accessed at www.ncl.org).</p>	

Adolescents With	Inclusive Strategies
<p>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</p> <p>Online Resources: www.chadd.org www.help4adhd.org/en/about/what</p>	<p>★ Try to stick to a schedule to avoid confusions; if changes are warranted, offer advance notice if possible; divide larger tasks into more manageable ones; offer positive reinforcement for attention on task; gradually decrease amount of scaffolding given; be kind, yet structured; offer occasional breaks or acceptable motoric outlets, e.g., school errands, classroom centers and stations; incorporate kinesthetic opportunities in lessons, e.g., hold yarn to show latitude and longitude or act out balancing human algebraic equations, plate tectonics; directly teach study skills; if student is on medication, be aware of the type and possible associated side effects, e.g., headaches, abdominal pain, nervousness, insomnia, dizziness, cardiac arrhythmia, stomachache, mouth dryness.</p>
<p>Some facts about ADHD: As of 2003, there are 4.4 million youth ages 4 to 17 diagnosed with ADHD by a health care professional. There are three subtypes of ADHD—inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, and combined (www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd).</p>	
<p>Emotional Disorders</p> <p>Online Resources: www.nmha.org www.ocfoundation.org www.mentalhealth.com www.nimh.nih.gov www.nami.org/ www.massgeneral.org/schoolpsychiatry/interventions_begin.asp</p>	<p>★ Educate yourself and your students; understand that students may over- or underreact to stimuli; know that this may be a hidden disability, so be aware of soft signs in dress, writings, attendance; know that the range of emotional disorders can fall under either internalizing or externalizing behavior, with issues such as anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive behavior, defiance, conduct disorder, mood disorders, or panic disorders; realize that someone may display inappropriate behavior that is strictly situational and not indicative of an emotional disturbance, e.g., reaction to a divorce, death, loss; since issues with emotional disturbance occur over a long period of time, follow the student’s BIP (behavioral intervention plan), observe and monitor the student, and try to understand the triggers or causes with an FBA (functional behavioral assessment), e.g., boredom, frustration, attention seeking; collaborate and communicate concerns with other staff, e.g., school psychologists, guidance counselors, and families; establish a structured behavior modification plan with age-appropriate student reinforcers; encourage positive self-talk.</p>
<p>Some facts about emotional disorders: Mental illnesses—biologically based brain disorders—cannot be overcome through “will power” and are not related to a person’s “character” (www.nami.org).</p>	
<p>Intellectual Disabilities</p> <p>Online Resources: www.nacdd.org www.devdelay.org www.thearc.org www.ndss.org</p>	<p>★ Reach students by working through their strengths, using a step-by-step approach that honors maturity levels and interests, use concrete presentations to teach abstract concepts; promote ongoing communication with families to ensure that the IEP goals are reinforced in home environments; utilize age appropriate reading and writing materials such as magazines, CDs, DVDs, instead of juvenile materials, e.g., no SpongeBob for adolescents; have classroom adaptations for physical and sensory areas, e.g., positioning of desks, pencil grips, secure papers, clutter-free worksheets; relate the content to life experiences; use assistive technology, e.g., adaptive keyboards; acknowledge students’ social needs along with cognitive development; have high expectations with an abundance of patience; give opportunities for practice and repetition to retain learning, with attention to the level of support needed: intermittent, limited, extensive and pervasive; help teens with ways to escalate personal</p>

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Adolescents With	Inclusive Strategies
	<p>independence with guided modeling of functional skills, e.g., ordering in a restaurant, shopping for clothes, going to a doctor's appointment, navigating a website; realize that every moment of the day is an educational one.</p>
<p>Some facts about developmental disabilities: Developmental delays can be evidenced in cognitive, speech and language, social, emotional, fine motor, or gross motor developments. Causes can be genetic, e.g., Down syndrome, or environmental, e.g., fetal alcohol syndrome or poor prenatal care or nutrition, while some are unknown or multicausal, e.g., autism with intellectual impairments.</p>	
<p>Autism</p> <p>Online Resources: www.autism-society.org http://ani.autistics.org www.autismspeaks.org www.nas.org.uk/autism www.nichcy.org</p>	<p>★ If students with autism have significant cognitive impairments, address ways that they can work toward meeting the standards with alternate proficiency assessments, e.g., portfolio, dated anecdotal records, dissecting and prioritizing curriculum objectives; realize that symptoms occur before age 3 and that this developmental disability has a wide range of characteristics that can be evidenced in language, social interaction, communication, and cognitive development; understand that some students with autism do not have cognitive delays, allowing them to perform at higher-level activities; give classroom opportunities to improve verbal and nonverbal communication, e.g., brief student presentations; help students to organize information in workable categories; give students practice with social interactions, peer modeling, and mentoring in general education settings, e.g., assemblies, inclusive classrooms; coordinate and collaborate with families, speech and language pathologists, coteachers, paraprofessionals, physical education teachers, art, music, and more; use increased visual aids; outline structure for rules, task completion, and sequencing of daily events; be aware of possible sensitivities to lights and unexpected noises, e.g., allow student to use earplugs or headphones; praise students appropriately; guide students to make choices to create more independence; eliminate unnecessary words, giving direct and explicit directions; capitalize upon affinity for repetition with academic and social presentations.</p>
<p>Some facts about autism: People with autism have a normal life span; research indicates that students with autism learn best in a structured environment (www.nhautism.org/facts_about.asp).</p>	
<p>Asperger Syndrome</p> <p>Online Resources: www.asperger.org</p>	<p>★ Students with Asperger syndrome do not have language delays and often have good cognitive skills; model conventional social rules; help students to increase eye contact; display appropriate social reciprocity through individual behavioral plans and metacognition; limit use of sarcasm; explain figurative language; offer concrete life connections that acknowledge students' interests; teach students self-regulation techniques; help students to problem solve through hypothetical and real models; teach appropriate emotions, facial expressions, and body language through functional social stories, videotaping, and self-analysis; offer quieter and calmer classroom areas; announce major points to increase attention, cueing students to learn, e.g., "this is the main point"; use increased outlines and graphic organizers; vary lesson delivery formats, e.g., cooperative learning, one-to-one, small group,</p>

Adolescents With	Inclusive Strategies
	<p>whole group; ask student to paraphrase understandings; offer breaks; modify assignments to challenge rather than enable students; if instructional assistant or coteacher is involved, be certain the shadowing is invisible with circulation to all students; use strong motivators; encourage peer collaboration.</p>
<p>Some facts about Asperger syndrome: Most students with Asperger syndrome have normal to higher intelligences with no display of cognitive impairments.</p>	
<p>Mobility Impairments:</p> <p>Online Resources: www.naric.com www.ucp.org www.ataccess.org www.customsolutions.us/adaptatray/index.htm</p>	<p>★ Offer assistance with daily activities as required, trying to increase independence without diluting assignments; utilize technology as appropriate, e.g., word prediction programs, paper stabilizers, commercial switch-activated page turners, electronic books; talk at eye level to a student in a wheelchair; provide students with comfortable access, e.g., bolsters, slant boards, universal mounts attached to wheelchairs, communication boards; coordinate with and refer to occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists; coordinate with families to decide upon appropriate transitional plans for postsecondary opportunities; realize that students have average intelligences that are not impaired by their physical disabilities; keep individual profiles on each student with his or her IEP goals, accommodations, modifications, medical needs, interests, learning strengths, and family input; realize that the student may have less stamina, and offer breaks and adjust presentation rates accordingly; ensure that content lessons include strategies to maximize memory, attention, and perception, e.g., advance graphic organizers, outlines, study guides, vocabulary cards.</p>
<p>Some facts about mobility impairments: Each student with a physical disability is unique and has a range of strengths, from those who are gifted to those students who may also have learning challenges or sensory impairments, e.g., different types of cerebral palsy, spina bifida, or general categories of musculoskeletal impairments, which involve the joints, limbs, and muscles, or neurological ones that include the central nervous system, e.g., brain, spinal cord, or peripheral nerves (http://education.qld.gov.au/student-services/learning/disability/generalinfo/physical/pi2.html).</p>	
<p>Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)</p> <p>Online Resources: www.biausa.org www.nbirtt.org</p>	<p>★ Students need assistance with managing reactions to changes in their levels of performance and functioning such as educational and emotional differences, e.g., adjusting to changes in thinking, learning, sensations, behavior, and communication or language; give direct instruction and modeling of problem solving and ways to strengthen memory; relate learning to functional skills; maximize positive peer interactions and collaborations with guided methods and structured interventions to manage stress and possible emotional triggers; educate yourself and your students about ways to help an adolescent with TBI; accompany verbal directions with written and pictorial ones, by giving examples that delineate new concepts; distribute and follow consistent student routines and schedules; allow additional time to complete school and home tasks; offer multiple ways and opportunities for students to practice and master newer knowledge; coordinate with physical education teachers on strategies to help students improve balance; offer ways to sharpen fine motor skills if muscles are weaker; reduce classroom auditory and visual distractions; allow student periods of rest as needed; communicate and coordinate with health care professionals and families, discussing what care may be required,</p>

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Adolescents With	Inclusive Strategies
	e.g., help with possible seizures, short-term and long-term memory problems, concentration; enlist help from the guidance counselor or school psychologists if the student exhibits mood changes, anxiety, or depression; offer positive ways for students to productively release and channel emotions, e.g., yoga, dance, art, writing, group discussion, peer collaboration.
Some facts about TBI: The causes of TBI range from falls to motor vehicle crashes, being struck by or against something, and assaults (www.biausa.org).	
Visual Impairments and Blindness Online Resources: www.afb.org www.rfbd.org www.acb.org/accessible-formats.html www.comeunity.com/disability/vision/index.html www.brl.org/	★ Speak directly to the student; do not speak loudly or shout; if someone is blind, it does not mean he person is also deaf; avoid clutter on worksheets, by offering ample white space; hang signs in the room at a comfortable eye level; enlarge worksheets; use low-vision aids, e.g., magnification pages, handheld telescopes; be certain that ample time is given for textbooks, worksheets; literature, novels, periodicals, and all supplemental written materials to be accurately transcribed into Braille; use talking books; announce physical changes of furniture in the room; reduce classroom clutter that would limit mobility and independence; collaborate with mobility trainers; enlist peer mentors and guides; secure talking Web sites offer additional auditory and kinesthetic ways for students to absorb and demonstrate understandings; announce yourself when walking into a room; do not distract guide dogs.
Some facts about visual impairments: Visual impairments do not just affect the eyes, but the whole person as well as friends and family (www.chrishigh.com/visual_imp.htm).	

ratios, shared responsibility by general education (GE) and special education (SE) teachers and departments, data intervention groups with different delivery models, and more that will be outlined in subsequent chapters.

Classroom Environment: Factors such as class size, coteachers working together; a facilitative vs. authoritarian classroom atmosphere; heterogeneous vs. homogeneous groupings, seating arrangements; and cooperative groups, are just some of the environmental factors that positively or negatively impact adolescent achievements in inclusive environments. Proactive teachers monitor these variables and adjust them to best suit individual student needs without sacrificing the curriculum, emotional, social, and behavioral needs of all classroom students.

Student Dynamics: Issues such as gender; culture; socioeconomic status; physical, perceptual, emotional, behavioral, social, and cognitive abilities; motivation to succeed; self-efficacy; family support; and field-dependent versus field-independent learning styles are just a few student dynamics that enter into successful inclusion implementations.

Cognitive Factors: What about student and teacher prior knowledge, memory issues, varying instructional approaches, matching assessments with the curriculum, and targeting students' strengths? Cognitively speaking, the brain is not to be

ignored! Students respond to teachers who honor cognitive differences by offering scaffolding of learning within the students' zone of proximal development to avoid adolescent learning frustrations, but also enhance comprehension of the curriculum with often difficult or unfamiliar topics. Graphic organizers, advance planners, teaching how to create study guides, modeling, offering multiple curriculum examples, and presenting learning with multiple intelligences in mind are just a few ways to respect cognitive differences in inclusive classrooms. More strategies with curriculum details and connections will follow.

Student Crises: Peer pressure, physical appearance, depression, eating disorders, suicide, identity issues, postsecondary decisions, sexual choices, wanting to belong, or wanting to be unnoticed are all potential crises that enter inclusive adolescent classrooms. Teachers who acknowledge these issues will accomplish more curriculum advances. It is often said that students remember how you treat them, long after they forget what you taught them. Kind, supportive teachers offer students non-judgmental ears that accept differences, but do not magnify them.

Other School Activities: Adolescents with disabilities reap many benefits when they are included in extracurricular activities such as the yearbook committee, drama club, school newspaper, band, chorus, technology club, track and field, cheer-leading, future teachers' group, Spanish club, and more!

Review the columns in the next inclusive table to decide what actions (see the list below the table) you believe constitute excellent, good, fair, or noninclusive classrooms. Place the letters where you think they belong in reference to instruction and assessments, and then collaborate with colleagues and share thoughts with families and students.

EXCELLENT INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	GOOD INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	FAIR INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	NONINCLUSIVE PRACTICES

- A. High expectations for all students.
- B. Belief that students with lower skills do not belong in the same classroom as those students with higher skills.

- C. Instruction is test oriented.
- D. Instruction is student oriented.
- E. Illustrations depicted by artists from different cultures are included.
- F. Good grades are the bottom line.
- G. Classroom occasionally includes cooperative learning.
- H. Students do not keep profiles of their progress.
 - I. Grading sometimes has multiple purposes.
 - J. Tests are never weighted.
 - K. Tests are always weighted.
 - L. Testing is frequent.
- M. Same test format is given throughout the year.
- N. Portfolios are used for students with highest abilities.
- O. Response time is monitored and limited.
 - P. Teacher will orally read, explain, or paraphrase test directions and questions.
- Q. Critical thinking skill questions are only required for students without IEPs.
- R. It's all about students achieving higher grades.
- S. Team-building is valued.
- T. Multiple strategies are offered.
- U. Proactivity is given merit.
- V. Assessments are formative and summative.
- W. Write what you think constitutes excellent inclusive practices.

Source: Karten, T. (2008). *Facilitator's guide for more inclusion strategies that work!* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Answers will vary, depending upon the populations of students serviced, individual education programs, environments, and curriculum demands, but the key (see page 11) offers some ideas that constitute an inclusive classroom and letter placements for ones that do not exemplify the best inclusive practices.

Philosophy of the School District

School philosophies are evidenced as soon as you enter a building. You sense a climate that permeates the main office, hallways, school cafeteria, teacher's room, and individual classrooms. Students, educators, administrators, and staff who walk around with a bounce in their gait or a smile upon their faces are saying, "*Things are good here, and I'm happy to be part of this building and district!*" Okay, every given day will not be that rewarding or blissful, but overall, the school tone is set by the philosophy of the school district. A school district that supports its teachers and staff with resources, positive feedback, and respect in turn creates a healthier climate for learning to succeed in individual inclusive classrooms. A school philosophy that

EXCELLENT INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	GOOD INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	FAIR INCLUSIVE PRACTICES	NONINCLUSIVE PRACTICES
A	I	G	B
D		H	F
E		K	N
J		M	O
L		C	Q
P			R
S			
T			
U			
V			

supports its students with disabilities is one that is based upon student needs, not the available resources, latest buzz words, or past practices used.

Philosophies in special education need to match the ongoing and ever-growing research in the field that advocates and delineates effective instructional practices to which students respond best. Reaching students in critical middle school grades helps to prevent students from becoming frustrated with school, and later dropping out in high school, ill prepared for postsecondary options. The earlier students' needs are identified, and they are given appropriate strategies, the better. An inclusive environment has an ongoing and growing inclusive philosophy for all of its students and staff that says, "With the proper support, trained staff, and resources, inclusion can and will benefit all students."

Online resources to view on best practices include the following:

<http://research.nichcy.org/whatworks.asp>

<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>

www.inclusionresearch.org

Administrative Roles

To increase student achievement, it is recommended that administrators advocate, support, and propagate schoolwide programs for improving literacy for adolescents in inclusive classrooms that give merit to the following research-based strategies as delineated by Biancarosa and Snow (2004). Although this report from the Carnegie Corporation focuses on literacy in middle schools and high schools, the applicable suggestions are valid for all subjects and are not manageable without administrative support. They include direct and detailed instruction in literacy that is embedded in content areas and giving teachers the necessary instruction to

implement those programs. Strategies are recommended such as motivation, self-directed learning, strategic tutoring, collaborative peer interactions, increased technology, teacher teams, ongoing assessments to ascertain the effectiveness of the programs, and full support for the necessary professional development. Of course, all of these elements require the encouragement and embrace of principals and administration to champion higher academic skills for adolescents in all content areas with the accompaniment of appropriate staff guidance, backing, and professional nourishment. An administrator's ultimate goal is to provide students with the necessary functional skills to succeed and provide teachers with the appropriate tools to turn that goal into a reality.

Students in inclusive middle schools who lack academic skills may become disillusioned by their lack of progress, while their families quite often experience frustrations with the system. This leads to high school students who very well may be at risk of dropping out. In September 2008, a U.S. Department of Education report entitled *Dropout Prevention: A Practice Guide*, published by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), highlighted six recommendations to reduce the number of high school dropouts. Administrators are the key players who can turn the suggestions from this report into schoolwide realities for students with and without disabilities (Dynarski et al., 2008).

These recommendations include utilization of realistic diagnostic data systems to determine the following:

- ★ Students at risk of dropping out
- ★ Number of students who have dropped out
- ★ Implementation of targeted interventions such as
 - Adult advocates
 - Academic support and enrichment
 - Social skills and behavioral programs

The report's recommendations also include provision of schoolwide interventions:

- ★ Personalizing the learning environment and instructional process
- ★ Providing rigorous and relevant instruction with skills to better prepare students for postsecondary options

Dropout prevention interventions cannot begin until the first step of identifying who is at risk of dropping out is achieved (Kronick & Hargis, 1998). Regularly reviewing records such as students' grades and absences and then trying to intervene with programs to increase student engagement can accomplish this. This can include but is not limited to assigning adult advocates for students at risk, finding ways to increase interest and enthusiasm, creating a schoolwide climate with a sense of belonging, and ultimately encouraging an environment that values not only the curriculum but also students' personal interests. This is tricky, since all of these factors must accompany rigorous as well as relevant instruction that allows students to explore realistic postsecondary options. Educators and administrators who foster and strengthen problem-solving skills and partner with community agencies are creating a culture that goes beyond individual subject areas.

The following programs are some of those listed in the *Dropout Prevention Report* (Dynarski et al., 2008). More details and other promising results can be viewed in the full report or by consulting the following Web sites.

Career Academics: This curriculum is based on career themes, relevant course work, and work experiences with community collaboration, for example, local employers encouraging health careers.

First Things First: Schools are reorganized into smaller learning communities. Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools saw many gains with this program's implementation over a 3-year period, which included lower absences, more proficient reading grades, additional school connections, and graduation rates that increased by almost 40 percent. See www.irre.org/ftf/results.asp.

Talent Development High School Model: Issues such as attendance, discipline, achievement scores, and dropout rates are addressed through organizational and management changes to strengthen school climate, curriculum and course offerings, instructional strategies, professional development, and parent and community involvement. This model offers programs such as Transition to Mathematics, which gives ninth graders increased time and exposure to essential algebraic concepts and other areas to better prepare them for high school-level programs, and Geometry Foundations, giving tenth graders increased course time in that subject area. Other programs include Strategic Reading and Reading and Writing in Your Career, which offer additional literacy opportunities. See <http://web.jhu.edu/CSOS/tdhs/index.html>.

Quantum Opportunities Program: This program offers life skills training, academic help, tutoring, social mentoring, community service, and financial incentives to primarily ninth-grade adolescents from low-income families, which then extend to their 4 years in high school. See www.childtrends.org/Lifecourse/programs/QuantumOpportunitiesProgram.htm.

High School Redirection: This program encourages teachers to assume roles as not only the people who deliver instruction, but mentors as well, by offering students at risk of dropping out the appropriate support through basic academic skill development, extracurricular activities, and additional monitoring. See http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/dropout/hs_redirect/.

Check & Connect: Students' attendance levels, academic grades, and suspensions are regularly checked by someone referred to as a monitor or mentor who establishes and ensures increased school connections, for example, literacy and student engagement. See <http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect>.

Achievement for Latinos Through Academic Success (ALAS): This program presents a collaborative approach to preventing students from Latino backgrounds with and without disabilities from dropping out of school, and it includes both problem-solving and social skills. ALAS mainly focuses on Mexican American students from high-poverty neighborhoods who have learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities. Intensive feedback and collaboration with community members, families, and the students themselves are offered. See www.ncset.org/publications/essentialtools/dropout/part3.3.01.asp.

Twelve Together: This program offers peer support and mentors through avenues such as weekly afterschool discussion groups, homework assistance, college visits, and a weekend retreat. Trained adult mentors assist students who are considered at risk for academic failure. See <http://promisingpractices.net/program.asp?programid=263>.

Administrators have tough jobs. Principals and supervisors in particular frequently deal with school situations that they have not created, but must improve upon. Directives from the central office are often just that, not debatable topics, where input is valued. Some school administrators are merely the conduit between

Proactive strategies	Ideas on how administrators can implement these strategies and programs in inclusive adolescent classrooms
Provision of continuous professional development and promotion of teacher leaders	Inservices and workshops are based upon teachers' communicated needs, not just lip service, e.g., if workshop presenters talk about multiple intelligences or UDL strictly through a lecture format, then no specific curriculum connections are established; offer teachers time to collaboratively plan lessons, design graphic organizers for subjects, and just communicate concerns with each other at faculty meetings; respect each other's days; encourage unity of staff with information, strategies, support, and continuous connections as a principal or administrator who communicates vital messages that not only value the benefits of inclusion, but also turn it into a successful classroom reality with appropriate supports.
Literacy and numeration coaching with direct and explicit instruction	Adolescents with disabilities who learn at varying rates benefit from direct instruction in phonemic awareness, comprehension skills, and mathematical applications; however, the staff or trained student mentors presenting these literacy and numeration strategies need setups for the guidance and suitable time frames to accomplish this, e.g., additional homeroom time, compensation for before- or afterschool tutoring with time for such training periods; lower teacher–student ratios with instructional assistants even if a state's code does not demand it sends out a clear message that support is given; often teachers in middle school and high school grades say that they do not have the time to teach phonics, yet gaps need to be decreased, not widened, e.g., syllabification rules taught with content-related vocabulary; schedule intervention and planning times for this direct instruction into the schedule; offer inservices for those teachers who need more training to develop student fluency, increased comprehension, and phonemic awareness; incorporate tactile approaches in mathematics with the buying of more student manipulatives, e.g., decimal blocks, algebra tiles; offer trainings for reading strategies with career connections; for all content areas, set up teacher skill groups to investigate how to implement best practices.
Strategic tutoring	Administrators and supervisors emphasize that yes, the curriculum is important, using standards as the objectives, but at the same time, specific study skills can be delivered, e.g., organization skills with calendars, teaching how to take notes and other strategies to enhance understandings and completion of short- and long-range assignments; help given to students to process information, refocus, gain more metacognition, and become self-regulated learners. Time should be allotted for this study skill instruction and encouragement given to teachers who innovatively propagate and support these programs.
Interdisciplinary teacher teams	Teachers working together to deliver a curriculum topic or unit achieve greater goals as a team than if operating in isolation with fragmented subjects. Administrators need to encourage the meshing of topics across classrooms and subjects so that students are able to explore more topics in depth, yet gain specific course-related goals across the board.
Ongoing combination of formative and summative assessments of skills	Monitor data on student progress, e.g., reading fluency (www.successforall.net/middle/reading.htm), mathematics (http://balancedassessment.concord.org/packetms.html); use assessment calendars to keep track of different tiers; graph and share students' weekly or monthly progress; monitor those students who require intensive remediation more frequently; establish collaborative data review and intervention groups to ease the burden of data collection on one person.

Proactive strategies	Ideas on how administrators can implement these strategies and programs in inclusive adolescent classrooms
Increased technology	Review <i>Meridian: A Middle School Computer Technologies Journal</i> at www.ncsu.edu/meridian to gain ongoing insights into newer technology and curriculum connections; also look at sites such as www.crews.org/curriculum/ex/compsci/index.htm ; promote usage of SMART Boards, mastery of word processing systems, and other technology that helps students to gather and present information; be certain that students with physical, attention, language, communication, or sensory issues are given maximum and alternate access to the curriculum, e.g., word prediction programs (www.donjohnston.com/products/cowriter/index.html), wheelchair adaptation trays, wheelchair lap tray with a light, sound-field amplification systems (www.hearingresearch.org/Dr.Ross/classroom_sound_field_systems.htm).
Connected and informed administrators	This is the bottom line: The principal is the key leader who facilitates the inclusive learning and positive mind-sets for his or her staff and students!

communication and deliverance of the philosophy. Other school districts that collaboratively have administrators, teachers, families, and other staff work together yield more fruitful results for all.

Examples of administrative scenarios range from what movies are allowed to be shown to which textbook will be adopted; how back-to-school nights will be scheduled; evacuation plans; earthquake drills; student suspensions; familial concerns; which teacher will receive tenure; and which students with special needs will be assigned to certain classes, teachers, and inclusive programs. This eclectic mix during the day requires leadership that supports its staff's and students' wishes and requirements while abiding by the set district, state, and federal rules; special education regulations; and philosophies.

Then there is the adolescent population, which offers its own set of challenges, concerns, and needs. Students in inclusive classrooms often consume an inordinate amount of administrative and staff time. Issues range from which peers students are to be included with or which ones they should be separated from, how much study skill support time is required, and how to improve literacy and numeration skills, to viable parents' concerns, alternate or interim placements required, and ways to promote positive and accepting inclusive mind-sets. Most important is how to improve postsecondary opportunities for students with and without disabilities, beginning with inclusive classroom environments.

When administrators encourage teacher quality and professional development, they are valuing continuing knowledge for their educators as well as for all students. Administrative policies that encourage team-teaching acknowledge achievement of goals through collaboration. Professional district conferences, meetings, and workshops enhance the quality of instruction in inclusive classrooms. This inclusive training and support includes teacher-generated topics such as ways to implement coteaching, time to plan collaborative interdisciplinary units, classroom management/sharing issues, long-range planning, grading, assessment options, technology training,

multiple ways to differentiate the curriculum, and more. When representative teachers share planning with administrators in strategic and tactical meetings, the line between educators and administrators is diminished and replaced with an attitude that says, *"We are in this together, and all inclusive input is valued."*

Improving student achievement is a goal of Making Middle Grades Work (MMGW) (www.sreb.org/programs/middlegrades/publications/06V15_MMGW_Brochure.pdf). On the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) eighth-grade assessment, 29 percent of students scored below Basic in reading, and 32 percent scored below basic testing in mathematics, which revealed that these students are not prepared for challenging high school studies (Southern Regional Education Board, n.d.). According to the MMGW, middle schools need to foster an environment that not only offers academics, but also motivates students' efforts through supportive relationships such as extra help from teachers, and a kind ear and voice that foster challenging work directed toward the standards as well as the students' emotional levels and needs. Administrators that promote this type of school improvement send out a clear humanistic message to the staff that the subjects do not exist in isolation of the educators and students' needs. The table on page 17 offers some ways that administrators can support their staff in implementing inclusion.

Scheduling Issues and Other Challenges

It is often quite taxing to try to set up schedules for educators who work with students with disabilities. Since these students spend the majority of their day in inclusive classes, special education teachers must be highly qualified in their subject areas to not only help students gain more understandings, but to also properly assist their supportive staff and coteachers in general education classes. Allotting common planning time for coteachers, related staff, instructional support teams, and paraprofessionals is also a task that needs much focus. Often, having a floating or rotating substitute in the building frees up staff to plan units of study together and to discuss students' needs. Challenges are the norm when school schedules need to coordinate with lunch periods, basic skills reading sessions, speech services, and individual students' electives.

When districts value collaborative planning, the specific time allotted to educators is proactive time well spent. Since it is not always an ideal world, due to many other constraints, educators can keep ongoing collaborative notebooks with specific issues listed. Administrators, coteachers, and other instructional staff can then view these active and viable shared lists at set meetings during the day or week. Planning times could even include school administrators and supervisors covering classes, which frees up teachers and sends them a clear message that their efforts and collaborative inputs are valued. Keeping a concrete list stops concerns from turning into problems, since collaborative planning sessions are aimed at communication to improve existing issues with classroom management, curriculum delivery, accommodations, assessments, family supports, and more.

TEACHER PLANNING, PREPARATION, ORGANIZATION, AND REFLECTION

What if they don't get it? In most jobs, you may have a plan to accomplish certain tasks by desired dates, but if your idea or time frame does not work out on any given day,

Inclusion Implementation on an Administrative Level	
What and Why?	How?
(a) Value educators who support students in inclusive classrooms to increase both students' and teachers' productivity.	Offer inclusive teachers additional planning time on district days and through rotating substitutes or administrative coverage; establish a teacher-recognition program, e.g., inclusion certificates of achievement; send personal notes and e-mails, put positive letters in personnel files; use more verbalization; offer administrative support, both emotional and monetary, with personal accolades and allocation of money from the school budget for appropriate materials and requests.
(b) Listen to educators' concerns to proactively address and promote positive inclusive experiences that honor everyone's efforts and to prevent frustrations from escalating.	Schedule avenues for teachers to voice and network their opinions with team members and all inclusive partners. Value individual student concerns and varying classroom situations, e.g., promptly respond to needs with e-mails, offer viable pragmatic solutions such as administrative intervention with parental contact or student meetings, more classroom assistance via instructional aides, staff consultations, additional supplies and resources.
(c) Advocate a school environment with a proactive support system that specifies what standards students must understand, with a setup ready to handle challenges presented.	Study halls, before and after courses, with tutoring centers, writing workshops for and with teachers and students during the school year, and summer sessions. Train peer tutors and community volunteers to offer assistance with algebra skills, reading strategies, curriculum applications, research papers, study skills, communication needs, social avenues, and all curriculum needs.
(d) Hold continuous high expectations for inclusive progress to send out clear messages to staff, students, and families with a mission statement that the purpose of an inclusive education is to prepare students for life beyond school.	Develop schoolwide system with programs for students and educators to set goals, e.g., build in time in homeroom for student reflection and tracking of progress. Require students to fill out planners that list prior, current, and future courses. Assign teacher leaders to monitor strides toward achieving both academic and social goals. Support professional development that helps students with functional skills to choose career paths. Continually review the curriculum delivery with supervisors and GE and SE teachers to monitor progress in courses before summative, formal, standardized assessments take place.
(e) Connect with communities to maximize everyone's potentials.	Job shadowing, guest speakers, volunteers, and field trips ensure that students within inclusive classes do not view their lives within a microcosm, but instead see that the academics have career connections. Service learning projects are additional ways to develop character education while sharpening academics, e.g., purposeful writing to soldiers overseas or seniors in nursing homes, preparing a personal budget, communicating with peers and adults in appropriate social and school environments.

there isn't always an audience of 25 or more watching you. Teachers in inclusive classrooms not only have lessons that they are preparing, but also have a population of students to whom they are delivering those very lessons at any given moment of every day. The dilemma arises when a teacher thinks that he or she can just wake up in the morning, roll out of bed, stumble into the school, and then just *wing it!* Students with special needs who are matched with teachers who are highly proficient in their subject areas shine in their academics, since the teachers are able to break down the concepts into manageable student doses.

All adolescent learners benefit from highly qualified teachers. Students know when the one in charge doesn't know the topic. They respond to teachers who are prepared with the knowledge, skills, and delivery techniques needed. For example, when introducing a new topic, having a unit planned out with specific lesson goals, and then sharing those goals ahead of time with students in a graphic organizer, will eliminate student frustrations with lack of prior knowledge or surprises about where the unit of study is headed. Sharing the lesson game plan with the students clearly says, "*I am not just teaching a subject; I am teaching it to my class of students.*" This tactic allows students the chance to preview concepts and vocabulary on upcoming text pages. Even sharing calendars with such things as dates of upcoming quizzes, assignments, assemblies, and extracurricular activities can help organize students with self-regulatory study skills. It also organizes collaborative teachers who then have adequate time to prepare essential study guides; maybe brush up on the topic themselves; or conduct mini lessons to gauge students' understandings and further remediate, refocus, or redirect as required. The Chemistry Course Planner on page 19 is designed to concretely assist educators, students, and families to be better prepared and organized with the objectives, instructional approaches, and conceptual skills of upcoming lessons. Sometimes just increased communication can be the correct formula to help adolescent learners achieve further advances. *Classroom chemistry* certainly has literal and figurative connotations here!

Without planning, you may as well just surrender to chaos. Consequently, educators who think that they could go into a classroom and just *wing it* deserve to be permanently grounded! Students know when their teachers do not know the curriculum and cannot properly respond to their questions. Teachers and staff need to be able to assist their coteachers in the deliverance of lessons. There's nothing more harmful than a teacher who introduces a topic and then 20 minutes later says, "Oh, wait a minute, what I just told you was wrong!" or "Oops, I left out a step in that math problem!" Yes, educators are human beings, too, but consistently unprepared teachers are not engaging the minds of their students and only confuse them or increase learning gaps with communicated *pedagogical misconceptions*. Adolescent minds are like sponges, eager to soak up knowledge, despite the learning challenges they might have.

Most students respond to and respect fairness. Personalities that exhibit candor are appreciated, as well as organized classrooms that offer outlines of what is to be expected, with shared lesson objectives. This helps students in inclusive classrooms to see the *big picture*. Prepared educators who plan lessons ahead of time are fueling their adolescent students with excellent modeling for life, since organizational skills are crucial ones that can be applied to many different career avenues. Yes, sometimes gears need to be shifted, but an overall plan guides and structures both adolescents and teachers. In addition, the objectives must be consistent with the instructional

Chemistry Course Planner				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 Introduction to the Periodic Table to identify patterns in chemistry HW due 10/3	2 Half day— No class PM Staff Development Day	3 Text pp. 55–72 <i>Concepts:</i> <i>Covalent and ionic bonds and you</i>
6 Text pp. 73–82 <i>Concepts:</i> <i>Valences and atomic structures and how they influence reactions</i> HW Q 1–5 p. 82	7 Text pp. 83–99 <i>Concepts:</i> <i>Catalysts & enzymes helping us along</i> HW Q 1–3, 5 p. 99	8 Cooperative group research assignments: ➤ ionic bonds ➤ covalent bonds ➤ valences ➤ catalysts ➤ enzymes	9 In-class research time for cooperative group presentations Outline format with practice questions will be distributed to prepare for 10/15 quiz	10 In-class research time for cooperative group presentations Student note taking on concepts <i>Chemistry in Life</i> assignment explained
13 Cooperative group presentations Student note taking	14 Cooperative group presentations Student note taking	15 Chemistry Quiz Chapter One Sections 1–2	16 Introduction to acids, bases, and salts Chapter 1, Section 3 Text pp. 100–125	17 Lab experiments on acids, bases, and salts
20 Group discussion question & answer session Outline/study guide for 10/24 test	21 Lab reports due PowerPoint unit review	22 Pharmacist as class speaker <i>Chemistry in Life</i> assignment due HW: Personal reaction, 250 words See teachers for writing frames and rubrics	23 Group study session <i>Chemistry Jeopardy</i> Open-book class cloze exercises pp. 55–125	24 Unit test, all concepts from Sections 1–3. Matching, T/F, open-ended responses Individual student/teacher conferences scheduled next week

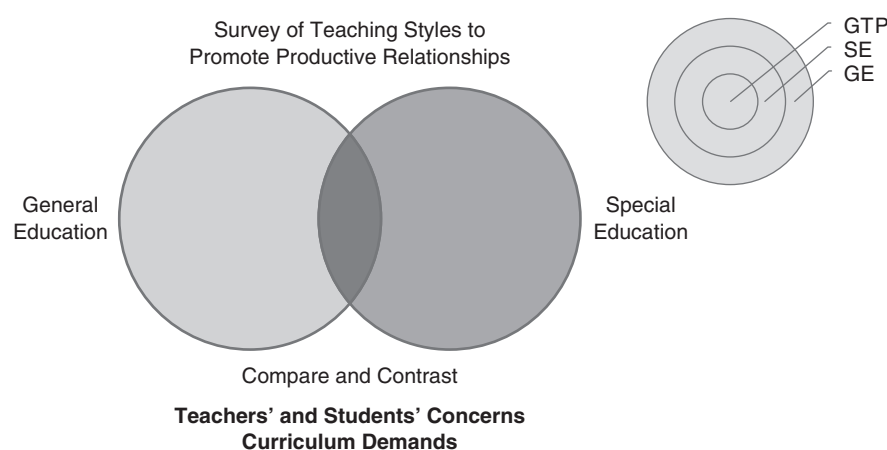
approach one uses and the types of tests one creates. These three points must be part of all lesson plans:

- ★ Identify the objectives and goals. (What do you want the students to learn?)
- ★ Define the procedure. (How will you teach it?)
- ★ State the criteria for assessment. (How will you determine if the lesson works?)

Some curriculum examples follow in the next table.

Curriculum Subjects/ Activities	Planning Elements Objectives/ Assessments	Preparation	Organization
Biology	Students will be shown how to use a microscope. Assessments will require students to label microscope parts and physically demonstrate their <i>macroscopic</i> microscope understandings. Word box will be included on written assessment.	I will have enough labeled slides to view in the biology lab. Students will be given microscope worksheets with and without labeled parts to include a self-checking element for home studying and to ensure that correct answers are reviewed.	The students will gather together for a mini lesson with direct skill instruction and then divide into cooperative groups to view the slides.
Geometry	Pairs of students use Geometer's Sketchpad to learn about the relationships among the angles formed when parallel lines are intersected by a transversal. Students cooperatively construct computer and freehand lines, given certain coordinates. Students work together, but each one completes separate written work.	We modeled the computer program for the entire class on the interactive whiteboard. We have an ample supply of rulers, protractors, and graph paper for freehand work. Group discussion will entertain and clarify student questions.	Students work together in pairs and save all work. Pairs will randomly be assigned and be different from the last cooperative pair groups. Positive interactions and expected outcomes will be outlined on a grading rubric that will be distributed to the students.
Spanish	Students will be able to identify the Spanish names of fruits. The <i>fruity</i> assessment will be orally given to test for proper pronunciation.	I will use www.inspiration.com to find fruit pictures that will be matched to the Spanish words.	Classroom setup with stations has Spanish dictionaries and pronunciation guides. Peer tutors from Honors Spanish classes will assist students.
World History	Both oral and written directions will be given to students who will then jigsaw text chapters about World War I. If time permits, they will conduct further research online. Students will then regroup and share knowledge. As an assessment for this unit, students will be given two assignment choices.	Sites to view documents and hear speeches from primary sources will be accessed and shared before students begin research. Students will be given a grading rubric that lists criteria for completed assignments in these categories: superior, good, fair, and more effort needed. www.rubrics4teachers.com	After approximately 15 minutes of instruction and dissemination of resources, heterogeneous groups conduct research for the next two class sessions to either create skits or visual time lines to delineate prominent figures and events from 1914–1918.

Curriculum deliverance by teachers alleviates or elevates student concerns, depending upon whether the motivation, procedure, and ongoing support match students' goals and objectives. Adolescents with and without disabilities are often faced with outside societal and community pressures, home demands from parents, family issues, neighborhood conflicts, peer pressures, and—in case that was not sufficient—internal confusions as well. Teachers are concerned with completing units of study to prepare students for standardized tests, graduation requirements, and future postsecondary choices. Often, general education teachers think that students with disabilities have needs that are not being met under their auspices, due to the variability of the students' class levels. Special education teachers are able to sometimes adapt the curriculum to instruct students in inclusive classrooms, but then they often fear that the right adaptive mix eludes them when there is too much curriculum. The conundrum occurs when knowledge is either sacrificed or diluted. Overall, the needs of all students, both general education and those with special needs, must be met, without emotionally, socially, physically, or behaviorally sacrificing any students. Proactive, collaborative GE and SE teachers who communicate to each other and their students can even use simple techniques such as a Venn diagram or a three-columned chart to figure out how inclusive environments can address adolescent strides. Another representation of concentric circles shows that the SE population under the inclusion model belongs inside the GE domain, with GTP—good teaching practices—acting as the core for both GE and SE, since all students benefit from solid, research-based instructional practices.



Students with and without disabilities have similar, but not always identical, needs. Comparing and contrasting the two areas concretely reveals that accommodations or modifications need to be offered to both groups of students, with many overlapping interventions. Variables such as complexities of units of study, prior student knowledge, motivation, and interests will influence educators' lesson plans and decisions. Keeping a chart with specific students listed helps teachers to sharpen inclusive reflections with lesson planning. Many general and special educators would agree that the core to student success consists of GTP and the reflection upon those processes. Sample curriculum connections and accommodations for students of all abilities follow.

Students With . . .	Curriculum Concerns	Accommodations
above-average skills	Finishes work ahead of others in science lab	Set up available centers with ongoing science projects and Web sites offering extensive applications; assign positions such as classroom supervisor, equipment manager, safety supervisor.
Asperger syndrome	Needs reminders to refocus in Spanish class	Establish private signals with the student; have structured rules posted with pictorial reminders; privately share photos with examples of positive role models.
Autism	Less prior knowledge about abstract ideas in American History	Offer DVDs and videos pointing out events with multimedia options, e.g., www.brainpop.com , songs, and art without overstimulation; preteach the vocabulary without excessive verbiage but link to student's prior knowledge when possible.
behavioral concerns	Cannot attend for full period during algebra class	Incorporate classroom energizers linking exercise with learning; allow acceptable channels, e.g., getting up to add words to a wall list, writing equations on the chalkboard, computer research, errands; monitor, implement, and enforce individual and classroom behavioral rules with student graphing of strides.
communication/language needs	Idioms in the novel are confusing.	Have vocabulary pictures that explain the words and idioms; give analogies with student connections; ask students to paraphrase understandings.
hearing impairments	Difficulty hearing the physical education teacher	Utilize a megaphone or sound-field amplification system; speak directly to student with closer proximity; give student a written outline of rules; assign peer to relate instructions.
intellectual disabilities	Less prior knowledge and skills with fractions	Allow usage of more manipulatives and functional associations, e.g., one of your shoes is $\frac{1}{2}$ the total number of shoes on your feet, number of vowels in students' names.
learning disabilities	Different processing speed of directions given during art and music classes	Offer written lesson plan outlines to students with step-by-step written explanations that accompany verbal ones; assign a peer coach/mentor to redirect; allow more wait time for student to process.
visual impairments	Print in mathematics text is too small.	Be certain that magnification pages are available for students to use over text pages; enlarge writings; use line markers.

Reflective teachers revisit their knowledge and teaching practices. It is sometimes from the lessons that do *not* work that teachers learn the most. Changing course is not a sign of defeat, but the application of the knowledge gained. Excellent teaching is an evolutionary and ongoing process.

Directions: Reflectively answer the following statements as true or false.

1. _____ Soliciting comments about the effectiveness of one's teaching methods from students and colleagues and reflecting on these comments is an excellent way to become a better teacher.

2. ____ Students of all abilities need opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and expression.
3. ____ When teachers keep a journal, they focus on what they do, why they do it, and how effective they are in inclusive classrooms.
4. ____ Educators must continually prepare, observe, and reflect on their lessons, themselves, and their students.

Answer key: All of the above statements are definitely true!

Reflective educators review what was taught and then fine-tune lessons to best meet individual student needs. Students who take the time to candidly reflect upon their learning also determine if the outcomes achieved match their efforts and understandings. Reflections lead to changes, which then result in ultimate inclusive growth for all. It's comparable to an artist who needs to do many sketches before framing a picture, or a writer who revises the first, second, or even third drafts. Perfection, or close to it, is basically an unattainable goal without continual reflections, since there is no template or script to follow for inclusion.

Adolescent learners in inclusive classrooms are not automatically aware of just how crucial these reflections are in order for improvements to occur. Here's where educators can give mini *reflective lessons*. Directly teaching meta-cognitive reflective skills across all disciplines is time well spent. Students need to know how to learn and learn how to know. When students admit that they are responsible for their learning strides, more achievements are attained and retained. The following concise, lower reading-level vocabulary table is intended to increase adolescent inclusive reflections.

My Reflections				
	Yes	Maybe	No	Additional comments/ inclusion support needed
1. I am pleased with my grade.				
2. I could have done better.				
3. Next time I will do things differently.				
4. I thought that I was totally prepared, but I am not sure what happened.				
5. This subject is way too tough for me!				
6. This subject is way too easy!				
7. I need to prepare differently at home and in school.				
8. The test was way too hard and unfair!				
9. I will ask for help if I don't understand something.				
10. Learning more in school will help me in life.				

COLLABORATIVE ROLES OF STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, RELATED STAFF, AND FAMILIES

In order for a team to function successfully, the team members should hold the belief that team teaching provides a more effective teaching environment, which in turn benefits all students, not only those with special needs. (Hammeken, 2007, p. 33)

The acronym below, CHOICES, outlines some key coteaching points:

- C**urious learners actively seek out more knowledge about best student practices.
- H**onest communication is essential.
- O**bservant educators gather and gain valuable student information.
- I**nnovative ideas are well accepted by attentive students.
- C**ollaborative attitudes take time to develop.
- E**xpandable minds happen with proactive inclusive planning.
- S**tudent- and subject-oriented deliveries yield effective results.

Honest communication between coteachers allows innovative ideas to blossom in professional relationships. If educators are curious learners, eager to expand their content knowledge, then inclusive student-oriented classrooms become realistic ones. On any given day, the coteaching process involves consultation, negotiation, articulation, instruction, assessment, and often resolution. Students who are classified as needing special education services now have additional exposure to the general education curriculum with supports in place. Bauwens and Hourcade (2003) have specified that coteachers trying to achieve collaboration believe in achieving results and also have high confidence levels in their abilities. In addition, coteachers respect each other's imperfections. Most important, coteachers hold high expectations for their students as well as each other.

Research supports that changes need to happen for all parties to achieve maximum benefits in cotaught classrooms. Studies about coteaching practices at the secondary level reveal that teachers need more relevant knowledge about content and strategies, and they also require more awareness and training about disabilities and best practices, aside from keeping their eye exclusively on high-stakes testing (Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2004; Lindberg, Kelley, Walker-Wied, & Beckwith, 2007; Magiera, Smith, Zigmond, & Gebauer, 2005; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2006). Negative attitudes regarding coteaching certainly influence outcomes for adolescents, coteachers, and peers. Many students and educators reap benefits when positive attitudes prevail. When asked about cotaught classes, secondary students with and without disabilities interviewed reported benefits; however, one student with emotional issues resented the fact that students could not get away with anything (Dieker, 2001). Overall, students enjoy having multiple educators since it breaks up the monotony with more responsiveness to individual learners (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2007).

Collaboration is a wonderful concept, but its implementation is not always easy. One study reported the lack of differentiation in cotaught world history high school classes (Mastropieri et al., 2005). In 10 cotaught high school mathematics classes, the majority of educators observed used whole-class lecture with independent seat work (Magiera et al., 2005). Options such as parallel teaching, stations, team teaching, and the implementation of differentiated instruction need to be practiced on broader scales at the secondary level. Coteaching models need to include more peer supports, manipulatives, and direct teaching of study skills, with both the expectation and preparation for adolescent differences, without relying solely on lecture-style formats. More class collaboration for educators and students means that more eyes and ears see and hear responses and then match instruction to align with varying levels. Cooperative learning and peer mentoring are valuable instructional delivery tools for adolescents who enjoy learning from each other under teachers' auspices. Somehow, there also needs to be a combination of better curriculum deliverance and the best coteaching practices and staff collaboration that individualizes instruction within inclusive environments to best utilize all resources, both human and physical.

School personnel such as paraeducators, instructional teaching assistants, and one-to-one aides are valuable school employees who work under the guidance of classroom educators, instructional support teams, supervisors, and administrators. These individuals collaborate with qualified school staff to help adolescents practice and review skills, and to assist them in staying on task. Paraeducators can work with students individually and in groups. When they provide assistance in classrooms, the student-staff ratio is lowered, with support given to collect data and offer related services to improve student academics, life skills, and behavior. Most important is that collaboration consistently occur among paraeducators, classroom teachers, students, and families to schedule, monitor, and manage progress and decisions within inclusive environments. Regularly scheduled meetings in pedagogical atmospheres that give merit to ongoing communication and reflections yield benefits for all. Objectives need to be shared, with integral inclusive players holding a team philosophy that respects all staff with constructive modeling, feedback, monitoring, evaluation, and supervision. Different types of coteaching and shared responsibilities include the following:

- ★ One person leading with support given by another staff member
- ★ Station teaching with centers set up around the classroom, while staff circulates and assists learners
- ★ Parallel teaching with the same content simultaneously taught to smaller groups
- ★ Alternative teaching where different areas of subjects are studied or reviewed with some students practicing subskills, while others move ahead or enhance concepts
- ★ Team teaching with a complete coordination of all inclusive factors, for example, planning, instruction, assessment

These variations of classroom instruction must be practiced on a wider classroom scale at the middle school and secondary levels for adolescents in inclusive environments to achieve increased successes.

The following sites offer information to help educators assist students, paraeducators, and other professionals within inclusive collaborative settings:

www.paracenter.org

www.specialconnections.ku.edu

Overall, team teachers need a knowledge of the curriculum and individual students' abilities, along with good interpersonal skills, flexibility, and creativity (Klinger & Vaughn, 2002). Even though pedagogical interrelationships are sometimes difficult, with diversification, preparation, coordination, and the right attitudes, benefits are not only possible, but also imperative!



Coteaching itself is often compared to a marriage. Sometimes, coteachers would love to *stay married*, while other teachers would like an *inclusive divorce*. No spouse, no matter how happy he or she claims the marriage to be, will say that every day is a blissful one. Just as no couple skips through a marriage holding hands at every given moment, classroom teachers do not always skip through each and every lesson. Agreements happen about as often as disagreements. The best inclusion case scenarios are wonderful ones, while others represent nightmarish situations for coteachers, students, families, and administrators. Not every inclusion classroom has two teachers working together. Some inclusive classroom configurations have one teacher who may simultaneously feel overwhelmed, underappreciated, frustrated, and delighted by students' progress and support systems. The following table offers perspectives shared by teachers and administrators about inclusive environments. Also check out the following resource: the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, at <http://cecp.air.org>.

The table starting on page 27 offers some positive coteaching approaches to promote collaboration.

Overall, collaborative staff includes team members, coteachers, support staff, and administration who share many roles and responsibilities to ensure inclusive successes. Issues such as scheduling teacher planning time or IEP meetings obviously require administrative support, willing coordination, ongoing flexibility, and the ability to simultaneously and often repeatedly dot your i's and cross your t's. Together, coteachers

- ★ plan lessons and course units.
- ★ decide upon appropriate instructional delivery, interventions, and strategies, for example, whole-class, cooperative, multiple intelligences.
- ★ figure out best formative and summative assessments—oral, written, performance-based, or take-home—that appeal to and maximize students' strengths and abilities.
- ★ approach grading decisions collaboratively, for example, balancing efforts, progress, achievements.
- ★ maintain proactive family communications.
- ★ value continual respect and reflection.

In ideal coteaching situations, educators generally collaborate on all classroom decisions. Whether one coteacher—either general or special education—supports, leads, or accompanies his or her colleagues with instruction that involves parallel or separate classroom groups, collaborative decisions are based upon students' needs. Even though it is not always an easy task, coteachers often exhibit both structure and

Questions and Comments About Inclusion From Teachers and Administrators With Inclusive Solutions & Ideas (IS&I):
<p>How do you change the belief system that inclusion is not good for kids?</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Maintain a positive outlook, despite the negative comments; focus upon your convictions. Continually communicate a <i>can-do</i> attitude; document and share students' progress with colleagues. Stay on track with your beliefs; realize that inclusion is an evolutionary process for all.</p>
<p>I'm currently implementing "push-in" much more in classes. I'm looking for ideas/tools to make inclusion work more effectively and ideas to help the reluctant teacher who is unsure about others <i>pushing in</i>.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Review and share characteristics of differences by investigating sites like www.nichcy.org, www.cec.sped.org, www.whatworks.ed.gov, www.behavioradvisor.com, www.asperger.org, www.ldinfo.com, and www.thearc.org to determine appropriate strategies. Observe and document students' progress toward goals with reflective and collaborative learning logs. Remember that you are not <i>pushing in</i>, but that everyone is <i>branching out!</i></p>
<p>I need more ideas to effectively work with special needs students so that they can progress in the general education setting.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> The first step is to review the curriculum standards and if necessary dissect those standards into their components, taking a step-by-step approach with lesson objectives. Equally important is to determine students' prior knowledge and baseline levels through informal assessments, e.g., class discussions, ungraded assessments, K-W-L charts. Try to relate the learning to students' lives in order to establish personal connections and increase intrinsic motivation. Reward student efforts as well as achievements. Stay connected to professional journals and organizations, such as the National Association of Special Education Teachers (www.naset.org) and Council for Exceptional Children (www.cec.sped.org). Remember to use people-first language: it's not a special needs student, but a student with special needs.</p>
<p>We are a full inclusion high school. I want to be able to help the teachers, SE and GE, be collaborative in a more positive way. (By the way, I am a Special Services Coordinator.)</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Value a team approach with your educators, establishing a committee of both GE and SE teachers, supervisors, and other staff members who collaboratively communicate and plan for students throughout the year. Honor teachers' needs by building weekly or biweekly coplanning time into the schedule and setting up resources for extra materials and help as warranted. Create a library of supplementary instructional and reference materials for all staff. Investigate the <i>full inclusion</i> policy, since some students may need a combination of services, given both in the general education class and in a separate smaller setting such as a resource room, study hall, or tutoring, e.g., intensive reading and writing programs, math instruction.</p>
<p>The attitudes of families, teachers, and administrators will determine the success of students with disabilities!</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Absolutely true. Try to share that <i>bottom line</i> philosophy that inclusion does and will work!</p>
<p>As a special education teacher, I worked at building relationships with the regular education teachers. I trained them in behavior management strategies to make them more comfortable around my students. Those that opened their arms and hearts to me opened up to the children.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Yes, and then those teachers train others with a <i>domino inclusionary effect!</i> In addition, a welcoming attitude is an essential ingredient for inclusion successes and to increase comfort levels with increased social and academic successes.</p>
<p>I don't always get the help I need from my cooperating teacher.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Not everyone is attuned or trained to work together. Perhaps the cooperating teacher is unaware of how to help, which means that the door for communication must be opened to voice concerns about how together you can better address students' needs. Listen and learn from each other, valuing different perspectives, background knowledge, and experience.</p>

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Questions and Comments About inclusion From Teachers and Administrators With Inclusive Solutions & Ideas (IS&I):
<p>I'm worried about short-changing the other students.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Inclusion does not mean that the students without IEPs are on their own. The learning experiences of the students with the most and least needs are equally valuable. Proactively set up the classroom with centers that expand upon concepts, e.g., writing stations, WebQuests, curriculum-related art activities, ongoing research projects, and more. Expect that students will finish assignments in various amounts of time, and work with students to expand their knowledge, assisting all learners. Proactively set up cooperative groups and centers to allow you to circulate about as needed while valuing independent study and differently paced learning times.</p>
<p>As a former teacher, I know that too many general education teachers do not want to take the time, effort, and energy to give accommodations and modifications to students with special needs. How do we change these attitudes and encourage general education teachers to take ownership and responsibility?</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> That's tough to do if attitudes say, "Why bother?" General education teachers' initial discomfort may be attributable to their lack of experiences or apprehensions. Gather instructional support from team members and administration to allow the GE teachers to attend appropriate professional workshops and be mentored by other GE teachers currently practicing inclusion, SE teachers, and other willing staff members.</p>
<p>We need more planning time!</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> How true! Situations will occur that require collaborative time to plan. Administrators and team members need to honor educators by building time into the schedule or offering district workshop planning days or set times into teachers' programs.</p>
<p>Time is needed to work on functional skills while still trying to help students pass the test.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> When study skill strategies are built into curriculum lessons, e.g., modeling how to take notes, then students will be able to not only pass tests, but become better learners. In addition, students with more cognitive needs are required to meet alternate proficiency assessments, even though teaching functional skills may seem like a wiser lesson choice. Dissect the standards and document how students are meeting goals, e.g., an eighth grader with autism learning about negative numbers can take steps toward meeting this math standard with the functional topic of weather and temperature, or if sports oriented, the student can study how a football player gains or loses yards instead of writing abstract equations.</p>
<p>Often teachers are put into an inclusion setting, but not educated on how to work in this setting.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Unfortunately, in some districts' haste to implement inclusion, teachers are not given preparatory training or knowledge about the characteristics of students who will be included. This leads to frustrations for all and many sour attitudes about inclusion. Most important is to allow everyone access to students' IEPs, so all will know the necessary accommodations and modifications needed ahead of time and ensure that the inclusive environment matches specific levels and IEP programs, e.g., increasing physical proximity, reading test questions aloud, not penalizing student for spelling errors, helping with note taking, teaching the students and not just the curriculum.</p>
<p>I am in a very small district that I feel is resistant to inclusion. At my former district, I was an inclusion specialist in an inclusive setting. I would like to know how to get the backing of the powers that be to make that change!</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> First off, start small, getting the administration's support to share information with the staff, e.g., effective strategies, characteristics of disabilities, study skill resources. Then offer your help to administration to present or arrange workshops and ongoing support for the staff.</p>

Questions and Comments About inclusion From Teachers and Administrators With Inclusive Solutions & Ideas (IS&I):
<p>Families tend to use students' disabilities as a crutch or excuse and sometimes have a lack of concern for student success.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Much more is accomplished when everyone is on the same page with effective and realistic home-school communication supports. Invite family members to attend informal planning sessions to listen to and share their perspectives and concerns. Enlist family support through regular communication, e.g., e-mail, face-to-face conferences, telephone, video conferencing, progress reports.</p>
<p>Some students just don't put forth the effort!</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> No matter how wonderful a lesson is, nothing is accomplished if students within the inclusive environment do not <i>buy into</i> the lesson. Survey students to connect the curriculum with their interests, multiple intelligences, and learning styles. Involve students in more peer interactions within cooperative learning groups to increase focus. Reward efforts and progress toward mastery by giving increased realistic verbal recognition, and by reminding students how close they are to mastery. Definitely share a team mentality that creates self-regulated learners.</p>
<p>Who will be with me during these inclusion classes?</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> That depends upon a student's specific IEP, but it may be a coteacher, instructional assistant, or just you within the classroom. Realize that you should never feel that you are alone in this process. Always communicate with team members and administration for additional support, strategies, needed resources, or professional development training that may be required.</p>
<p>Will a 1-day lesson turn into 2 or 3 days?</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Yes, that is a definite possibility. Remember, however, that the curriculum spirals and that concepts will be reintroduced. All students will not master the standards in the same way. Use your best judgment about how much time to spend on lessons, offering students different ways to absorb concepts without spending an inordinate amount of time on details if the students get the big picture. Each situation will vary, e.g., algebra instruction may require mastery to move on, while some students will understand more or less about the Industrial Revolution. Proactive study centers with trained mentors, e.g., peers, community members, extra teacher tutoring, and online sites, may be viable options to assist students with more difficult concepts.</p>
<p>Inclusion teachers are the ones who receive the reward when students advance.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Teachers who help students achieve beneficial inclusion experiences have an incredible feeling of assisting an adolescent to increase his or her strides toward leading a productive adult life as an integral member of the community. The rewards achieved by both students and educators are immeasurable ones.</p>
<p>Inclusion is sometimes wonderful when I work with the right people, and sometimes it's not so great.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Yes, it's not a perfect world. The same holds true for all occupations and careers.</p>
<p>My inclusion teacher doesn't always show up on time.</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Being a support teacher requires that you assume responsibility as a professional, with each person equally sharing the workload of planning, student engagement, and assessments. Remind the inclusion teacher that the periods of support are IEP generated and therefore legislatively mandated.</p>
<p>Inclusion doesn't mean that the kids with IEPs always get 100s on their tests!</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Not every student who is included will receive As and Bs on tests. That possibly lower result does not indicate inadequate instruction or that the student is not learning. Students' prior knowledge levels vary. Thus, a grade of 70 percent indicates that the student has mastered 70 percent of the curriculum, but perhaps the entering level was only 50 percent, and a 20 percent gain has occurred. Try to administer pretests and informal assessments to gauge progress, not strictly mastery.</p>
<p>When do I retire?</p> <p><i>IS&I:</i> Tomorrow?</p>

flexibility at any given classroom moment to ensure that student accountability matches student variability, without sacrificing the curriculum. Personality differences between coteachers are fine, as long as the communication is continually open and honest. Even when disagreements occur, they can be excellent opportunities for learning growth. This collaboration also extends to paraprofessionals and instructional assistants who need to be in the loop and also sometimes directed on specific ways to assist students. The following examples offer some collaborative models.

Positive Coteaching Actions
(a) Respect that you and your colleagues have personality differences and unique teaching styles, but remain firmly planted on <i>common classroom ground</i> that has positive students' outcomes as your collaborative goals.
(b) Support coteachers in front of other staff members, students, administration, and families.
(c) Have a sense of humor and flexibility in all situations, even the ones that defy all rules or expectations.
(d) Be prepared to agree or disagree on any given day, remembering that it is vital to have ongoing communication.
(e) Adapt course content together, grade together, laugh together, and know when to walk away from each other, too!
(f) Decide ahead of time on acceptable adaptations and modifications for all students, not just those with IEPs.
(g) Vary your teaching styles, assisting, leading, or following one another's lead with shared lesson delivery during whole-class, small-group, or individualized instruction.
(h) Be <i>two-faced</i> , which in this case means exchange roles, which allows students to view both of you as equal partners, both worthy of the name <i>teacher</i> .
(i) Share ideas with each other and other grade-level teachers privately or in arranged meetings.
(j) Be aware of the standards and course unit planning, but understand that pacing is not racing.
(k) Focus upon hearing each other, not just talking to each other. Definitely talk to each other in front of the students to stimulate more thinking skills.
(l) Raise your own level of professional development by learning and practicing a new strategy each week, belong to organizations, read journals and magazines, learn more about students with different learning needs, and be open to new ideas.
(m) Accept each other's needs, prior experiences, and future potentials.
(n) Give each other space, literally—classroom areas to work, e.g., desks, filing cabinets, book shelves for resources, and also mental space, e.g., time to digest, cool down, rethink, prioritize, and reflect.
(o) Remember that you are both professionals who chose this job for reasons other than the lucrative financial gains!
(p) Be aware of desirability vs. feasibility.
(q) Like what you do; find positive qualities in each other, your students, and life!

Coteaching and Collaborative Curriculum Applications for Shared Classrooms

Literacy Lesson: The lesson begins with introducing the whole class to the literature, implementing direct instruction and modeling of reading strategies with passages in a variety of genres. An informal assessment of prior knowledge about specific literature to be read circumvents misconceptions and establishes personal connections. For example, if the class is introduced to a commentary, speech, short story, or newspaper article in the genre of historical fiction, set in the 1940s in Europe, do the students know some of the political and social conditions that existed at that time? In addition, when students are connected with a motivating hook, focus is increased. At this time, even before the literature is read, students are asked to write down their character traits and then to compare their list to those displayed by the protagonist or antagonist as they read. Even though students have differing word recognition abilities, reading comprehension grade levels, and interests, everyone is learning the principles behind the same basic literacy skills. This lesson includes skills such as the following:

Finding the main idea

Locating supportive details

Sequencing events

Establishing the elements of a story, for example, characters, setting, plot, climax, resolution

Identifying cause–effect relationships

Distinguishing fact from opinion

Understanding propaganda

Applying inferential skills

Next, after the brief direct instruction, teachers or instructional assistants simultaneously instruct separate groups on refining and practicing these literacy skills with differently leveled fiction or nonfiction reading passages, poems, informational articles, short stories, and interest-generated topics or novels from assorted genres. A variation of this coteaching scenario includes offering the same reading materials to all students, with the availability of supplemental materials with options such as prerecorded versions of stories or passages to listen to on headphones, worksheets with guided questions and more explanations, or even flashcards with phonetic pronunciations or visual definitions of more difficult vocabulary. If students are working independently or in smaller groups, this is an ideal time for coteachers, paraprofessionals, and instructional assistants to circulate about the classroom, to give additional guidance to students as needed so as to gauge or clarify understandings. Even when the students do not ask for help, circulating about offers students positive feedback and the chance to check if they are headed in the right direction, as well as an opportunity to circumvent students from heading down learning paths that will detour them from achieving literacy objectives.

Coteaching and Collaboration in Mathematics: Perhaps some students in the inclusive class do not understand how to solve equations and inequalities with variables, while

other students do. When more than one adult is in a classroom, students are afforded the opportunity for more guided instruction, either in smaller groups or one on one. In this case, one teacher instructs more advanced students in solving word problems involving one or two variables, while other students receive guided instruction on variables, understanding terminology such as *coefficient* or *inequality*, along with more detailed step-by-step practice on how variables represent numbers or how to solve and balance linear equations. More accelerated students conduct independent practice on approved Web sites. If advanced students desire, under teachers' auspices, they could act as peer tutors and guide other students along their learning path, thereby strengthening and reinforcing their own knowledge while helping their peers achieve mastery. In this case, the initial academic lesson on variables itself varies, to become one that includes behavioral, emotional, and social gains. Knowledge of concepts is reinforced when you communicate those concepts to someone else.

Coteaching and Collaboration in Social Studies: Quite often, students may be excellent at the regurgitation of facts but do not make connections between prior learning and new concepts, especially in areas such as world history, when they often do not see the relevance of the subject matter to their lives. Inclusive classrooms are heterogeneous ones, with students who possess different motivation, attention, study skill levels, cognitive abilities, and social acumen, along with varying physical, communicative, and sensory needs. Yet, despite these differences, there are standards in the social studies curriculum that all students need to acquire. Teachers can ensure that students actually gain the knowledge and make the connections from history to their present lives, while at the same time advance in study skills such as organization, by working in collaborative peer groups. Rather than dictating lessons straight from the textbook, for example on a unit such as Ancient Rome, students collaboratively jigsaw sections of the textbook with different groups learning about subtopics such as the following:

- Geography of the Italian peninsula
- Formation of the Roman Republic
- Expansion of the Roman Empire
- Lasting Roman achievements
- Reasons for Rome's decline

After the students have a command of the knowledge assigned in the textbook and other references, they then collaboratively figure out ways to present this knowledge to their peers through skits, songs, posters, debates, PowerPoint presentations, WebQuests, newspaper articles, poems, and more. Coteachers or paraprofessionals circulate to assist and guide as needed. A written assessment is collaboratively created and required for each cooperative group, who then grades and records each other's assessments. Valuing both written and verbal acumen, coteachers evaluate students based upon their presentations and their mean performance on student-formulated tests. Coteachers and paraprofessionals encourage and guide cooperative student groups to create written test formats that include essays, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. The advantage of this type of lesson on ancient Rome is that students are still gaining information from the textbook, but now they are becoming self-directed and more regulated learners who figure out the big ideas

from minor details and how to communicate this information to their peers. In addition, they are gaining literacy, mathematical, and social skills with deliveries that value their strengths and multiple intelligences. Lessons such as these improve motivation and attention, since students are learning with and from each other, under coteachers' guidance.

Coteaching and Collaboration With Interdisciplinary Lessons Involving Chemistry, Social Studies, and English

I love when effective teaching leaps outside of one classroom and connects with other disciplines. When different subject area teachers collaboratively preplan lessons, they are then teaching students that a unit of study exists beyond one set of classroom walls. In this learning instance, when students enter their next classroom, the vocabulary, basic concepts, and the language are the same. Students do not completely shift learning gears, since there is a common thread that unites disciplines.

While completing an assignment in a graduate class about the adolescent learner, a cooperative group of students ingeniously connected the 19th- to early 20th-century Industrial Revolution with literacy skills, scientific principles, and social studies. Topics in English included the discussion of the conditions described by the writings and books of Dickens, Wordsworth, Gaskell, Melville, Twain, Hawthorne, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, and Matthew Arnold. Themes, metaphors, and symbolism of working conditions presented in factories and the world during this time were explored. Social studies class included lessons that investigated how railroads united the country; explored more about cultural groups who contributed to the growth of the Industrial Revolution; and investigated the development of agriculture, manufacturing, factories, transportation, and communication in the United States and abroad. Students even kinesthetically demonstrated the principles of an assembly line with the division and specialization of labor to create a prototype of a Model T, which yielded a collaboratively created Lego car. Chemistry class discussed the principles behind what made that 1908 car run. Coteachers explored combustion by comparing it to a candle burning. Chemical equations, such as $C_{25}H_{52}(s) + O_2(g) \longrightarrow CO_2(g) + H_2O(l)$ were then balanced. Comparisons were made between unbalanced equations and incomplete sentences to further connect chemistry with English. The law of conservation was then related to each person's interests. During this demonstration lesson, teachers established prior knowledge, planned together, and displayed incredible enthusiasm. In this scenario, adolescents realize that once their 40-minute chemistry period ends and they walk into another classroom, for example, English or Social Studies, they still explore a given topic, such as the Industrial Revolution, with increased depth. Collaboratively, teachers then grade students with cloze exercises, reflective journals, group projects, and more. Coteaching in this case is certainly *industriously revolutionized!*

Family–School Collaboration

Students often weaken family bonds to bond elsewhere (Sylwester, 2005). When schools embrace families in the mix, with active communication, then accountability extends beyond school walls into homes. Districts that have active Web sites listing items such as school events, teacher e-mails, and family involvement strategies are valuing home connections. Teacher Web sites also send out strong messages to

students and families about how everyone needs to collaborate for maximum inclusive results. Web sites can list exam schedules, long-range assignments, conference times, dates for report card distribution, ways to improve literacy or mathematics skills, specifics about the History Day project, track events, college visitation night, and more! This type of setup prevents student miscommunication or lack of communication with parents and also enlists family support. In addition, it helps students who may misplace papers or forget just when the report may be due. If families do not have computers in their homes, they can access one at the local library, or through a neighbor or relative. If possible and desirable, educators can also regularly send communications with progress reports to parents' homes or businesses via postal mail. The ultimate goal to succeed is a shared one for homes and schools. Communication with families leads to increased positive involvement and proactive support, which yields more student advancements when the learning is shared and valued in all environments. When families and students are on board, offering ongoing input and communication into planning and enforcing individualized education programs, then the stakeholders extend beyond the school walls. More positive results are then exhibited across all settings to create inclusive strides that value collaborative attitudes.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

A presentation I heard given by Harry Wong, a renowned educator and author, described how at the end of the day, students are leaping out of their classrooms with a bounce in their gaits and a gleam in their eyes, waiting to tackle whatever afterschool plans are on their plates. Then, several hours later, teachers are dragging themselves out of the school building exhausted, ready to hit the hay before it even turns dark. Now what is possibly wrong with that scenario?

Hmmm, perhaps we could analyze this pedagogical-student description together. First off, learning is a two-way street. Teachers in inclusive environments who deliver incredible lessons cannot succeed unless students are equal partners in the process. Nobody needs exhaustion, just invigoration and responsibility to succeed. Educators want to deliver successful lessons, but the students also require the successes. For some curriculum analogies, integers do not exist without both positive and negative numbers, while rotations and revolutions are both parts of the year, creating day and night and the seasons. The point is that students and teachers have positive or good days, and negative or less desirable ones, too, but we all need to physically and conceptually include each other in our daily rotations and yearly revolutions. Teachers need to plan units of study, but students are ultimately the ones responsible for assuming major roles as learning protagonists who want to achieve higher cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, communicative, physical, and sensory levels.

When teachers encourage adolescents to assume responsibility for their progress, regardless of the cards they are sometimes dealt or the way the coin is tossed, self-regulated learners are created. Adolescents with disabilities need to realize that although they do not choose their disabilities or learning weaknesses, they can choose their attitudes and ways to approach achieving improvements. As an activity, share these few statements with students and then ask them to fill in their own *heads and tails* versions of a *student coin* on the lines provided.

Decide which side of the coin you would like to be!	
Negative Statements—Tails down	Positive Replacements—Heads up
I might pass this course.	I will pass this course.
I'll never get it!	If I review it more, I'll get it!
This stuff is stupid!	Even though I don't like what we are learning, I will concentrate on the lesson. Sometimes there are things we have to do, even though we may not want to do them.
School gets in the way of my life!	School can improve my life!
Explore other comparisons on the lines below.	

Here are some ways for educators to assist students in gaining more responsibility:

- ★ Provide guided learning experiences.
- ★ Help students to set realistic goals.
- ★ Encourage adolescents to ask questions in welcoming classroom environments.
- ★ Consistently schedule open classroom discussions.
- ★ Count student participation as part of grading systems.
- ★ Outline problem-solving steps.
- ★ Encourage more positive self-talk.
- ★ Actively provide meta-cognitive strategies and guidance.
- ★ Observe and assist students as appropriate to help develop self-directed learners.

Just as a family member may provide support to a child learning to ride a two-wheeler, teachers also provide the right amount of support, without exceeding or dismissing the pivotal part where the student rides off on his or her own into that sunset called independence!

The following pledge reaffirms learning commitments and self-responsibilities.

Student Pledge (to be recited with enthusiasm!)

I know it's the *morning* (afternoon)
 And we're *still yawning* (leaving soon)
 But this is my promise for *today* (now)
 When I will *say* (vow)
 That I will do my best

And it's not said in jest
 To really care
 And be sincere
 To listen and learn
 And respect each in turn
 We all have many a need
 But we all can succeed
 If we use our mind
 And to each other be kind
 So here I am in school
 Where not only teachers rule
 But it's each student
 That needs to be prudent
 If I have a positive attitude
 I could master math, reading, and even latitude
 The implications are great
 I decide my own fate
 So I'll give it my best try
 And that's no lie
 It's my promise, no fingers crossed
 I'll ask questions when I'm lost
 I'll care about this stuff
 Even when the going gets tough
 And I think I'll even smile
 May as well, I'll be here awhile

Source: Karten, T. (2007). *More inclusion strategies that work!* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

WHAT ABOUT THE STUDENTS WITHOUT DISABILITIES?

Inclusion is not exclusive to students with disability classifications. Inclusion benefits all students. The following few vignettes expand upon this thought. While I was clothes shopping, a true hobby of mine, an adolescent who was a store employee smiled at me. She then approached me and asked if I was a teacher in a school she attended several years ago. Being the ultimate proud educator, I did not deny my profession, but said, "Yes, I am a teacher there." This lovely young lady, who is now a high school senior, then proceeded to thank me for helping her in a sixth-grade math class. Wow! I was floored that I had had such an impact upon her that she not only remembered my support, but wanted to communicate it to me as well! That made me smile the whole day. I was even content to walk out of the store, without a purchase, since the dividends gained far outshone an extra wardrobe piece. She was not a student I was *supposed* to help, but was someone who had responded to an extra pair of eyes and the additional support I offered. Inclusive classrooms have better teacher–student ratios for assisting students without disabilities, too.

The next vignette concretely defines support. I was in a science classroom, nonchalantly sitting near a desk and assisting students while the general education science teacher was leading the lesson. I was not seated next to any of my five

inclusive students, since there were no desks available near them. However, my distance from them still allowed me to monitor their attention to the teacher and see if the students were taking notes without stigmatizing them. Basically, I am a realist, and I capitalized on the fact that an available chair existed that belonged to a student who was at a band lesson. (As an aside, I write notes, share outlines, and communicate class and home assignments for those students who are not physically present and who miss part of the instruction, even though they are not classified students with IEPs.) I was seated next to a general education student who is probably one of the brightest science students in the school, destined to become the next Albert Einstein. An outside observer might say, *wrong place for me to be!* Actually, it was a serendipitous location, since what followed now helps me to define what inclusive support can mean *to the other students*, and for the sake of increasing melodrama, just may have saved this student's life. The teacher was discussing the circulatory system, talking about blood transfusions, when all of the sudden, this science prodigy seated next to me went into convulsions, with a tilted head that would have smashed onto a tiled floor a few feet below, had I not quickly caught his head with my outstretched cupped hands. Now how's that for support? We then quickly enlisted the school nurse who was informed by the child's parent that the student faints at the description of blood. This same parent later sent me a thank-you gift—stationery with the following imprint: *Teachers have class!* Not a bad example of what support can mean!

In summary, when inclusion is properly implemented, all students achieve additional gains. The fact is that students with learning disabilities; additional cognitive needs; and auditory, visual, communicative, attention, and physical concerns do require extra support. However, this extra support in no way has to exclude the other general education students who also have needs to be addressed. They, too, deserve the best educational scenario. When I was in that inclusive science class, I taught the whole class study skill strategies with better ways to remember and understand information using mnemonics, vocabulary, and conceptual flashcards. The students created their own study guides, increased research and literacy skills, and just generally learned how to learn! Sometimes I led the lesson, sometimes we taught parallel mini lessons, and sometimes we circulated about, helping students who were completing station work in cooperative groups. The point here is that properly implemented inclusion includes and supports everyone at all inclusive stages. This begins with *Act I, Scene 1*, during the initial planning stage, which considers appropriate services and support needed; and continues to *Act I, Scene 2*, conducting observations and preevaluations; and to *Act II*, the writing and implementing of IEPs with PLAAFP statements (present level of academic achievements and functional performance); and to *Act III Scene 1*, checking and communicating students' progress. The *finale* then creates successful classroom and postsecondary inclusive realities!