

TRANSCRIPT

The History and Future of Special Education: Implementing Quality Services through the Implementation of Inclusive Models

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MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

[Title slide] Hello, and welcome to *The History and Future of Special Education: Implementing Quality Services through the Implementation of Inclusive Models*. **[Slide: Today's Presenter]** It's my pleasure to introduce today's presenter, Alice Parker, from Parker Educational Consulting. Welcome, Alice.

ALICE PARKER

Thank you, Meg. I am really excited to be with you for this webinar on special education models. I work as a consultant now for state agencies, districts, schools, and I support school improvement work across the United States. I have been a speech and language specialist, a special day class teacher, a program specialist, a school principal, a director in a district, and the Assistant Superintendent for Special Education for the California Department of Education. I'm really looking forward to spending the next 90 minutes with you, talking about practices to support improvement for students with disabilities.

[Slide: Participant Outcomes] Our outcomes for today include these three. We want to initiate a dialogue among the schools who are participating in CORE, with a shared focus on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Second, we want you to become familiar with data outlining national outcomes for students with disabilities; and thirdly, understand the research base and basic tenets of inclusion for special education students.

[Slide: Objectives] The objectives are to go through and understand the history and continued need for reform in educational systems, an overview of how and where this is happening in the United States, inclusive models and how to get started, some information on Universal Design for Learning and how we can support all learners in multiple ways, and, finally, some three to five actionable steps that you might accomplish should you begin the process of moving into inclusive education models.

[Slide: Historical Timeline of Reform] Now let's look at the history—some of where we've been and what has caused special education to become what it is today. The history of special education in the United States has deep roots in larger educational reform movements. Supported by efforts initiated in *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, we now celebrate more

than 40 years of federal civil rights legislation for children with disabilities via the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA. With passage of other federal and state legislation, such as NCLB, and the growth of the charter school movement, we are now faced with new sets of challenges, which are highlighted by the movement toward Common Core standards and the assessments that will accompany them. These laudable and forward-looking efforts, though not without flaws, have improved opportunities for *all* students. Still, special education in many school systems remains largely segmented from overall improvement efforts.

Special education is often about providing students with disabilities access to the general education classroom and the curricular materials. Access, as you likely know, is not enough. For students with disabilities to meet rigorous standards, they must be supported through a system of services and strategies that help each child progress through a high-quality general education curriculum with the supports and assistance that they individually require. Our outcome data show that these supports are not yet in place for students with disabilities.

So let's take a look at some data [**Slide: Changes in Law and Practices**] and how our laws and practices have changed. Let's think about these things—the GI Bill of Rights, *Brown vs. the Board of Education*, *Park vs. the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, lawsuits in the District of Columbia around students with emotional disabilities, and so many more. They made the pathway for students with disabilities and their families, for school systems, for you and me, to be here today. Shirley Chisholm said something like, “The service we do pays the rent we owe for our space on this earth.” And what we do for students at risk of school failure, for parents, teachers, and students in our systems, reflects those sentiments.

[**Slide: What is the historical shift...**] So let's take a look at how things have changed, and they have changed in a radical fashion. From 1975 to '97, the first passage of the federal legislation occurred, and 6.5 million students had access—many, if not most, for the very first time—to a place in the educational system in our country. But we had another huge shift from 1997 to 2004 and the present, and that is about how children with disabilities have access to and participate in the general classroom—in the context, first, of regular education, and looking at how placement-neutral funding can assist our students with disabilities.

[**Slide: How Our Work Has Changed**] Our work changed with these laws as well. We went from a system where we conducted assessments to identify the disability. We identified places and services that would best meet students' needs. We, in fact, expanded the variety and quality of special education services available in the schools and in the community. But with the passage of 1997's and 2004 reauthorization of this law, the focus became again squarely on the general curriculum, the services, modifications, and supports to address the needs of children to enable them to progress in the general curriculum, and we were looking at lots and lots of data.

[**Slide: Rationale**] Alexa Posny, the former Assistant Secretary of Education, talked about why we made these shifts. She talked about an education system that helps all learners achieve rigorous standards seamlessly, will really weave general and special education services and strategies together to support each student. Educational leaders recognize the importance of creating an interconnected system of supports and services for students. She talked about

proposing an increased alignment between IDEA and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and believes that integration of federal legislation will promote alignment at all levels of education. We believe that this type of system is achievable and of the highest value. Through understanding accommodation, modifications, and differentiation, and by working together as collaborative teams at state and district levels, we *can* improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

[Slide: Data on Outcomes] Now let's take a look at some of our data and see how we have been doing. **[Slide: Of Every 100 White Kindergartners]** This shows us, from the U.S. Bureau of Census, what happens for kids who start school as kindergartners. Of every 100 White kindergartners who start, 88 graduate from high school, about; approximately 58 complete some college; and about 26 of those 100 kindergartners obtain at least a bachelor's degree. **[Slide: Of Every 100 African-American Kindergartners]** Let's look at what happens for our African-American kindergartners. About 82 will graduate from high school, about 45 complete some college, and approximately 11 obtain at least a bachelor's degree. How about for our Latino youngsters? **[Slide: Of Every 100 Latino Kindergartners]** Approximately 63 will graduate from high school, 35 complete some college, 8 obtain at least a bachelor's degree. Native American kindergartners? **[Slide: For Every 100 Native American Kindergartners]** 58 graduate from high school out of 100; approximately 7 obtain a bachelor's degree. Let's look at our students with disabilities. **[Slide: Of Every 100 Students in Special Education]** Approximately 50, or only half of those 100 incoming kindergartners, will graduate from high school with a diploma, and only about 7 will obtain a bachelor's degree.

[Slide: California's Special Education Statistics] We now educate more than 695,000 students with disabilities in our schools in California. I want you to notice the largest categories, and remember that these students most frequently have normal cognitive potential. I'm talking about students with speech/language impairment; our largest population of students with specific learning disabilities; many of our students in the category of other health impairment, emotional disturbance, visual impairment, orthopedic impairment. The vast majority of these youngsters also have a normal cognitive potential.

[Slide: Special Education Count] When we look at our count across the state of California, you can see how it looks over grade spans, and I want to point out that California is slightly below the overall percentage of identification. The national average is approximately 12.4%. California identifies a little over 11% of its population as students having a disability.

[Slide: SpEd Enrollment Change Over Time] Let's take a look at special ed enrollment over time. Notice these increases, because it informs our work. Specific learning disability has increased by 136%, autism by 273%, since 2002. Also, these student groups potentially have normal intelligence and benefit from inclusive models. And as I said before, they include hard of hearing, deaf students, speech/language impairment, visual impairment, etc.—the vast majority of our special education students.

[Slide: California High School Completion] Let's look at our high school completion. You can see that the graduation rate for our students with disabilities is only about 59%, and the dropout rate for students with disabilities is 18.4%. Where do these kids end up? So many of our

youngsters who drop out of school do become known to the juvenile justice system, and it's imperative, therefore, that our models of education teach children how to be learners, how to improve outcomes, and how to stay persistent and within school.

[Slide: Data Sets to Consider – 1] Take a look at this. What happened around 2003 and 2006, and what did so many systems do in the United States? It is about the time when response to intervention/instruction, or multi-tiered systems, became really much more evident across the United States. You know, there are some blueprints that will help your district and your school take a look at response to intervention for schools. Also, other places of great resource include Kansas, Michigan, Florida, Iowa, and Oregon. They have focused in on responsive educational systems for instruction, for reading and positive behavior, and Oregon's work from the positive behavior intervention systems is really extraordinary, and it helps kids stay in school and stay engaged.

[Slide: Data Sets to Consider – 2] National data by incidence of disability looks much like California's shifts and changes. You can see that, again, our largest populations are the teal blue sets that are *specific learning disability*. The next largest category are *speech/language impairment*, but you do see the huge increase in the percentage of students who are identified as being autistic or on the autism spectrum.

[Slide: Data Sets to Consider – 3] The national identification rate tells us some interesting things. Someone once said, "An anecdote is not the singular of data." You must know your school data, your district data, and your state data, because it helps inform what practices and processes within your school and your district are working, and what needs your attention and focus and perhaps change. So as we go into the next sections, we will begin to look at places where folks are successful in what they are doing across the country.

[Slide: What works consistently...] So what works consistently, and where is that? What are the characteristics that districts and systems use **[Slide: Successful Reform Initiatives]** to really improve outcomes for students with disabilities? It's happening in many places. We're going to focus on a few of these places in the next few minutes.

[Slide: Response to Intervention/Instruction – 1] The consistent element that you see across all of these systems, that they have in common, is they are using a response to instruction or intervention set of methodologies, a multi-tiered system. They're using reform efforts, and they're focused around the most vulnerable students. They're talking about making sure that the system is reflexive and responsive to *all* students, but in particular, students who are at risk of school failure, and those kids include our students with disabilities.

[Slide: Response to Intervention/Instruction – 2] So what is it about a response to intervention system, or a multi-tiered system, that really helps students be successful? It's a problem-solving and instructional decision-making system that is a reform system for schools and districts. It supports individual students in being more successful students, but it really focuses on systemic reform. It's planned, and it's purposeful.

[Slide: To ensure improved results...] We need to really move in many directions to get our systems to be reflexive and responsive. To ensure that we do have improved results for all

students at risk of failure, we must shift our thinking from procedural concerns to an instructional focus. If I could have one big do-over from my long career of teaching, it would be to be able to go back with the instructional pedagogical strategies that I have learned in the last many years and be able to work with some of my students that I recall so vividly, who could have used and benefited from some of the research-, evidence-based instructional, pedagogical focus.

We have to move from our reliance on formulas and checklists to systemic problem solving; from territorial silos to blended expertise; from label-seeking to instructional solution-seeking; from “testing” to instructionally relevant assessment; from categories or places to whole children as a general education student first, and always regardless of their educational needs.

[Slide: Paradigm Shift] We really need to refocus how we think. So how do we define getting help? We are getting help without a label. We are moving from a paradigm shift of eligibility focus to a cultural shift that is the outcome focus. So where has this happened?

[Slide: Questions?] But we do have a question, I believe.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Actually, we have several questions, Alice. The first one is: Do you suppose part of the reason that we’ve actually seen a decrease in the number of special ed students who obtained a high school diploma is because of the focus on exiting students, when appropriate, rather than keeping them in special ed till graduation? So if students are able to meet the A-G requirements and are able to be exited, they would no longer be counted as special ed students statistically when calculating the number. So maybe we should also look at calculating the number of students who graduate with a diploma who are previous special ed students. Your comment?

ALICE PARKER

Well, my comment is that this question and this comment is really right on the mark. One of the big issues with the accountability system that comes to us from No Child Left Behind is that by being successful with our student groups—whether they’re English language learner students, whether they’re low socioeconomic student groups, or special education student groups—if we are successful and they are no longer a member of that group, we get penalized for doing good work. And so I think a much more appropriate metric that I hope we’ll see in the reauthorization when we get one, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, will be that districts and schools get credit for the successful students they have who have been identified previously as special education students. So, thanks; that was a great question, and it’s a great political agenda for all of us to focus on.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Absolutely. Another question is: What data shifts do you anticipate under the Common Core State Standards?

ALICE PARKER

The data shifts are going to be really interesting to watch. As most of you know, there are two different sets of assessments: one is Smarter Balanced, and the other is PARCC. What we have yet to see from either of these systems are, what do the assessments for the disabilities look like as well? We will, probably, because of the rigor of Common Core State Standards, see a drop initially in how students are achieving, and...but the other thing that, I believe, will be a very intentional consequence is that students will be learning habits of mind, thinking strategies and skills, that will help them be much more a lifelong learner and, therefore, much more successful in life. So we're going to see some initial drop in scores in the states that have already implemented those assessments or begun those kinds of things; we have seen that. But we also are seeing that students are much more independent thinkers and able to be more successful as young adults as they come into the world.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Great. Thank you. And a third and final question for this segment: What are some things you could share that districts are doing that have been successful so far?

ALICE PARKER

Well, a purposeful focus on instructional pedagogy and, if you will, cross-pollinating between general and special education so there are shared practices and shared responsibilities. We're going to see much more in depth—and it's a great question that leads us into our next segment, what the specific outcomes are. They are about instruction; they are about behavior; they are about whole school responsibility and pedagogical reform that focuses on high-yield instructional strategies. But as we get into the next section, you'll see much more specific information about that very question.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Great. Thank you, and I think we're ready to move on.

ALICE PARKER

Great. Good questions. **[Slide: Districts That Have Made Changes]** So districts, as I promised, that have made changes. **[Slide: National Center for Learning Disabilities]** I'm going to talk throughout the rest of the presentation about several resources and information. There is a website that we'll give to you at the end of the webinar that will have all these resources—where they can be located—and this particular one, from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, is extraordinary. It's called *Challenging Change*, and it's about five school districts who have made extraordinary growth and efforts in their reform to support students with disabilities and students at risk of school failure.

[Slide: Research on Effect of Instructional Models – 1] So the research there featured five districts, as I said, across the United States. One of the schools, Mary Lyon School in Massachusetts, has more than 41% of their population being students with disabilities; 55% of them are free and reduced lunch; 48 are non-White, but only 3 are English language learners.

This school implemented a full inclusion model. They had one class in kindergarten through 9th grade for each grade level, so it was a small school. Each class was about 10 typically developing children and 5 students with either emotional or behavioral disorders. They had no pullout; they had before- and after-school programs, a master teacher, an assistant teacher, and their after-school program had a credentialed teacher. All of their teachers were dually credentialed.

They had a total commitment to inclusion, schoolwide positive behavior, creative scheduling, extra planning time—so precious for teachers who are working with children who have challenges—professional development that was aligned to their curriculum, frequent communication with parents, and a strong, as I said, before- and after-school program aligned to the curriculum.

Another one in this article was Okaloosa County, Florida. There was Worthington Hills Elementary in Ohio, Northeast Independent School in Texas, and Snowline Joint Unified School District here in California. What Snowline did was align their curriculum. They had formative assessments in all four core areas. They used data-based decision making. They had purposeful, structured teacher collaborative time. They had inclusion of their special education staff in district instructional improvement processes.

[Slide: Research on Effect of Instructional Models – 2] The five districts really had some common issues. They focused on the National Reading Panel recommendations for literacy instruction. They all used high-quality, research-evidenced instructional practices. They all had behavior intervention, and strong, positive behavior intervention systems schoolwide; time for teachers to work and plan together; and administrative support and knowledge of students to affect the changes.

[Slide: Research on Effect of Instructional Models – 3] Something that was fairly telling to me are these two quotations from this article, *Challenging Change*, from NCLD. And they are: “When students don’t fit particular programs, then those programs must be modified to fit the needs of the students.” “It’s not a special education issue; it’s an instructional issue.” All of these five schools had extraordinary improvement in outcomes for their students with disabilities.

[Slide: Inclusive Practices] Let’s begin our conversation about inclusive practices now. Inclusive practices are not new. **[Slide: Inclusive Practices: Service Delivery Models that Work]** Since the 1980s, these practices have been implemented across the United States in various formats. Early on, Dr. Marilyn Friend—who, by the way, teaches at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill—called it this: Inclusion is collaboration, which is a style for direct interaction toward a common goal. It is a philosophy or set of beliefs based on the idea that everyone belongs, is accepted, supported, and assisted by his or her peers and other members of the school community, in the course of having their educational needs met. Both No Child Left Behind and IDEA make it imperative that students with disabilities, no matter what their level of functioning, access the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible. Inclusion is driven by the needs of the student, collaboration is driven by the needs of teachers, and they must go hand in hand.

Key elements include collaboration, with time clearly set aside to facilitate that happening; a shared responsibility for planning, for instruction, and for follow-up through team teaching; understanding and supporting one another in differentiation, modification, and Universal Design for Learning to enhance all students having access to the curriculum and instruction at their levels.

The adaptations, accommodations, and differentiation are for both individual students, such as books on tape, enlarged print, alternative modes of communication. They are also for small groups of both identified and non-identified students who may need support in different ways, or multiple opportunities to access and demonstrate learning, and, occasionally, for entire classrooms. Cooperative learning is a quality opportunity, and students working with students to assist in learning helps both sets of students access and participate in quality instruction.

[Slide: Collaborative Teaching in an Inclusive Model] The inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms necessitates collaboration between administrators, general educators, special educators, parents, and service providers in order to deliver quality services to all students. Positive outcomes have been shown for both students with high-incidence disabilities, such as learning disabilities and other mild/moderate disabilities, and those with low-incidence disabilities—intellectual disabilities, multiple and severe students. The body of research on inclusive practices includes quantitative studies, where the standard is replication, as well as qualitative studies. We’re going to review the HOW of this; that we can ensure that our inclusion works for our students.

[Slide: Characteristics of Collaborative Interactions] So let’s begin with some characteristics of collaborative interactions. Collaborative or inclusive practices do not happen by accident. They’re well planned; they include parity of responsibility—really important—parity of responsibility, and value over the contribution each participant brings to the work and the decision making. Not unlike a good marriage, working in this manner is based on equality of decision-making power, choice to participate, voice in developing mutual goals and shared responsibilities, equality in outcomes, and accountability. And it’s a way for all parties to access time, resources, and support.

[Slide: Research Findings on Inclusion – 1] The research findings on inclusion of more than 20 years tell us—placement matters. Wow! Studies investigating the effects of placement in general education classrooms reveal positive outcomes in IEP quality, the time of engagement, and in individualized supports. There are significant increases in IEP quality on measures of age appropriateness, functionality, and generalization. These positive effects resulted even when students were moved from a more segregated setting, and the same special educator who served them in the segregated setting was serving them in the inclusive setting.

Findings also included more instructional delivery in a general education classroom as compared to one-on-one instruction time. Research showed that in self-contained classes, 58% of the time was classified as non-instructional, as compared to 35% of the time in a general education classroom. McDonnell and their colleagues, in their research, compared the instructional context of students with low-incidence disabilities and their typical peers in general education settings. The severely handicapped students were 13 times more likely than

their peers without disabilities to receive instruction directed exclusively toward them during whole-class activities. This really lays to rest the prevalent notion that students with disabilities cannot receive individualized support in a general education setting.

Academic outcomes for mild/moderate students with disabilities showed a higher percentage of progress in general education classes compared to students in traditional resource settings. Learning disabled students in a two-year study made more than 8% gain in math as compared to students with disabilities in those resource programs, as well as comparable gains in English language arts. Additionally, significant increases were shown in spelling, social studies, and other academic indicators. The national longitudinal transition study of more than 11,000 students with a range of disabilities showed positive correlation in inclusive practices settings with fewer absences, fewer referrals for disruptive behaviors, and better outcomes after high school in the areas of employment and independent living.

[Slide: Research Findings on Inclusion – 2] By utilizing effective instructional and curricular adaptations such as these, no difference in instructional time and in student engagement was found on typical peers. In fact, the presence of students with disabilities resulted in greater numbers of typical students making reading and math progress as compared to non-inclusive general education classes. Findings in multiple research showed no compromise to general education students' outcome. Typical peers benefited from involvement and relationships with students who have disabilities in their inclusive settings, and the presence of those students in general education classrooms led to new learning opportunities for typical students.

[Slide: Research Findings on Inclusion – 3] Research for students with mild/moderate needs is well documented and clearly establishes efficacy. For moderate-to-severe and low incidence, the body of evidence is smaller, but it does favor inclusive settings. Strategies show great promise for both typically developing peers and severely handicapped, including peer tutoring with results of significant increase for *all* students in academic gains, increased engagement, and increased academic responses. Classwide peer tutoring models showed that both the tutors and the tutees both had large effect size on student outcomes. We think this is due to typical peers having higher levels of engagement and a deeper understanding during their support role. And this model in many places is taking the place of a more traditional paraprofessional support model. Indeed, in inclusive settings, the para role has shifted from one-to-one work with a student to one of a broader role providing guidance and support to the student serving as the peer support or all students within the classroom.

Now let's begin to look at the specifics of how we do this. **[Slide: Team Teaching]** This is the first of the six types of inclusive models that we will discuss. In a team teaching model in the inclusive classroom, the co-teachers deliver the same instruction simultaneously, playing off each other as they teach the lesson to the whole class. The co-teachers are engaged in a conversation, not just taking turns. Note that there is a need for a high level of planning and collaboration, which comes from trust, compatibility, and time together to plan and learn from one another's strengths and challenges. It does, however, provide less opportunity for individual or small group instruction for students needing more opportunities or differentiated opportunities with multiple engagement in the curriculum.

An example is a social studies and an English interdisciplinary class, where the literature read and discussed focuses on the literature of a particular period or country. In a high school I've had the pleasure of visiting several times, I went into a class that was on the block schedule, and there were teachers in English and an algebra teacher. The students had read *Of Mice and Men*, and they were working on projects that included developing a business plan for that era for a restaurant or a store, calculating taxes for employees, developing informational presentations that supported their business, and presenting those presentations to the entire class. The teachers planned together, presented in a team manner, and supported all the students in participating.

About half of the students were special day class students, and I could not tell which. This model is also an excellent way for teachers to model metacognitive strategies as they unpack their thinking for each other and talk out loud for students, so that they see how strategies can be employed to learn things more deeply. Metacognitive strategies, by the way, is another critical element we need to support our teachers in learning. It will help us all be more effective in unpacking and utilizing the new Common Core State Standards.

[Slide: Parallel Teaching] Let's look at parallel teaching. In parallel teaching, with each of the teachers in this setting, they are delivering the same content at the same time, but with different groups, and these groups represent different needs. This allows for co-teachers to reach into the content at differing levels of rigor, but with the expectation that the same content will be mastered. Grouping in this model is so very important. You might see one teacher with a group of students, both identified and non-identified, who needs more hands-on practice and are using manipulatives to perhaps build a model of a house to determine perimeter, while another group is working with the other teacher, and those students are designing a dream house that has requirements to include an isosceles triangle, a rectangle, and a measurement that meets one inch equal to one foot, or includes a specific list of elements. This model requires teachers understanding students' needs, using data to develop their plan, supporting differentiation of needs in a presentation, and carefully structuring how students are grouped and regrouped.

[Slide: One Teach, One Observe] The third model, One Teach, One Observe, or support teaching in the inclusive classroom, is excellent when used at routine times to gather information on student engagement and progress, to inform how lessons will be planned, and to support development of skills from one teacher to the other. This model is also excellent as a tool to inform team teaching and parallel teaching models, data for use in PLC work, planning work, and skill development by the adults.

For example, I'm struggling with an alternative means of responses from students, and my partner is skilled in differentiating for that option of students. By observing him present a lesson with multiple means of response, I can make notes and we'll debrief later. Conversely, I may have learned a new strategy to increase the level of rigor through DOK questioning strategies, and I want my partner to observe and provide feedback on how my lesson works. Remember, this one's tough, because it really takes trust and time to work together.

[Slide: One Teach, One Circulate] The next one is One Teach, One Circulate. I'm really spending the least amount of time on this format, because this has been shown in research to be the least effective. It is a costly model, with one teacher circulating and, in essence, acting as a paraprofessional. Note the concerns in the bullets on the slide: risk of distraction, marginalizing students, overuse. If, however, it is utilized, clear delineation of roles is necessary, along with switching of roles consistently. This is frequently a way for individuals to get their toes wet, trying out working together, planning together, and making suggestions on who will teach what part of a lesson or which day. Again, administrative support is essential to this model being successful, by ensuring both parties meet, that they are developing a relationship and trust, and ensuring that switches in roles are occurring purposefully, and that both individuals are beginning to be more and more excited about moving to a more robust model.

[Slide: Alternative Teaching] Alternative teaching in the inclusive classroom. One co-teacher delivers a lesson to a large group while the other teaches a smaller group. It's the same lesson, but potentially on a different level, or maybe even an alternative lesson that's related. Alternative teaching is appropriate when you know mastery of objectives will look different for different students or groups of students in the classroom, or when there is a great degree of difference in learner readiness. Alternative teaching requires use and planning of materials in different levels. It's important to use this method not only for remediation purposes, but also for our gifted students for enrichment. Alternative teaching varies the purpose and composition of small groups.

It is important to understand, agree upon, and articulate what the differences will be for different students, what rubrics will be used to determine sufficiency of learning, and what's our grading policy, *before* you start. Note that this model can really support enrichment and remediation, as I said, and if used in conjunction with agreed-upon strategies and differentiation principles, this model can lead to an exciting classroom environment for children of multiple levels.

[Slide: Station Teaching] The next model is station teaching in the inclusive classroom. This can be an extremely effective system, particularly when using project-based learning and in many cross-disciplinary studies. I worked with a school in Indianapolis where this model was employed by the special education teacher, general education teacher, the title teacher, and a paraprofessional, and they all had stations, and all students rotated to each of the stations within a 90-minute English language arts block. Each teacher differentiated for each group and for many of the students in those groups.

You can imagine, planning time was precious and a premium. The principal made sure it was available, and that at each planning period during the week, all the data staff needed was ready. Roles and responsibilities were discussed and sometimes reversed. For example, the special ed teacher might teach the direct instruction reading lesson from the core text; the general education teacher may teach the small group practice opportunities utilizing strategies planned by the special education teacher. It was really a marvelous, well-oiled machine, and students were really thriving within that classroom.

So those are the six models that are recommended for inclusive classroom practices. **[Slide: Considerations for Implementation]** Here are some of the considerations. Visible leadership at the top levels is vital to the success of this initiative. An atmosphere of trust is essential if teams are to work effectively. It is the responsibility of administrators to accurately identify a climate open for collaboration before the process begins. You need effective, positive communication to establish and maintain relationships. Time is a critical commodity. The seven elements featured here are fundamental to ensuring an effective and productive inclusion program: a collaborative culture, shared leadership, a coherent vision of what we want our outcomes to be and how we are going to work together, comprehensive planning, adequate resources, sustained implementation, and continuous evaluation and improvement.

[Slide: Getting Started] Okay, here are the steps to get started, and they are critical to a successful implementation. As I said before, leadership is key, and providing time, support, and encouragement along the way are necessary. Buy-in to this philosophy really is critical. So we need to get started by identifying and building school teams, planning early for the next school year, recruiting and supporting capable participants. Maybe not all of your teachers are at the stage yet where they can buy in to this process. Providing ongoing professional development and resources; creating balanced, well-planned classroom rosters—just because two people are beginning a new process, and you think they are great, strong teachers, you don't give them all the most difficult children to deal with—balanced, well-planned rosters. Provide scheduled collaborative planning time in these participants' schedules; providing a climate for sustained implementation; and building a plan that includes opportunities for continuous evaluation, reflection, and improvement.

[Slide: Research on Inclusive Education] The next several slides are resources for you. There's research; there is a short bibliography, and some other issues that you might want to take a look at in your journey to develop inclusive practices. They'll be on the website that we will share with you at the end of the webinar. **[Slide: Short Bibliography]**

[Slide: Universal Design for Learning] Next, we are going to begin a very brief section on Universal Design for Learning, a critical opportunity for schools and districts to support the learning of *all* students. **[Slide: Universal Design (UD) Principles]** Universal Design for Learning is about opportunities for *any* of us and *all* of us to access, benefit from, and learn from our environment. The classroom and the curriculum, the instructional pedagogy, the response expectations are always that our curriculum can be a disabled curriculum. This affects our students' capacities to understand, retain, and respond to us. One consideration we should never forget is that there is no vast middle group of students. Every one of us takes in information differently, processes differently, and responds differently. Using Universal Design for Learning in how and what we plan in our classroom will benefit all of our students.

[Slide: UD Examples] What is Universal Design? Let's take a look at some of the examples—ramps, curb cuts, electric doors, captions, easy-grip tools. But there's also many, many things that will support Universal Design in classrooms.

[Slide: Who Benefits?] So who benefits from UDL? All of us—in our homes, in our workplaces, and in our schools. **[Slide: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)]** Why should we employ it, though? Because it provides more ways—more ways for access, more ways to participate, more ways to demonstrate learning, and that results in a much more equitable access to the general education curriculum for *all* of us.

[Slide: Why UDL?] Why do we do it now, though? We can no longer teach to the middle; we really don't have a middle. Even our average learners have different ways they need to address and access their instruction. The gaps in achievement can be addressed in planning prior to meeting, or having to revamp or even revise curriculum. Planning ahead of time for differentiation and inclusive practices and support for multiple learners enriches all students in the class and school. And fiscally, if we plan for the needs of all learners *before* we instruct, we have better results, and they are much more cost-effective.

[Slide: Goals of UDL] So let's look at goals of Universal Design for Learning. As we said, they improve access, but the research also shows a higher level of participation and achievement. It shows that barriers are eliminated, including both physical and academic, and it shows students who learn differently that their diversity is honored through proactive design.

[Slide: Access and Equity is Built In] When we build in Universal Design for Learning practices, principles, and check posts—check posts is what the Center for Applied Special Technology, or CAST (and that resource will be available for you on the website) call the Elements of Universal Design. If we use those from the beginning, we can more effectively address all of our learners. It is why the research on inclusive practices notes that typically developing learners are also gaining from these settings, because the teachers working together, utilizing UDL practices, can provide options for entrance into and deep learning of the curriculum in multiple ways that benefit all of us.

[Slide: Principles of UDL] So the principles of UDL include multiple means of representation, of action and expression, and of engagement. I mentioned the National Center for Universal Design for Learning is housed at that place I said before, the Center for Applied Special Technology, or CAST. Their resources are amazing. What follows are just a sampling of what teachers who wish to co-teach and work in an inclusive environment might be able to utilize.

[Slide: Universal Design for Learning Guidelines graphic] The guidelines provide for multiple means of representation, the WHAT of learning; multiple means of expression, or the HOW of learning; and multiple means of engagement, or the WHY am I learning this? Universal Design for Learning will help us all roll out and benefit from learners who are more deeply engaged in their learning and have multiple pathways to access and express and understand the import of what they're learning.

[Slide: Universal Design for Learning Guidelines chart] This is a very useful tool that articulates all of the checkpoints of the UDL guidelines, and it's found online at cast.org. Again, that resource will be available for you.

[Slide: Universal Design for Learning Examples] Here are some of the principles and examples. The representation input on the far left talks about the WHAT of learning, with

options to see, hear, and perceive information. So you're looking at differences around providing information through video, through lectures, demonstrations, diagrams, textbooks, websites. It also provides options to decode language: math symbols, text to speech, manipulatives, pictures are some of the things that show how to utilize that process. When we're looking at options to make sense and understand knowledge, we're thinking about graphic organizers, clues, prompts, guided questions, models.

For action and expression, or the HOW of learning, we might be looking at options to do more or interact more, things like using games, acting, role playing, demonstrations, lab work, speeches, typing, recording. Options for differentiation, expression of your knowledge, include things like journaling, oral expression, a timeline, a worksheet, an exam. Options to plan, strategize, and initiate action might include things like a project, a portfolio, creating a video.

Engagement, or the WHY of learning, talks about discussions, guest speakers, journaling, etc. Universal Design for Learning has great opportunity for all of our children and, I might add, for we as adults in classrooms, because it leads to our strengths as well.

[Slide: UDL Resources and Research] As we come to a close, here are the resources that will be on the website for you to download, and **[Slide: Questions?]** we are now ready for our final set of questions.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Thank you, Alice. I have two questions for you. The first one is: When we think about these inclusive strategies at our school sites and our districts, who is, or who should be, part of the planning team or the decision-making team?

ALICE PARKER

It's really important for the leadership team at a school. At an elementary school, it would include representatives from each of the grade levels, the principal, perhaps coaches. At a high school level, again, if you're doing it departmentally, it would be members of that department, assistant principals, the principal, any coaches or support people. It's important to begin to look at readiness structures and how we provide information to the rest of our colleagues within a school setting to begin to have people grasp and look at the idea as an opportunity for them as well as for their students.

It also is important on a districtwide level to include not only the district leadership teams, but representatives from the teaching staff, from coaches, from support staff across the board, so that it becomes a way that we do our work together. Again, it's that building relationship and trust, and you must do that at the outset and talk about what are some of the barriers and issues one might face before just sending teachers off to begin to do this work together.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Thank you. The second and the final question has to do with your thoughts about using coaches. If districts have coaches that are specifically trained in special ed and inclusive strategies to help support the general ed teachers, as well as other specialized teachers who

might be engaged in these types of practices. So just a comment about your thoughts about that.

ALICE PARKER

I think some of the most exciting opportunities I've seen in schools that are embracing the concept of inclusive practices are where they are using their coaches to do what I call "just-in-time professional development"—perhaps two teachers are co-teaching together, and they're trying a new strategy, and the coach may have some expertise in that strategy. So one of the things you might do is ask that coach to come and do the co-teaching with one of the pair to demonstrate it for the other. It's a way to really strengthen and provide the resources, and not only the professional support, but the emotional support to be successful in inclusive practices.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Thank you, Alice, and thank you so much for your presentation. The last slide has the address where the materials are available, and before we get to...there it is. **[Slide: The Slides and Materials...]** Thank you. It's at <https://wested.box.com/core>. That's where you can find all of the materials for the webinar that Alice has mentioned. And, Alice, now if you would back up a couple of slides to give us your final thoughts.

ALICE PARKER

I will do that.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Thank you.

ALICE PARKER

[Slide: We can develop systems...] Well, one of the most important things to think about is that we can, by looking at different ways of supporting all students, develop systems, policies, procedures, and practices that lead to improved outcomes for *all* of our students. This has happened in many places across the country already. It is a matter of will. It's not just skill; it's not just money; it's not bureaucracy; it's a matter of will, and finding the resources that are already at hand to support people working together to benefit all students. So my question to you is: How will *you* start?

Thank you so much, and I look forward to seeing the great practices that you're putting in place in your districts and schools.

MEG LIVINGSTON ASENSIO

Thank you, Alice.