

Accommodations and Modifications

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The 1985 Education Amendment Act, Bill 82, removed many barriers to the education system for students with special education needs. As the result of the appeals by parents for greater integration, the Ontario Government established the following placement decision criteria: before considering the option of placement in a special education class, placement in a regular class must be considered first with parental approval and with appropriate special education programs and services.

This resulted in a need to make changes to curriculum content and delivery methods to create an inclusive environment; and the INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN was born.

An Individual Education Plan must be developed and maintained for each student who is identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee. The IEP must outline, as appropriate, any modified or alternative curriculum expectations and any accommodations that are required to meet the student's needs. Many school boards also support writing IEPs for students with special learning needs who are not or may not be formally identified as exceptional but who require special education supports. These are usually known as informal IEPs and are in place only for the specific school year; however, for that time period they have the same force of law as a “formal” IEP. An IEP, either formal or informal, must be written for a student requiring accommodations for EQOA testing (however, not solely for EQAO testing) and for some funding applications.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf>.

The IEP development team:

The team to create an IEP is established by the principal, in some cases a Special Education Teacher may take the lead, but for students largely integrated in the classroom, the classroom teacher needs to have significant input into the plan because the classroom teacher is charged with carrying out the plan. ***Please note:*** the IEP is a school document and is not subject to appeal.

There is only one Ontario Curriculum but there is more than one way to deliver the curriculum.

- ✓ A student can demonstrate knowledge and skills in many ways – the test or the task given to the whole class may only be one way to demonstrate knowledge and skills.
- ✓ The student may also demonstrate knowledge and skills in a limited way with support or completely independently.
- ✓ Both ways are meeting the learning expectations of the curriculum.

Universal design for learning and differentiated instruction as outlined in *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6, 2005*

(<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/reports/speced/panel/speced.pdf>) provides the following guiding principles about learners:

- ✓ All students can succeed
- ✓ Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective in meeting students’ learning needs
- ✓ Successful instructional strategies are founded on evidence-based research
- ✓ Classroom teachers are key educators
- ✓ Each child has unique patterns of learning
- ✓ Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community and
- ✓ Fairness is not sameness.

The preceding resource document is also supported by *Learning for All, K-12, 2009*.

Comparison Between Accommodations & Modifications

We Accommodate the teaching/learning process to meet student needs and allow demonstration of grade level expectations which are age/grade appropriate; changes are made to the way the student is taught and assessed. Accommodations set up “equity” so all students can play on a level playing field.

We Modify the curriculum to meet student needs that are substantially different from the prescribed grade level curriculum.

| Accommodations (changes to HOW we teach and assess) | Modifications (changes to WHAT we teach and assess) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to the teaching strategies, assessment & evaluation strategies, supports and/or services that are required for a student to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to changes made to the content of the learning expectations that are different from the age and/or grade placement of the student |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not alter the provincial learning expectations for the grade or level of the curriculum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alter the grade level learning expectations from the provincial curriculum |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be classified into the following categories: environmental, physical, academic, organizational, motivational, assessment & evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More restricted lists of modifications are available when compared with the numerous possibilities that exist for accommodations. However, a program that is modified will likely also require accommodations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded on the IEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recorded on the IEP; accommodations can also be made to support modifications |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made for a student at any grade level Frequently an accommodation made for one student will benefit the whole class, e.g. highlighting important words in the question being asked in a testing situation; a necessary accommodation for students with organizational or comprehension challenges but a useful focusing strategy for all students. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made for a student in any elementary grade; however, only has minimal application for credit granting courses at the secondary level If learning expectations are significantly altered in a credit course, the integrity of the course is compromised, i.e. a different course is being delivered, e.g. academic course may now become applied in a subject area |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> removes or lessens the barriers a student faces to provide opportunities for success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes to outcomes or what an individual is expected to learn changes to the number and/or complexity of the grade-level learning expectations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed for EQAO testing in limited ways: adjustments to the environment, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> not allowed for EQAO testing |

| | |
|--|--|
| time allowed, format of the test, format of responses | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change to a classroom environment or delivery method that permits an individual to participate in the classroom process and the task | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant changes related to the specific content, level of skills, or number of skills required by the program |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supports Ministry expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • derived from Ministry expectations |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As of September 1, 2005, the IEP box on the provincial report card is NOT checked off for a student whose program in the specific subject is only accommodated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the IEP box on the report card and state that: "(Student Name) is working on an individual program that varies from grade level expectations" in the comment section for modified programs. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation not recorded on the IEP | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation not recorded on the IEP unless the IEP is used as the report card for students whose program is derived from Alternate curriculum. |

Alternative Expectations

Alternative expectations refer to expectations that are related to development of skills deemed essential to learning in areas not represented in the current Ontario curriculum policy documents. Examples of such skill areas include orientation and mobility training, life skills, social skills, and anger management, etc. Alternative expectations should represent a specific program that has been designed for delivery to the student. A representative sample of the alternative expectations for each skill area outlined for the student must be recorded in the student's IEP.

- **expectations from Ministry documents do not form the basis for the program area, e.g. not based on the Ontario curriculum**
- student's learning needs are outside the provincial curriculum
- there is no appropriate place to report progress on the Provincial Report Card; usually the IEP is the report card.
- Evaluation is recorded on the IEP.

Is it an Accommodation or a Modification?

Deciding whether an adaptation you have put into place is an accommodation or a modification is in some cases clear. For example, changing grade level expectations is obviously a modification while allowing extra time to do the same task as everyone else is an accommodation.

There are times however, when accommodations can become modifications.

For example: You are teaching a unit in a grade 9 academic course and there are 10 learning expectations that the student is expected to learn. If you reduce this to 8 expectations for a student then

you are still covering most of the expectations and can consider that an accommodation. If on the other hand, you reduce this to 2 expectations, then this is a modification which means the integrity of the *academic* level course may be compromised and the student's course may most appropriately be changed to *applied* level in a secondary credit course. You need to think about whether this reduction affects the integrity of what you are teaching. Has reducing the expectations resulted in the student not being expected to demonstrate learning for most of the content? If so, then this is a modification not an accommodation and requires a course level change for a credit course. Any elementary course using the Ontario curriculum can be modified; this is rarely the case for secondary credit-granting courses as previously outlined.

NINE TYPES OF ACCOMMODATIONS

1. **SIZE** - Adapt the number of items that the student is expected to learn or complete.
2. **TIME** - Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.
3. **LEVEL OF SUPPORT** - Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific student.
4. **INPUT** - Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the student (differentiated instruction).
5. **DIFFICULTY** - Adapt the skills level, problem type, or the rules about how the student may approach the work.
6. **OUTPUT** - Adapt how the student can respond to instruction.
7. **PARTICIPATION LEVEL** - Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.
8. **ALTERNATE EXPECTATIONS** - Adapt the goals/expectations while using the same materials.
9. **PARALLEL/ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM** - Provide different instruction/materials and alternate activities to meet a student's individual outcomes.

Inclusion Websites

- <http://www.cast.org/index.htm> using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a blueprint, CAST researches and develops ways to support all learners according to their individual strengths and needs.
- <http://shop.ascd.org/productdisplay.cfm?productid=199040&adv=111> offers some sample materials, chapter previews and ideas from Carol Tomlinson's book *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*.

Some inclusive education websites with a wealth of information about accommodations and modification strategies supporting the learning needs of all students in the regular classroom can be found at the following sites:

- http://www.edu.uwo.ca/Inclusive_Education/index.asp
- <http://www.inclusiveeducation.ca/english/index.asp>
- <http://www.inclusion.com/>

Additional sites of interest:

- <http://teaching.berkely.edu/bgd/disabilities.html>
- http://education.umn.edu/nceo/TopicAreas/Accommodations/Accom_topic.htm
- <http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/bibliog/bib15txt.htm>
- <http://www.newhorizons.org/spneeds/inclusion/law/haves.htm>
- http://www.newhorizons.org/ld_indepth/teachers/teaching-2.html
- http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/teaching_techniques/mod_checklists.html
- http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/teachers/exam_test_modifications.html

For more information go to the Google Search Engine and key in “accommodating students with disabilities” for a wealth of websites.

Your school board’s IEP engine has lists of accommodations by exceptionality using a dropdown menu.

For samples of IEPs by exceptionality for elementary and secondary students, go to <http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/IEP-PEI/index.html> .

How Do I Accommodate? Let Me Count the Ways

Use the self-assessment quiz below to reflect on the degree of accommodation you presently use in your program to assist exceptional students. Rate yourself 1 (low) to 5 (high) for the degree of use. Be honest with yourself!

I TRY TO

1. Encourage students to verbalize whenever possible
 - before writing, students discuss topics collaboratively.
 - when studying, students read material, notes, and directions aloud.
 - with visual information, students summarize orally.
2. Clarify definitions, terms, and vocabulary in assignments.
3. Tell students the purpose of the assignment and the method/criteria for the evaluation.
4. Ensure that students understand the assignment and lesson material by asking them to retell or paraphrase instructions.
5. Give short, clear instructions and use non-verbal instruction by pointing, holding, touching, tapping, etc.
6. Provide time for students to begin assignments in class in order to assist with preliminary organization and understanding of the assignments as well as time to clarify and review instructions before they leave class.
7. Provide opportunities for peer interaction such as using a peer coach as proofreader, editor, vocalizer, and listener.
8. Prepare a guide or outline to assist students when taking notes; such a guide indicates the specific information which is required from a reading assignment.
9. Record reading materials on tape for disabled readers - (students in peer tutoring or leadership programs may be able to assist.)
10. Avoid assignments and notes which require extensive copying from the board; instead, I hand out the notes which students require for class and use the time to discuss the key ideas of the lesson.
11. Use drama as a tool to assist students in following directions.
12. Provide opportunities for co-operative learning.
13. Encourage students to pair up and work together.
14. Ensure resources at the appropriate reading level are readily available.
15. Write important phrases on the board as I say them. (Seeing and hearing at the same time act as reinforcement.)
16. Use individual conferences to guide students and to monitor their understanding of assignments.

17. Give students sufficient time to process instructions before requiring a response.

18. Give all instructions and information both visually and orally.

Check your score!

Self-Assessment Quiz

To score: add up the circled numbers from your responses.

If your total score was:

70 – 100

good

Give yourself a pat on the back!
Your special needs students are in
hands

40-69

Coming along! You're well on the
way to a fully accommodated program.

20-- 39

Consult the special education teacher
in your school. He/she will help
you become a 100.

0-19

Gong! Gong!

No matter what your score, this quiz was intended to create an awareness of the many options available to differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of exceptional students in our classrooms. Remember, exceptional students often possess the ability to understand course material, although their particular disability may not allow them to translate their thought processes into action.

Sample Accommodations' Checklist

| ENVIRONMENTAL | ORGANIZATIONAL | MOTIVATIONAL | PRESENTATION | CURRICULUM and Assessment & Evaluation |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •charts • paired seating • small groups • computers • access to outdoors •opportunity to move in class • pictures of real life examples • space in room to do hands-on work • flexible groupings • task-specific centres • seating close to/far from distractions • homework or expectations for home involvement •use of study carrel • arrange room for safe visibility, accessibility and movement, e.g. double horseshoe arrangement for individual student desks •for students using mobility aids, e.g. wheelchair etc, access to multiple levels, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patterning (to show sequencing, procedures, rules) • colour coding • labeling • picture clues • numbering of sequential steps • storage containers • consistent learning routines similar from one subject to the next • graphic organizers for writing • diaries/day minders • calendars with posted due dates; posting the lesson agenda • use of charts and other methods of organizing what students have learned •training in time management •training in study/test taking skills • training in note taking skills • training in self | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • real-life situations • establishing links between the task and student experience • use of concrete materials •class excursions • using Estimation to reduce right/wrongness • positive reinforcement • privileges/rewards • using “different” learning materials •working in pairs • practice sessions for tests • reduce “stakes” of poor performance • use of technology • use of charts and other methods of organizing what students have learned • use of humour •organize study-buddy program •call on student often and acknowledge effort put forth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lots of review and repetition • teach small groups • regular checking of understanding (content and instructions) • simultaneous oral and visual presentation • use of technology • colour coding • pacing of instruction; waiting for students to think • kinesthetic learning • chunking presentation of new skills/concepts • alternatives to question/answer format •ongoing modeling • examples • mnemonic devices •chants, rhymes, music • using large font size, buff-coloured paper, divide page into clearly marked sections, dark ink, remove distractions from worksheet e.g. graphics, use ample | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visual cues • “cheat sheets” • desk-top dictionaries • reminders of rules • use of real-life examples • brainstorming • amount of work expected • time allotted • cooperative groupings • use of technology •word-wall instead of dictionary • teach use of spell-check •pre-teach vocabulary •oral assignments •tape recorded reading materials •shortened reading assignments •use concrete examples or visual aids to teach abstract concepts •photocopied class notes, NCR paper Assessment/Eval'n • techniques variety of |

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| <p>accessible washrooms, school yard, non-slip flooring, walkways & entrances kept free of ice/snow, hallways free of obstacles, appropriate desk height, dropdown counters, push handles on water fountains etc.</p> | <p>advocacy/communication skills training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •conflict resolution strategies •clear notification of transition changes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •use signals for helping student stay on task; private cueing •daily reinforcement •counseling •cooperatively develop classroom behaviours and routines •use consistent classroom routines •consequence inappropriate behaviours consistently •use inclusive language and encourage group achievement | <p>white space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Kurzweil 3000 is text to speech software •Dragon Naturally Speaking is speech to text software | <p>evaluation types – multiple choice, short answer, fills in the blanks, matching, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use short, frequent quizzes • permit breaks during a test •permit untimed testing •practice taking similar test questions •arrange for oral testing •permit use of word processor, scribe etc. •allow use of calculator •enlarge print on test and allow white space •use open book tests for variety •write test in Resource Room •provide graph paper to align responses, e.g. for math tests •provide test/exam in alternate formats, e.g. tape, Braille etc. |
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Terminology Guide Concerning People with Disabilities

It is important to remember that each word in today's terminology has a precise meaning, i.e. the words are not interchangeable, and therefore, when referring to people with disabilities, the following information is important.

“Disabled” and “handicapped” are not the same thing. A disability is a functional limitation or restriction of an individual's ability to perform an activity. A “handicap” is an environmental or attitudinal barrier that limits the opportunity for a person to participate fully. Negative attitudes or inaccessible entrances to buildings are examples of handicaps, e.g., “a person who is handicapped by....”

The word “disabled” is an adjective, not a noun. People are not conditions. The appropriate terminology always refers to the person first, the disability second, e.g. a student with a learning disability, a person who is deaf, etc.

Similarly, references which cause discomfort, guilt, pity or insult, should be avoided. Words like “suffers from”, “stricken with”, “afflicted by”, “patient”, “disease” or “sick” suggest constant pain and a sense of hopelessness. While this may be the case for some individuals, a disability is a condition that does not necessarily cause pain or require medical attention.

Try to avoid categorizing people with disabilities as either super-achievers or tragic figures. Choose words that are non-judgmental, non-emotional and are accurate descriptions. Avoid using “brave”, “courageous”, “inspirational” or other similar words that are routinely used to describe a person with a disability.

The language and images used to portray people with disabilities is vitally important in changing perceptions. "People first" is a language that emphasizes the person rather than the disability.

People with disabilities are comfortable with the terminology used to describe daily living activities. People who use wheelchairs go for “walks”, people with visual impairments “see” what you mean, etc.

A disability may just mean that some things are done in a different manner; however, that does not mean the words used to describe the activity must be different.

Remember that although some disabilities are not visible, it does not mean they are less real. Individuals with invisible disabilities such as epilepsy, diabetes, hemophilia, mental disorder, learning or developmental disabilities also encounter negative attitudes and barriers to full participation.

Words and images should reflect an inclusive society.

| DO NOT USE or SAY: words with strong negative connotations | DO USE OR SAY: more affirmative and reflect positive attitudes |
|--|---|
| Handicapped Disabled | |
| Handicapped parking spot | Accessible or barrier-free parking spot |
| Handicapped washroom | Accessible washroom |
| The Blind | Person who is blind |
| Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound | Person who uses a wheelchair |
| Diabetic | Person who has diabetes |
| Epileptic Person | with epilepsy |
| Physically challenged, Differently abled | Person with a physical disability |
| Victim of cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc | Person who has cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, etc. or a person with a mobility impairment |
| Use images that isolate or call special attention to people with disabilities unless appropriate to the subject matter | Use images that show people with disabilities participating in society |
| Use actors/models without disabilities to represent people with disabilities | Use actor/models with disabilities to portray people with disabilities |
| Always depict the super-achieving individual to represent all people with disabilities | Depict whenever possible, the typical individual who has a disability |
| Normal | Person who is not disabled |
| The Deaf | Person who is deaf or is hard-of-hearing |
| Mentally challenged or retarded | Person with an intellectual disability or a developmental disability |

Source: *A Way with Words*, Human Resources Development Canada. Retrieved online May 2004 from http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/sdd-dds/odi/documents/waywithwords_tmp/purpose.shtml

Special Education Delivery Models and Inclusive Education

Among the myriad decisions that surround the education of students identified as exceptional by an IPRC, none raise as much passion and trepidation in the minds of teachers, administrators and parents as the placement and service delivery models of special education. While it is increasingly accepted that, given appropriate resources, most exceptional students are best able to succeed when included in the regular education classroom, variance in practices and understandings of inclusion persist among school boards, administrators, parents and individual teachers.

Inclusive education is an ongoing topic of discussion not only in Canada and in other countries. *Inclusion* is a relatively new term. It has replaced mainstreaming and integration which were used in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and both of which referred to moving exceptional students from segregated settings into classrooms in the mainstream. **Inclusion**, however, suggests that people with exceptionalities ought to be part of the mainstream of society and all its institutions from birth onward. Inclusion suggests that they be ensured full social, educational and economic participation in society and on their own terms as much as possible.¹

Perhaps some of the widely differing perspectives on inclusion can be explained in part by the work of Anne Jordan and Paula Stanovich of University of Toronto. They found that teachers effective in inclusive classrooms tend to have Principals who believe that all children can and should learn in regular classrooms and that teachers should adapt teaching rather than expect exceptional students to adapt.²

The most efficient and effective Delivery of Special Education depends upon the type of Administrative Model at the district level and the Instructional Model at the school level.

Administrative Models

Administrative models are related to a philosophical approach, and instructional models are related to a delivery system in the education of exceptional students. Two administrative and five instructional models are discussed.

One administrative model, described as the “*full inclusion*” model, is where the exceptional student is taught by the regular classroom teacher. In this model, the role of the special educator is described as helping the regular education teacher support the learning of the exceptional child in the regular classroom. The social and academic goals have been modified or accommodated for every child so that each child is in a program tailor-made to his or her own needs.

The second model, described as the “*range of placements*” model, is where a student moves in a continuum of services from one administrative plan to another with the maximum integration possible. In this model, a range of placements is considered necessary to meet the needs of a wide range of learning needs in varying degrees of

¹ Hutchinson, N. L. (2007). *Inclusion of Exceptional Learners in Canadian Schools*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada, Inc.

² *ibid*, p.18

severity. Information provided by every provincial and territorial education department in Canada indicates that provisions are made for integration through a continuum of service delivery arrangements e.g. a range of placements.

Instructional Models

Instructional models provide for the entire educational program in the regular classroom or for program options in a variety of settings as well as curriculum and instructional adaptations.

- *Individualized Instruction Model*
The individualized instruction model makes provision for all students to be enrolled full time in a regular classroom and to be taught by the regular classroom teacher or teachers. Social and learning goals are adapted as needed for every individual student.
- *Resource Room Model*
The resource room model has been identified as the predominant model in the delivery of special education services in Canada (Canadian Education Association, 1985). This model is one in which exceptional students who have been enrolled in a regular classroom attends a special education room for specifically scheduled periods each week for special instruction based upon individual needs.
- *Enrichment Model*
Enrichment, ability grouping, and acceleration are three approaches to meet the needs of students with superior talents, abilities, and achievement in an inclusive setting.
- *Curriculum Modification*
Curriculum modification has been used as one appropriate approach to meet the needs of low academic achievers within the regular education class setting. Standard reading materials of regular courses of study are modified for exceptional students so that students can proceed successfully with the rest of the class. The role identified for the special education teacher is that of consultant to the regular class teacher in establishing objectives and in modifying learning materials/activities.
- *Instructional Adaptations/Accommodations*
Varied instructional strategies based upon learning styles, learning rates, and previous experiences and knowledge of students have been found to be most effective in teaching exceptional students in an inclusive setting. Teaching strategies incorporated into this model include individual assessment data, modified materials, evaluation techniques, groupings, and peer tutoring, to name a few. The role of the special educator in this model can best be described as that of methods and materials consultant. Adapting instructional strategies involves considering the perspectives of many people, including classmates, about the adaptation(s) and the consequences of the adaptation. Hutchinson (2007) outlines five steps in the process as follows:

The ADAPT strategy involves
Step 1: Accounts of student's strengths and needs
Step 2: Demands of the classroom
Step 3: Adaptations
Step 4: Perspectives and consequences
Step 5: Teach and assess the match.³

All the above can be delivered through a full inclusion model.

Full Inclusion

Consultant model.

This model works best in schools with a low incidence of special-needs children and a small overall enrollment. This model operates by having the special education teacher provide consultation for the students who are in the inclusive classrooms. The students receive support in the areas of need, however not in all areas of academics. Exceptional students' programs are developed in conjunction with the special education teacher and the classroom teacher. These programs highlight the student's strengths and support their learning needs within the regular classroom setting. The special education teacher is available to teach special education students challenging skills. These students tend to be high functioning and most often students with a learning disability.

Teaming model.

The teaming model promotes cooperative planning and teaching. A special education teacher is assigned to a grade level team, and general and special education teachers work together to present the same material to all students in the classroom. The special education teacher provides student information, possible instructional strategies, and modification ideas for assignments, assessment and evaluation, and behavior strategies. Advantages include immediate re-teaching and a lower student-teacher ratio.

Collaborative Co-teaching.

Shared responsibility between the regular education and special education teachers is an advantage of this model. Teachers may organize a class into groups and teach students simultaneously. One teacher may lead an enrichment or alternative activity while a second teacher works with a small group on difficult content areas. The co-teachers may provide support in varying ways through withdrawal programs were students are removed for specified periods of time. Students receive age-appropriate academics, support services, and necessary accommodated instruction and assessment and evaluation.

Content Mastery/Learning Lab Model

In this model, students receive support solely from the classroom teacher. Additional support if needed is given from the special education teacher, but only on a specified task and only for a specified time. No scheduled individual support for the students is provided by the special education teacher in a content mastery /Learning lab model.

³ *ibid*, p.198

The IEP Standards Policy, 2000 document states that a range of placement options is required to meet the specified IPRC placement decision.

“The placement indicated must be consistent with the placement specified in the IPRC’s statement of decision. (Options may include placement in a regular class with or without withdrawal support provided by a qualified special education teacher; placement in a special education class with partial integration in regular classes; and placement in a special education class for the entire school day.)” (page 3)

Special education delivery models are directed towards helping to meet the educational needs of all students with disabilities. Generally, this is done by providing services in the least restrictive environment. The range of placements is based on several criteria. The profile and level of a student’s strengths and needs plays a key role in the development of program accommodations and/or modifications to support the appropriate placement.

A variety of options are available to meet the needs of each exceptional student. They are:

- ***A regular class with indirect support*** – Student is placed in the regular class for the entire day and the teacher receives specialized consultative services from the special education resource teacher.
- ***A regular class with resource assistance*** – The student is placed in the regular class and receives specialized instruction, within the regular class from a qualified special education teacher.
- ***A regular class with withdrawal assistance*** – The student is placed in the regular class and receives instruction outside of the classroom for less than 50% of the school day, from a qualified special education teacher.
- ***A special education class with partial integration*** – The student is placed in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, Section 31, for 50% of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily.
- ***A special education class full time*** - The student is placed in a special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, Section 31, for at least 51% to 100% of the day.

Each of the placement options offers advantages and disadvantages. In a study comparing outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive and pullout programs, it was noted that students in inclusive classrooms earned higher grades, and achieved higher or comparable scores on standardized tests. The authors go on to state that “students with disabilities included in general education classrooms achieved better outcomes on some measures than did their peers in pullout programs, and comparable outcomes on others.”⁴ In the Rea, McLaughlin and Walther-Thomas study, the inclusive school had organizational structures in place to appropriately support the program

⁴ Rea, P., McLaughlin, V., and Walther-Thomas, C. Outcomes for Students with Learning Disabilities in Inclusive and Pullout Programs, *Exceptional Children*, Vol. 68, #2, pages 203-223.

delivery model: common planning time, regularly scheduled team meetings and manageable specialist caseloads.

Advantages of special education classes (i.e. self contained classes):

- Small class size.
- Students get curriculum tailored to their needs.
- Students spend most of their time with a qualified special education teacher.
- Students who cannot succeed in an inclusive class may do well in this setting.

Disadvantages of special education classes (i.e. self contained classes):

- Students may feel stigmatized by being in a "special class".
- Students may not get the social benefits of being included with their peers.
- Students can feel isolated from the rest of the school.

Advantages of Partial Withdrawal Programs:

- Students gain the social benefits of being included with their peers in an inclusive classroom.
- Students receive one-on-one or small group instruction geared to their individual learning needs.
- All students and teachers learn about diversity and accommodating individual needs.

Disadvantages of Partial Withdrawal Programs:

- Students sometimes miss interesting or important lessons.
- Students may feel stigmatized by being pulled out.
- Scheduling is sometimes difficult.
- Sometimes students cannot keep up with the work of the inclusive classroom.

Advantages of Inclusion Model:

- Students gain the benefits of being fully included with their peers in a regular class.
- Students receive one-on-one or small group instruction geared to their individual learning needs.
- All students and teachers learn about diversity and appreciating individual needs.
- All students benefit from the special education teacher's involvement in the classroom.

Disadvantages of Inclusion Model:

- Some teachers find it difficult to have another teacher in their classrooms.
- Scheduling time to meet with children in many classes can be difficult.
- Some children need more support than short visits from the special education teacher can provide.

The most important factors associated with successful inclusion practices intersect at the classroom teacher level. The literature suggests that four key variables form the foundation for successful inclusion as follows:

1. teacher beliefs held about students with disabilities and their inclusion in general education classrooms

2. teachers' sense of teaching efficacy
3. the classroom teacher's repertoire of instructional and assessment and evaluation strategies
4. the beliefs held by the Principal and the other teachers in the school which mirror effective inclusionary practices.

The only constant is change and nowhere is this more evident than in special education. The philosophical, social, economic, and instructional issues surrounding inclusion will continue to be debated and will continue to evolve. By working together, classroom teachers, special educators, administrators, parents, students with disabilities and regular education students can make inclusion successful.

Think About It

Choose several of the following questions to help you explore your beliefs about inclusion.

1. Is it a good thing that we do not have a consensus concerning inclusion and exclusion thereby giving parents, students and educators more opportunities to meet the specific strengths and needs of exceptional students?
2. Does inclusion or exclusion in a high school setting best prepare students for employment or other post-secondary opportunities? Explain.
3. How do classroom teachers effectively ensure that the needs of every student in their class are met?
4. How do educators make the decision that an inclusive classroom is the best of choice for a student with severe multiple disabilities?
5. How does your board deal with gifted students with learning disabilities?
6. To what extent has your board provided you with professional development about various exceptionalities to support inclusion?
7. Do you think that parents of students with exceptionalities can contribute to the school team's philosophy and approach to inclusion? Explain
8. What are some ways that your board, administrators, and teachers promote, encourage and support inclusion?
9. What advice would you give to a special education resource teacher at your school who is integrating a student with disabilities in the classroom of a "traditional" teacher?
10. How do teachers create a sense of community in classes comprised of students who differ in their abilities and behaviour?
11. Who benefits from inclusion in education? Is it necessary to apply an inclusive approach for all exceptional students?

READINGS AND REFERENCES

EXCEPTIONALITY: TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND ONTARIO POLICIES

The Ontario Ministry of Education page on Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12, Program and Diploma Requirements provides an index of documents that would be a good starting point from which to link to particular areas of interest.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/oss/oss.html

Note particularly:

Section 5.1 The Teacher-Advisor Program

Section 5.2 The Annual Education Plan

Section 5.4 Program planning for Exceptional Students

Section 5.4.2 Developing the Student's Transition Plan

Section 5.5 Early Identification and Intervention Strategies for Students at Risk

Section 7.11 Programs for Students at Risk

Section 7.12 Special Education

Section 7.13 Anti-discrimination Education

The Ontario Ministry of Education document, Program Planning and Assessment, The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12 includes sections on "Considerations for Program Planning-Education for Exceptional Students" and "Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting".

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/progplan/progplan.html

In the index to Ontario Secondary Schools, Grades 9 to 12, Program and Diploma Requirements 2000, note "Appendix 6: Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students" which describes teaching approaches, assessment procedures and strategies, and a helpful glossary of terms.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/oss/oss.html#appendix6>

Ontario Ministry of Education Appendix 6, Meeting the Needs of Exceptional Students.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has provided a Home Page on Special Education with sections on: Overview of Special Education, Resolving Identification or Placement Issues, Policy Direction, Resource Documents, and Related Information. Some of these documents may also be pertinent.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html

Full text of the *Individual Education Plans (IEP) document, Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation 2000* that includes sections on Student Profile, The Student's Strengths and Needs, Special Education Strategies, Accommodations, and Resources; Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting, and The Transition Plan.

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iep/iep.html

Resource Documents lists a variety of support documents including: Safe Schools: Ideas Book for Students; Highlights of Regulation 181/98: Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils; Special Education Awards for Exemplary Practice in Integration (descriptions of the specific initiatives of individual elementary and secondary schools

with highly inclusive practices); and Individual Education Plan (IEP) Resource Guide, 2004. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/resource/resource.html>

Policy and Reference listing includes links to *Choices into Action: Guidance and Career Education Program Policy*; *Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans 2000*; *IEP: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation 2000*; *Ontario Schools Code of Conduct 2008*, *Violence-Free Schools Policy 1994*, *Pathways for Success – Sample timetables for supporting students at risk, 2003*, *Shared Solutions, 2007*, *Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009* and *Shaping a Culture of Respect in Our Schools: Promoting Safe and Healthy Relationships, 2008* to name a few. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/policy.html>

Exceptional Students, The Education Act, s.1.1

“exceptional pupil” means a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee, established under subparagraph iii of paragraph 5 of subsection 11 (1), of the board,

- a) of which the pupil is a resident pupil,
- b) that admits or enrolls the pupil other than pursuant to an agreement with another board for the provision of education, or
- c) to which the cost of education in respect of the pupil is payable by the Minister; (“élève en difficulté”)

Integration

The MET remains committed to the principle that the integration of exceptional pupils shall be the normal practice in Ontario, when such a placement meets the student's needs and is in accordance with parental wishes. A range of options including placement in a special class or provincial demonstration school will continue to be available for pupils whose needs cannot be met within the regular classroom

IIRC (Identification, Placement and Review Committee), O. Reg. 181/98

In Ontario a committee (of educators, administrators, and parents and/or youth age 16 years+):

- describes pupil's strengths and needs
- describes pupil's exceptionality identification and definition
- makes the placement decision
- includes reasons for placement in a special class (if integration not chosen)
- *may* make recommendations regarding programs and services

IEP (Individual Education Plan)

After an IPRC the school must develop an IEP for the pupil IDENTIFIED AS EXCEPTIONAL WITHIN 30 DAYS that must include:

- learning expectations for the pupil including accommodations and modifications
- an outline of special education programs and services
- how the pupil's progress will be evaluated
- a transition plan to post-secondary education, work, or community living (for students identified as exceptional who are 14 years of age or older, except for students solely identified as gifted)
 - A working document to guide day-to-day teaching. A student's IEP is a school document and may not be appealed.

Inclusion

Term to describe a professional belief that students with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms whether or not they can meet traditional curricular standards and should be full members of those classrooms.

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Appendix D: Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities of the Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans 2000. These categories include: Behaviour, Communication, Intellectual, Physical, and Multiple.

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/iepstand/iepstand.html>

Behaviour

A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:

- an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;
- excessive fears or anxieties;
- a tendency to compulsive reaction;
- an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.

Communication

Autism

A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:

- a) disturbances in:
 - rate of educational development;
 - ability to relate to the environment;

- mobility;
 - perception, speech, and language;
- b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing

An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.

Language Impairment

A learning disorder characterized by impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:

- a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and
- b) include one or more of the following:
- language delay;
 - dysfluency;
 - voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.

Speech Impairment

A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.

Learning Disability

A learning disorder evident in both academic and social situations that involves one or more of the processes necessary for the proper use of spoken language or the symbols of communication, and that is characterized by a condition that:

- a) is not primarily the result of:
- impairment of vision;
 - impairment of hearing;
 - physical disability;
 - developmental disability;
 - primary emotional disturbance;
 - cultural difference; and
- b) results in a significant discrepancy between academic achievement and assessed intellectual ability, with deficits in one or more of the following:
- receptive language (listening, reading);
 - language processing (thinking, conceptualizing, integrating);
 - expressive language (talking, spelling, writing);
 - mathematical computations;

- c) may be associated with one or more conditions diagnosed as:
- a perceptual handicap;
 - a brain injury;
 - minimal brain dysfunction;
 - dyslexia;
 - developmental aphasia.

Intellectual

Giftedness

An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.

Mild Intellectual Disability

A learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;
- b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;
- c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.

Developmental Disability

A severe learning disorder characterized by:

- a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;
- b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;
- c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self- support.

Physical

Physical Disability

A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or developmental level.

Blind and Low Vision

A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.

Multiple Exceptionalities

A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities, that is of such nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

Equity and Inclusion Policy Documents:

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119: *Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools, 2009*
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/119.html>

Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/policyfunding/equity.pdf> outlines how the Ministry of Education, school boards and schools are supporting stronger equity and inclusive education in our schools.

EQUITY: TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

From: Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

Diversity: The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Inclusive Education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Other Definitions:

Antiracist Education

An approach to education, that integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and racial minority groups into an educational system and its practices. The aim of antiracist education is the elimination of racism in all its forms. Antiracist education seeks to identify and change educational policies, procedures, and practices that foster racism, as well as the racist attitudes and behaviour that underlie and reinforce such policies and practices. Antiracist education provides teachers and students with the knowledge and skills to examine racism critically in order to understand how it originates and to identify and challenge it.

Stereotype

A false or generalized conception of a group of people, that results in the unconscious or conscious categorization of each member of that group without regard for individual differences.

Bias

An inaccurate and limited view of the world, a given situation, or individuals or groups, which can be expressed through speech, nonverbal behaviour, and written and other materials.

Racism

A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions, and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures and programs as well as in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals.

Discrimination

The practice or act of making distinctions between people based on such characteristics as race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation which leads to the inequitable treatment of groups or individuals. Direct discrimination consists of overt actions. Systemic discrimination occurs through apparently neutral policies or practices which are reinforced by institutional structures and power and which result in the inequitable treatment of members of certain groups.

Cultural Proficiency

The policies and practices of an organization or the values and behaviours of an individual that enable the agency or person to interact effectively in a culturally diverse environment. There are six points along the cultural proficiency continuum that indicate how people see and respond to difference. The goal is to move to level 6 on the continuum.

1. ***Cultural destructiveness***: See the difference, stomp it out. The elimination of other people's cultures. Negotiating, disparaging, or purging cultures that are different from your own.
2. ***Cultural incapacity***: See the difference, make it wrong. Belief in the superiority of one's own culture and behavior that disempowers another's culture or elevating the superiority of your own cultural values and beliefs and suppressing cultures that are different from your own.
3. ***Cultural blindness***: See the difference, act like you don't. Acting as if the cultural differences you see do not matter, or not recognizing that there are differences among and between cultures.
4. ***Cultural pre-competence***: See the difference, respond inadequately. Awareness of the limitations of one's skills or an organization's practices when interacting with other cultural groups. Recognizing that lack of knowledge, experience, and understanding of other cultures limits your ability to effectively interact with them.
5. ***Cultural competence***: See the difference, understand the difference that difference makes. Employing any policy, practice, or behaviour that uses the essential elements of cultural proficiency on behalf of the school or district.

Interacting with other cultural groups in ways that recognize and value their differences motivate you to assess your own skills, expand your knowledge and resources, and cause you to adapt your relational behaviour using the five essential elements of cultural proficiency:

- Name the differences: Assess culture
- Claim the differences: Value diversity
- Reframe the differences: Manage the dynamics of difference
- Train about differences: Adapt to diversity
- Change for differences: Institutionalize cultural knowledge

6. **Cultural proficiency**: See the differences and respond positively and affirming. Esteeming culture, knowing how to learn about individual and organizational culture, and interacting effectively in a variety of cultural environments. Honouring the differences among cultures, seeing diversity as a benefit, and interacting knowledgeably and respectfully with a variety of cultural groups.

(last modified March 3, 2010)