Including Students with ASD into General Education Classes:

Transforming Research to Practical Application

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Sheila Wagner, 2013 DOE – IDEAS Conference: St. Simons, GA
Inclusion programs mean getting out of the clinical, research setting - and into the world of public/private education.
Background: Standards for Education

- Elementary & Secondary Education Act (1965)
  - Part of the war on poverty legislation
    - Public Law 94-142 (1975)
    - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004)
- No Child Left Behind 2001
  - Reauthorization of ESEA
- National Research Council (2001)
  - Educating Students with Autism (early intervention)
- Flexibility of states to implement the legislation

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Autism Education Trust
Charman, Pellicano, L.V. Peacey, N. Peacey, Forward, Dockrell (2011)

• Developed standards for delivery of good practice in education provision for students w/ASD. Themes discovered to be consistent in study:
  – High ambitions and aspirations
  – Hearing the pupil’s own voice
  – Strong relationships with pupils
  – The need for “autism curriculum”
  – The need for multiple assessments
  – Staff trained & motivated (all staff)
  – Joint working with specialist health practitioners
  – Reciprocal communication with parents

  • University of London

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My journey as educational consultant -

• Have been in the ‘world of ASD’ for 30 years
  – Indiana Resource Center for Autism – Transition Demonstration Program
  – Emory Autism Center – since 1991

• Consult to school districts (Indiana); Georgia, as well as other states

• Monarch Program based on ABA-incidental teaching in the natural setting
  – Developed and implement large-scale inclusion projects since 1993 (17 systems)
    • 2 years commitment
    • Unlimited follow-up
    • Demonstration sites in each system; but no longer

• Conduct both system-wide & individual student consults

• Go into schools at the request of either system or parent
Inclusion “Myths” I’ve encountered in my 30 years:

• Inclusion programming means a certain *placement*
• Inclusion programming will mean ASD will go away
• Included students do not need support
• Included students will automatically make friends
• Included students will “absorb” social skills through proximity
• That all students with ASD can be “included”
• Being included into general education classes means the student’s adult outcome will be better
• Students with ASD who are included will gain better proficiency with academics
• Students with ASD will be “taken care of” by the typical peers
• A medical diagnosis of ASD is the same as an Autism Eligibility
• IDEA (2004) guarantees a student will be placed in general education classes

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If not myth, then what IS inclusion programming?

“a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met”

(Stainback & Stainback, 1990).

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Where do we find students with ASD?

- General education classes
  - Co-taught
  - Collaborative
  - Supportive
- Resource
- Self-Contained
- Combination programs
- Magnet schools
- Charter schools
- Cyber schools
- Alternative Schools
- GNET classes or schools
- Private Schools
- Home schooled
- Psychiatric Hospitals
- Institutions
- Homeless shelters
- Foster homes
- Juvenile detention centers
- Incarcerated

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To me, “inclusion” means gaining appropriate access to typical peers in the natural setting of school and community -

So that students with ASD can be taught and model real-world social, language, and behavior skills sufficient to be successful as possible in adulthood.
Inclusion can be:

• Full inclusion into general ed without support
• Full inclusion in general ed with support
• Partial inclusion without support
• Partial inclusion with support
• Programs that fosters inclusion for non-teacher directed times
  – Lunch; recess; before/after school; weekends; electives; specials
• The important aspect is to have experiences that can be replicated in society
• ‘Inclusion’ starts with whatever is most appropriate for that student at that time and targeting skills with the end goal of independence in adulthood.
Why even consider inclusion programming?

• “In 2011, 32.6% of working-age people with disabilities were employed, earning a median annual wage/salary of $19,735. To compare from the same year, 72.8% of working-age people without disabilities were employed, earning a median annual wage/salary of $30,285.” (http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/)

• Cederlund et al. (2008) found that 76% of those with classic autism had poor or very poor outcomes. Those with Asperger’s Syndrome (AS) did somewhat better in this study. Although 27% of those with AS had good outcomes, 26% had a very restricted life with no occupation, no activity and no friends.

• Taylor & Seltzer (2011) found that as adults:
  – ASD & ID comorbid: 74% received day services; 86% had voc or employment services
  – ASD w/out ID: 6% received day services & 24% had no regular daily activities
Yet, the employment results for those with HFA and AS indicate outcomes are generally much lower than would be expected on the basis of the individual’s intellectual functioning.

Cederland et al. (2008) found that only 20% of the men with AS held jobs, with 10% working in competitive employment and another 10% working in sheltered employment.
It is clear that what we have done in the past educationally, hasn’t worked well.

Autism presents all of us with many challenges -

Social; language; behavior impairments. But we are up against something even bigger than that:
But inclusive programs for students with ASD

Is truly the *toughest form of education* out there for students with ASD.
Take the “Mystery” out of Inclusion

• Successful inclusion of a student with ASD takes a LOT of hard work and collaboration from all involved:
  – Special education
  – General education
  – Administration
  – Parents/families
  – Community providers
  – Researchers
Autism Profile: Age 5yrs, 3mos

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Advocacy of Parent & Teacher
Training
Administrative Support
IEP Driven
Inclusion Coordinator
Inclusion Philosophy and Commitment
Collaboration Between Home & School
Regular Ed Ownership

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What has ‘money’ got to do with ASD?

- Cidav, Lawer, Marcus & Mandell 2013
  - Mean annual cost of educating student with autism is about $13,000/year
    - Gen ed national mean: $9,989
  - Intensive behavior therapy: $30,000 - $60,000/year
  - Residential costs: $60,000 to $128,000/year
  - “a decline in respite care and personal care/home health aide service (age 17-20), suggesting significant barriers . . . when a strong network of social and residential support may be most necessary.” Shattuck et al. 2011

- NCLB pushes for higher test scores
- Student test scores linked to teacher salaries mean corruption and falsified scores and reluctance to accept students with disabilities in class
- States taking over the running of schools
- Poor economy means CBI eliminated or reduced
- Lack of funding means limited staff support

- Peter Gerhardt’s school in NY
  - $135,000/year

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School budget cuts have reduced support staff for both self-contained and included students.

But students who have learned to be more independent AND are more socially appropriate require less support in schools.
Motivation for inclusion
for administrators, teachers, students & parents

• Parents drive inclusion
  – Largest area of special ed litigation (Zirkel, 2011)
  – Parents want better outcomes

• Teachers want to see progress and know that their hard work is accomplishing something

• Students with ASD need motivation for completing all of the work the state requires

• Parents need to reinforce good teachers

• Teachers need to reinforce students

• Peers need to learn what it is like to live and work alongside someone with differing ability levels

• Students with autism will learn skills when motivated to do so

• Administrators want to save money for the system

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However, motivation for inclusion lessens when behaviors are out of control

In my experience, if we can’t get behaviors under control, we won’t have a chance to look at social or more sophisticated language methods.

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Missed a Basket!

1.

2.

3.

Rules:

Prize for the Day

Slam Dunk!

Name

Parent Signature

Emory Autism Center - Monarch School Age Program
# The Score Card

## My Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule 1</th>
<th>Rule 2</th>
<th>Rule 3</th>
<th>Rule 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bring my materials to class</td>
<td>Bring my completed homework to class</td>
<td>Follow directions without arguing</td>
<td>Talk only when necessary during class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>2 points</td>
<td>3 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Things I can earn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity or Item</th>
<th>points needed</th>
<th>Activity or Item</th>
<th>points needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>read spiderman book</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>chewing gum in class</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play video game</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>playing a cd</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work on computer</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>sharpening all the pencils</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>card game with friend</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>extra cake at lunch</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shoot hoops</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>draw for fun</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jack can exchange his points for preferred items or activities at the end of each day. He may not have access to these things until he earns the points.
# Daily Points Tracking Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Joe Bloggs</th>
<th>Min Points Needed</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Max Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/Teacher</th>
<th>Beh #1</th>
<th>Beh #2</th>
<th>Beh #3</th>
<th>Bonus Pt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>signed:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Totals        |        |        |        |          |

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Teaching Social Skills

Social skills CAN improve!

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Social skills come in different forms today

But students with ASD need help in all the forms
Addressing social skills takes -

• Two styles of intervention:
  – Direct Instruction
  And
  – Incidental Instruction

• Why??
Direct Instruction: Lunch Bunch/buddies

• Lunch is a time of isolation for so many students with ASD
  – Small group social skills lessons (Lunch Bunch)
    • With/typical peers; without/peers; individually
  – Lunch Committees
  – Provides direct instruction of social skills with typical peers
  – Including typical peers allows for them to be trained about ASD, too

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Resources for social skills

• Direct instruction of social skills
  – Video Modeling of skills
    • Model Me Kids [http://www.modelmekids.com/]
    • Social Skills Builder [http://www.socialskillbuilder.com/]
    • Watch Me Learn [http://www.watchmelearn.com/]
    • Self-made videos
  – Cool School [http://www.rtassoc.com/gm_coolschool.html]
  – Skillstreaming (Goldstein; McGinnis)
  – Perspective-taking & problem solving practice
    • M. Winner’s resource materials
Peer Programming

• Can boost social acceptance amongst all peers if there is a supportive group
• MS/HS: Look to the honor’s students, Beta Club, student council members, environmental club members
• Conduct peer training at all levels, but easier to do in elementary school; however, much more needed in MS/HS levels
• MS/HS students know this student is “different”; provide information (but get parent’s permission first), and enlist their help and support
• Use students that need credit for community service hours
Peer Programs – The incidental approach

• **STAR Intervention Program** *(Boyd, et al. 2008)*
  – Stay
  – Talk
  – Assist
  – Reward
    • Social praise; key phrases

• **RAPR** *(modified from above) (for desks in pods)*
  – Responsible
  – Assist
  – Prompt
  – Reward
Scholar Program

- Stay
- Chat
- Help
- Offer
- Listen
- Answer
- Reward

Upper grades

Trained peers

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Visual Supports
Use visuals to explain skills
Bully Prevention & Building Self-Advocacy

• Assessing the environment for potential bullying settings/people
  – Help them identify people to stay away from

• Eliminate vulnerability by teaching specific routines to get out of situations, if needed
  – When to say “No”, how strongly to say it, who to tell; Internet security locks; reporting cyber-bullying
  – Explain the potential for bullying in society
  – Explain consequences for all involved in an incident

• Knowing they have ASD; teach advocacy
  – Being comfortable “in their own skin”
  – Learning to be a self-advocate takes time
Promoting academic acquisition

• Modifications/accommodations
• Lessen the writing component
• Provide motivation (*they won’t do the work just because we ask them to*)
• Provide tutors; pair/share; pair readers; turn & talk partners
• Lessen or eliminate homework in favor of other methods of judging acquisition
  – Oral testing; multiple-choice; projects; computer programs, on-line testing, on-line coursework, etc.
• Use visuals whenever possible (they are concrete learners)
  – Graphic organizers; rubrics; task lists; task analysis; self-analysis
• Link content to their own life; make it *purposeful* to them
• Teach organizational skills; set realistic deadlines
• Use of technology: iPad; iTouch; iPhone to assist w/schedule reminders; I.AMSEARCH (*free downloadable app*)
  • These students are going into the high-tech world; get them ready for it

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Determine what is needed when

What is necessary for all classes: *Visual supports (daily schedule; positive incentive program); AAC device; peer buddy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Goals &amp; Objective(s)</th>
<th>What else is needed?</th>
<th>Who implements?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Math   | 1. Turn in homework  
  2. Complete work  
  3. Raise hand to ask for a break | Task list  
  Blue/yellow disk  
  Additional prompting | Co-Teacher        |
| Music  | 1. Remain in seat  
  2. Participate in activity | Reminder of rules prior to class  
  Self-monitor graph | Paraprofessional   |
ASD is a complex and confusing disorder, and there is no cure, but it is not without its solutions.

This is going to take understanding, perseverance, and above all, a belief that the student w/ASD can learn and contribute to our society.

Early intervention is critical, but long-term support and understanding is also necessary.
Tana – to the present
References


