



# **EVALUATION OF INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ISSUES AND TRENDS**

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**Brenda T. Williams  
The College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, VA  
btwil1@wm.edu**

# Session Objectives


- Overview of current research on evaluation of inclusive practice
- Discussion of process and outcome indicators used in program evaluation



# Context

- **Legal**
  - **IDEA (zero-reject, FAPE, nondiscriminatory assessment, procedural safeguards, parental rights, **LRE**)**
- **Advocacy**






# **Inclusive Practices and Access to the General Education Curriculum**


**“In this era when pressure is greater than ever before for most students with disabilities to access the general curriculum and reach the same standards as typical learners, the importance of inclusion has continued to grow.”**

**(Cushing, Clark, Carter & Kennedy, 2005; Sailor & Roger, 2005)**



While there is currently little quantitative data of statistical significance to support full inclusion, there are clear patterns among the research that indicate improved outcomes as a result of integrated placements. These improved outcomes are even more noticeable in the qualitative data that exists in human services research.

Michigan Department of Education, 1993




“Inclusion research published to date commonly takes the form of ethnographic studies, narratives, case studies, anecdotes, and surveys, although the range is rapidly expanding and new studies are published every month”  
( Nisbet, 1994, p. 152).



# Definitional Challenges

- **Placement of students with disabilities in general education settings**
- **A belief system shared by every member of a school as a learning community about the responsibility of educating all students so that they reach their potential**

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In today's schools what is considered inclusive practice varies widely depending on the clarity of state and local policies related to inclusion, the resources available to foster such practices, teacher and administrator understanding and commitment, and parent and community support.

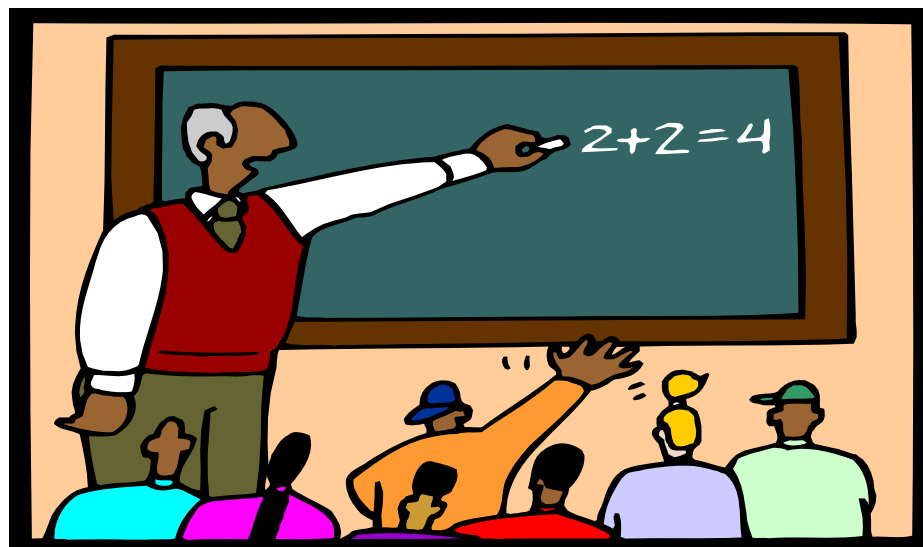
(Boscardin, 2005; Kavale, 2002)



## Other Factors

- **Special educator's knowledge of academic content areas**
- **Collaboration between teachers**
- **Use of evidence-based instructional strategies**
- **Emphasis placed on high-stakes testing (NCLB)**

ISSUE:  
Efficacy of Inclusive Education  
VS.  
Efficacy of an Inclusive School  
Program





## Research that evaluates...

### Inclusive Education

- Obtains data that will determine the effectiveness of a particular inclusion model or element of inclusive education

- cooperative learning
- teacher attitudes
- principal attitudes

### Inclusive School Programs

- Determines the efficacy of the entire program according to the **program's definition of inclusion**

Dymond, 2001



# Inclusion Processes

<b>School Climate</b>	<b>Student Participation</b>	<b>Personnel</b>
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>	<b>Administrative Leadership</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
<b>Program Structure</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>????</b>



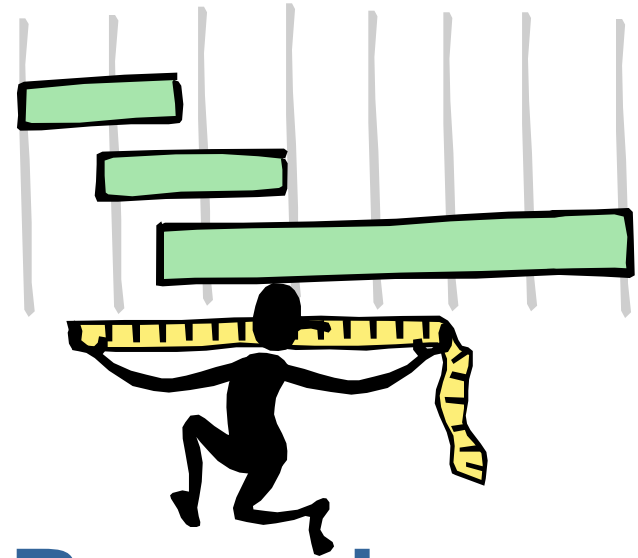
# Inclusion Outcomes

<b>Student Achievement</b>	<b>Behavior</b>	<b>Social Relationships</b>
<b>Program Costs</b>	<b>Stakeholder Satisfaction</b>	<b>Quality of Collaboration</b>
<b>Teacher Efficacy</b>	<b>????</b>	<b>????</b>



# Data Collection Methods

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Documents and Records
- Observations





# Evaluation Initiatives

- **National Study of Inclusive Education (NCERI)**
- **Statewide-Vermont, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Oregon, Utah**
- **District Level-Brevard County, FL; Gwinnett County, GA; Howard County, MD; Newport News, VA; Richmond, VA, Roanoke, VA**



# Concluding Thoughts

- **The research and evaluation data on inclusion indicate a strong trend toward improved student outcomes (academically, socially, and behaviorally) for both special education and general education students.**
- **Because inclusion is not a uniformly defined construct within the field, it is imperative that evaluations reflect the manner in which each program defines and implements inclusion. This will assist in identifying the elements of inclusive schooling that produce the greatest outcomes.**