Inclusion: Implementing Strategies

Module 1
What Is Inclusion?

In “Clearing the Hurdles of Inclusion,” Sandy Merritt says, “Underlying inclusion is the premise that students should be educated with their peers in the least restrictive environment for as much of the day as possible” (2001, p. 67).
Planning for Inclusion

- Learn about the student’s disability as early as possible.
- Attend IEP team meetings to gain insight into the student’s abilities and accommodations that will be needed.
- Resolve physical accessibility problems during the summer.

(Adapted from Merritt, 2001)
Implementation Stage

- Emphasize what the student can do.
- Build a trusting relationship with the student.
- Be confident in your ability to make curriculum decisions that concern the student.
- Accept that you will make mistakes.
- Treat every student as a worthy member of the classroom community.
- Involve parents in the student’s education.
Implementation Stage (cont’d)

- Schedule regular team meetings for all those who work with the student.
- Give the student the same opportunities that other students have.
- Treat the student fairly, but avoid favoritism.
- Be involved in the IEP process.

(Adapted from Merritt, 2001)
Universal Design in Education

- In addition to making buildings more functional, universal design’s overarching tool is technology that allows physical accessibility, facilitates constructivist learning methods, and provides alternative means for assessment of learning.

- The use of assistive technologies supports the goal of providing almost all students with a rigorous curriculum.
Students’ Physical Needs

When considering the special aids and services for a student with physical or cognitive disabilities, consider these issues:

- Mobility
- Room arrangement
- Specialized staff or technology
Aids and supports, if not selected and implemented in a thoughtful way in the classroom, can further isolate students with disabilities.

For a student who is severely disabled and requires a full-time assistant, natural and unobtrusive supports should involve teachers collaborating or coteaching to determine effective means for meeting the needs of all students.
The Classroom (cont’d)

- The curriculum and activities modified for the disabled students should closely parallel those followed by their nondisabled peers.
Additional Support for Teachers

The types of aid a teacher may need fall into three main categories:

- Additional training and professional development
- The addition of a special education teacher or paraprofessional
- Extra time for planning and collaboration
Role Redefinitions

Successful inclusive schools often implement changes in the job responsibilities for many school personnel, including

- The general education teacher
- The special education teacher
- The school psychologist
- The support staff
- The paraeducator
Assistive Technology

The National Assistive Technology Research Institute organizes the different kinds of assistive technology and services into seven categories:

- Existence
- Communication
- Body support, protection, and positioning
- Travel and mobility
- Environmental interaction
Assistive Technology (cont’d)

- Education and transition
- Sports, fitness, and recreation
  (Poel, 2007)