## Acknowledgements

OSPI is grateful to the advisory committee members whose contributions were instrumental for the development of this handbook.

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INTRODUCTION

The Inclusionary Practices (IP) Handbook is an Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) guidance document on inclusionary practices for educators, families, and school administrators in Washington state. The handbook highlights the integration of systems in education that support inclusion, while providing detailed guidance and resources for groups that are integral for the successful inclusion of students with disabilities. The IP handbook guidance is structured into the four sections below:

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An Instructional Guide for Early Childhood Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Family Guide to Inclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Leadership Guide for Administrators</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The IP handbook guidance is aligned with the Washington state Inclusionary Practices Professional Development Project\(^1\) (IPP) launched in 2019. This project involves the coordination of organizations and districts to support the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms through statewide professional development. This project is driven by OSPI Priorities for Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities: Leadership, Growth Mindset, Evidence-Based Practices, Professional Development, Resource Allocation, and Recruitment and Retention (Figure 1).

Figure 1: OSPI Priorities for Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

The purpose of this handbook is to provide practical guidance for teachers, schools, districts, and

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families on inclusionary practices in Washington state. The introduction includes the foundation of policy and research that supports the provision of inclusion in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities. Subsequent sections will provide specific guidance on strategies for implementing inclusionary practices in preschool through age 21.

**Inclusion as a Priority in Education**

Inclusion is characterized as a sense of belonging in community and applies broadly to every learner and all environments. Research on learning and human development clearly states that a sense of belonging, safety, and attention to individual needs and backgrounds is essential for all students to learn and thrive in any learning environment\(^2\). Inclusive schools are dedicated to embracing diversity and supporting the unique needs and attributes of every student regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and ability. This commitment to the inclusion of every student in education is reflected in the OSPI Equity Statement (Figure 2):

**Figure 2: OSPI Equity Statement**

Each student, family, and community possesses strengths and cultural knowledge that benefits their peers, educators, and schools.

Ensuring educational equity:

- Goes beyond equality; it requires education leaders to examine ways current policies and practices result in disparate outcomes for our students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education and English learner services, students who identify as LGBTQ+, and highly mobile student populations.

- Requires education leaders to develop an understanding of historical contexts; engage students, families, and community representatives as partners in decision-making; and actively dismantle systemic barriers, replacing them with policies and practices that ensure all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

IDEA legislation in the United States guarantees equal rights in public education for students with disabilities through age twenty-one. It was inspired by the civil rights movement and goes beyond Section 504 civil rights protections from discrimination. IDEA regulates federally funded mandates that support a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for students whose disability adversely impacts the ability to benefit from the general education setting, and the provision of additional or different education services to learn and participate in school. IDEA was initiated in 1975 as P.L.94-142 and is reauthorized based on input from families, professionals, and court rulings. Table 1 summarizes the evolution of federal policies and mandates for students with disabilities, from ensuring access to schools to focusing on quality educational services and experiences.

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### Table 1: Disability-Related Mandates and Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mandate/Act</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) (court ruling), “uneducable” or “untrainable” students cannot be excluded from public education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Reauthorization of IDEA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind (NCLB)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Endrew vs. Douglas County</td>
<td>more than de minimis and reasonable progress in light of the student’s unique circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Principles of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- **Zero Reject**: Locate, identify, and provide services to all eligible students with disabilities.
- **Protection in Evaluation**: Schools must conduct nondiscriminatory assessments to determine if a student has an IDEA related disability.
- **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**: Schools must develop and deliver an individualized education program of special education services that confers meaningful educational benefit.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**: Students with disabilities must be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate.
- **Procedural Safeguards**: Schools must comply with the procedural requirements of the IDEA.
- **Parental Participation**: Schools must collaborate with families in the development and delivery of their child’s special education program.

A basic education is an evolving program of instruction that is intended to provide all students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. IDEA guarantees students with disabilities the right to FAPE, to include the curriculum and experiences of a basic education that is provided to students without a disability.

Historically, a separate and parallel system of education and services has been practiced in schools, which has resulted in limited participation of students with disabilities in basic general education.

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3 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.150.210
curriculum, classrooms, and school community. Special education has been a room at the end of the hall or in a portable building away from general education students and disconnected from the general school community. Research-based instructional methods and schedules have traditionally been provided in small groups and one-on-one in special education classrooms to remediate or accelerate learning. However, numerous studies since the 1970s have concluded that separate education in a separate setting for students with disabilities has not only led to minimal academic gains⁴, but also has negative effects on social and academic outcomes ⁵. There is now ample research on the benefits of inclusion for students with and without disabilities to support a systemwide change (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Benefits of Inclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research on the Benefits of Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improved communication and social skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher expectations for student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher attendance rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Functioning at higher level than in segregated classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased engagement in school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved performance on state tests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased academic productivity and initiation with peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improved adult outcomes for postsecondary education, employment, and independence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The movement to improve inclusion practices in general education classrooms and school

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⁴ Schiller, E., Sanford, C., and Blackorby, S. (2008). *A national profile of the classroom experiences and academic performance of students with learning disabilities: A Special Topic Report from the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS).*

communities for students with disabilities has grown steadily since the Regular Education Initiative of 1986. Over the years, committed educators, schools and districts across the country have adopted inclusive missions and practices for special education, but real change must involve examining the system of education to recognize barriers for students with disabilities, and barriers to school change. Schools and educators need to adapt systems in education to build on what is known about learning and needed for teaching diverse students, including students with disabilities. Initiatives for inclusion must transcend general and special education silos, entrust bold leadership, apply innovative instructional strategies, engage families, and leverage related services.

**Inclusion Defined**

Educational environments for students with disabilities range from complete exclusion from the general school community and classrooms to equal participation as inclusion in all aspects of the education system. Figure 3 illustrates the educational experiences of students with disabilities.

**Figure 3: Types of Educational Access**

Inclusion means all students with disabilities have a right to meaningfully participate in general education settings, both academically and socially. It is when all students are presumed competent, are welcomed as valued members of all general education classrooms, school community, and

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8 United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *General Comment No. 4*. 
extra-curricular activities alongside their same age peers, and experience reciprocal social relationships.

Inclusion is realized when all students, regardless of their special education needs, are provided targeted interventions and accommodations, allowing them to learn in the general education classroom and engage the core curriculum. Inclusion is described by Villa and Thousand as both a vision and a practice. Udvari-Solner describes full inclusion as “a value-based practice that attempts to bring students, including those with disabilities into full membership within their local school community” (p.101). School teams need a shared understanding of what inclusion means, how it is implemented, and what role each member plays in making it successful.

Inclusionary practices are actions that educators, schools, and districts take to create opportunities for students with diverse abilities to learn and be a part of the general education curriculum, classroom, and school community (see Table 3). These actions are grounded in a belief in growth mindsets, a focus on strengths rather than deficits, and principles of equity. Inclusionary practices depend upon a commitment of resources, time, and materials to address individualized education goals in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible for social, academic, and functional gains. The inclusion of students with disabilities must be a shared initiative based upon a shared vision and actions that create opportunities for a meaningful education for students with disabilities. Teamwork between educators, administrators, and families is essential for full implementation of inclusion.

Table 3: Components of Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Inclusion is:</th>
<th>What Inclusion is not:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inclusive Vision and Practice</strong>: A shared belief that everyone belongs, regardless of perceived ability or disability.</td>
<td><strong>Traditional school practices</strong>: The shared belief that students who have needs outside of the norm receive specialized instruction in a separate setting within the school building. An expectation that students be ‘ready to learn’, and able to do the same work as students without disabilities to be placed in general education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Mindset</strong>: The belief that everyone can learn and benefit from increased expectations of the general education standards.</td>
<td><strong>Fixed mindset</strong>: The belief that student behaviors and the capacity to learn is limited and cannot be changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supported by Research</strong>: Students with disabilities included in general education develop self-determination and acquire greater social and academic gains.</td>
<td><strong>Integration</strong>: Arranged time spent with peers without disabilities with low expectations of students with disabilities (recess, lunch).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presumed Competence</strong>: Understanding that students learn best when they feel valued and educators hold the highest expectations while creating personally meaningful curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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9 TASH, n.d. Para 1 The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH)
What Inclusion is:
opportunities to acquire academic and functional knowledge across environments.

Practice of Differentiation and Universal Design for Learning: The provision of equitable access in the LRE to minimize the need for specially designed instruction through removing barriers and providing options for individual learners.

What Inclusion is not:
Mainstreaming: Selective placement in general education class settings (art, PE, music) with limited planning, goals, and supports.

Unidimensional Instructional Strategies: Instruction and environmental arrangements designed for an illusory average student with narrow learning objectives, standardized expectations, and little flexibility.

Rights-Based Perspectives on Inclusion
Implementing inclusion is very much about improving academic outcomes for all students, but it is also a matter of individual rights, because all students are entitled to meaningful participation in a general education classroom community. Because decisions around the placement of students with disabilities have consequences related to a person’s sense of marginalization and access to educational opportunities, rights and ethics discourse state that the existence of a parallel education system prevents the delivery of an education that adequately responds to the increasing diversity of student populations. The responsibility to implement inclusionary practices in schools is clearly outlined in state and national policy, as shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Policies Related to Inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals with Disability Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sec. 300.114 LRE requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About IDEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Each public agency must ensure that—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 (PL 114–195)** |
| ESSA |
| ESSA requires that students with disabilities be involved and make progress in the same general education curriculum that is taught to students without disabilities. |

| **Washington Administrative Code (WAC)** |
| WAC 392-172A-02050 LRE |
| Subject to the exceptions for students in adult correctional facilities, school districts shall ensure that the provision of services to each student eligible for special education, including preschool students and students in public or private institutions or other care facilities, shall be provided: |
| 1) To the maximum extent appropriate in the general education environment with students who are nondisabled; and |
Special Education and Least Restrictive Environment

Special education as mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a service provided to students who meet eligibility criteria in at least one of thirteen categories of disability. The services provided include assessment, specially designed instruction, adaptations, related services, supplemental services, transportation, transition, and protection from discrimination.

LRE is one of the six guiding principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which guarantees FAPE with nondisabled students to the greatest extent possible, which is interpreted as inclusion in general education. IDEA Section 300.114 mandates:

(i) To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and

(ii) Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

LRE is determined on a case-by-case basis by a multi-disciplinary team including the family as part of the IEP process. If a student’s IEP cannot be implemented satisfactorily in the general education environment with the provision of supplementary aids and services, then a continuum of environments and arrangements must be considered as increasingly restrictive from the general education classroom.

To ensure an appropriate education for all students with disabilities, IDEA mandates schools and districts provide a continuum of placement options that progress from full participation with nondisabled peers (LRE) with supplemental services, to part-time resource, self-contained classes, and separate day and residential treatment facilities. Educational services and delivery models can range from full or partial LRE with in-class support, resource center pull-out, partial or full special education class, and in-school or out-of-district placements, depending on student needs as identified in their IEPs.

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13 IDEA Sec. 300.114 (a)
14 WAC 392-172A-02055
The goal of special education is to provide FAPE, and to always work toward and ensure progress to meet general education standards, curriculum, and environments. Students in all settings will need teachers trained to provide access to the general curriculum, meaningful participation in general education classrooms, and effective instruction in grade-level content standards.

**Deconstructing Disability**

Disability is a complex phenomenon reflecting an interaction between features of a person’s body and features of society in which he or she lives. When city planners, architects, stores, transportation, and education neglect to consider disability as a natural part of humanity, by default are practices of ableism. The Center for Disability Rights describes ableism as the beliefs or practices that devalue or discriminate against people with disabilities based on the assumption that people with disabilities need to change or be fixed, thereby neglecting the responsibility to adapt or design for various abilities. Most standards of all kinds in society and schools conform to the way non-disabled people do, think, and live. Expectations narrowly focused on able-bodied and able-minded standards, as well as misconceptions of disability, contributes to experiences of marginalization, discrimination, low expectations, and inequity for individuals with disabilities.

The Office of Civil Rights enforces legislation that protects against discrimination, but a concerted effort is needed in schools and society to create a more inclusive and equitable life for people with disabilities. Awareness and understanding of disability (see Table 5) come from examining perceptions and misconceptions and learning about real challenges faced by those who experience disabilities.

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15 IRIS Center—LRE Information Brief
16 World Health Organization
17 The Center for Disability Rights: Ableism
Table 5: Components of Disability Awareness\textsuperscript{18}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Awareness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socially constructed:</strong> What we believe about disability, and how we respond to disability, is influenced by our personal experiences, cultural perspectives, and attitudes passed down through generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hidden vs. visible:</strong> A disability can be physically apparent, but many learning disabilities are not easily identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context specific:</strong> Disability is relative to contexts and expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural part of being human:</strong> Disability is something everyone experiences to some extent over the course of a lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Person first:</strong> Disability does not define a person and should not be the primary description of a person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marginalized and discriminated in schools and society:</strong> Education systems and environments inadvertently perpetuate ableism and discrimination.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design and structure of school systems are historically and culturally bound. **Intersections of disability and race, poverty, gender, and language difference further compound both the marginalization and oppression of students with disabilities in schools.** Students of color have long been overrepresented in special education, resulting in educational needs not being met. A significant shift in thinking and practice must occur so educators can move from a traditional model of separate general and special education systems to a more collective and collaborative mission that recognizes and values the benefits of inclusion for everyone.

**Addressing Barriers and Shifting Mindsets**

A traditional perspective related to special education is a belief that the unique and individual needs of students with disabilities can only be adequately addressed by special education teachers who have specific skills and knowledge for educating students with disabilities\textsuperscript{19}. Student access to learning means that all students regardless of disability or location have equal opportunity to learning environments, curriculum, academic support, and resources to achieve education standards. Barriers to learning opportunities and success in school can exist in the physical set up and structure of environments, the design of curriculum and instruction, systems of communication, attitudes toward disability, cultural norms, school schedules, and society beyond school. Barriers to learning in school for students with disabilities are numerous and have long-term deleterious effects on post-school outcomes. Barriers to inclusion are rooted in cultural and structural systems in education that have persisted over time, such as:

- Perceptions of disability as a deficit.
- Stereotypes about disability.
- Traditional school models of separation and professional silos.
- Low expectations of students with disabilities.
- Belief that students with disabilities cannot learn in general education classrooms.

\textsuperscript{18} Adapted from Lennard, D.J. (2010). *The Disability Studies Reader*. (3rd Ed). Routledge. NY.

• Historical disconnect from core instruction and content experts.
• School schedules that contribute to removals from core instruction in general education.
• Not prioritizing time for collaboration among educators and caregivers.
• Lack of teacher efficacy to support inclusion.
• Disproportionate discipline.
• Lack of administrative support for inclusion.

Mindsets are ways of seeing the world that can be either rigid and fixed, or open and flexible to new ideas and possibilities. When traditional practices and policies in schools related to students with disabilities are rigid or fixed, there is resistance to change. Fear and resistance to inclusion are influenced by perceptions of disability, available school support, and professional preparation. General and special education teachers have been prepared for and influenced by different students and separate traditional tracks of education, and often lack skills and experience for inclusion and collaboration in schools.

Table 6 shows that shifting mindsets involves focusing on student strengths and what they can do or gain rather than deficits compared to students without disabilities. Doubts about how or if a student with low cognition and processing skills or limited communication skills can benefit from the general education curriculum and classrooms can have negative impacts on outcomes. A strengths-based focus, and a presumption of competence, are mindsets necessary when considering participation in the general education curriculum and community with appropriate tools to learn and communicate alongside students without disabilities.

Table 6: Comparing Mindsets about Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusive Mindsets</th>
<th>Traditional Mindsets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All students have a right to be educated and socialized with their peers.</td>
<td>• General education teachers are meant to educate the &quot;average&quot; students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All educators support all students in becoming an integral part of society.</td>
<td>• Students who have needs outside of the norm should receive specialized instruction in a separate setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All individuals have something to learn and something to offer.</td>
<td>• Specialists are the only ones who know what to do with students who are different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students and teachers have a right to connect and belong with the broader community.</td>
<td>• Perspective that disability is a &quot;problem within the child&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students with disabilities and their families experience a sense of belonging in the school community.</td>
<td>• Families perceive students with disabilities need a separate class and specialists to catch up and get ready to be included.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When applying a growth mindset, mistakes are perceived as a normal part of learning and conditions are created for students to be more comfortable taking risks and asking for help. Efforts to increase access and create a more equitable system of education for students with disabilities

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requires proactive approaches to removing barriers and shifting to growth mindsets. Shifting mindsets and practices to be more inclusive requires time to reflect, strategies for teaching diverse students, commitment to collaboration, and administrative support. The following are recommendations for identifying and removing barriers for students with disabilities to learn and participate in the LRE:

- Examine expectations within our own mindsets, school environments and standards-based curriculum that are both implied and explicit.
- Examine materials and learning goals that could be adapted or modified.
- Identify barriers based on individual student needs in relation to expectations and materials. (All students do not experience the same barriers).
- Communicate expectations and perceived barriers to promote awareness and self-determination.
- Consider ways to adapt expectations, materials, and learning or social goals.
- Repeat, share, and reflect on successes and positive impact on students.

**Systems Change**

The principles behind the inclusion of students with disabilities are inherently about justice, equity, and opportunity. For inclusion to be successful, program quality must be high and support services must be properly planned. Successful inclusion is good for all students, and effective teaching is effective intervention for all students. Figure 5 identifies the multiple and overlapping systems that support inclusion; each has specific roles to play and reliance upon the others.

**Figure 5: Overlapping Systems of Support for Inclusion**

![Diagram of overlapping systems]

- **School Structures and Administrative Support**
  - Data-based decision making
  - Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
  - Scheduling changes for staff and students
  - Administrative support

- **Family/Family Partnerships**
  - Communication
  - Home-school continuity
  - Partnerships

- **Community**
  - Growth mindset
  - Flexible learning environments
  - Peer supports and mentoring
  - Collaborative planning and teaching
  - IEP team decision making

- **Instructional Strategies**
  - Universal Design for Learning
  - Specially Designed Instruction
  - Differentiation

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Reflection Activity: Inclusionary Practices

Washington state has identified six principles to guide districts in assessing inclusionary practices in schools and districts. Please reflect on the questions related to the six principles and consider ways individual educators, administrators, and districts might change current practices to increase successful inclusion in the LRE.

Inclusionary Practices Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision, Expectations, leadership, and climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How has your school and district communicated a vision and priorities for inclusionary practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways is your school and district exploring how to implement inclusionary practices?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent is there alignment for inclusionary practices throughout the system?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are accessibility and UDL considered when planning instruction, communicating with staff and families, and discussing resources?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policies and procedures reflect requirements of State and Federal Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How is your school and district participating in state opportunities for increasing inclusionary practices and engaging in system wide change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are Board policies and procedures supportive of inclusionary practices, and are bargaining agreements aligned?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An array of services and program/classroom strategies to facilitate the implementation of LRE for students with disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Are general education teachers in your school(s) committed to instructional planning that meets the needs of diverse learners?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How clear is the process in your school for making LRE decisions based on the needs and capabilities of individual students with disabilities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent is the LRE decision process considering student well-being, social-emotional development, academic achievement, and post-school success?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District accountability systems that reflect high expectations for all students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How does your school and/or district ensure all understand how to plan and implement adaptations and accommodations for participation in state testing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How is your team ensuring IEP goals and objectives are aligned with state standards?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers, families, and students working together for better student results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent is there collaboration in your school between general and special educators, administrators, related, service personnel, and families to plan for inclusion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In what ways might your school plan to increase collaboration for the success of inclusion?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24 Adapted from WestEd. (2005). Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Self-Assessment Tool.
### Sufficient numbers of qualified staff

- How has your school planned for flexible staffing, schedules, and support for inclusion?
- To what extent are special and general education teachers able to collaborate on teaching content standards, assessment, and support for inclusion?
- How does your school team identify and plan for efficient use of resources to support inclusion such as technology for teaching, assistive technology, paraprofessionals, adapted learning materials, etc.

### Inclusive Video Activity:

- Watch the [Including Samuel](#) extended trailer (12:03) by Dan Habib.
- Watch [Evolution of Inclusion](#) (5:02) by Shelley Moore.
- Identify personal, professional, and school goals or next steps for inclusionary practices.
SECTION 1: AN INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

An Instructional Guide for Educators is the first of four sections in the Inclusionary Practices Handbook for Washington state. This section will provide an overview of best practices and practical examples of how teachers can work together to meet the needs of diverse students. The section is divided into three chapters. The following are topics for the three chapters in Section 1: An Instructional Guide for Educators.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating a schoolwide culture of collaboration</td>
<td>Currently in development; publish date expected December 1, 2020</td>
<td>Currently in development; publish date expected January 15, 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive mindsets and beliefs for meaningful collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration and communication skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies for collaborative teaming and co-teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally responsive collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration across grade levels and learning environments</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Each chapter suggests strategies and practices that general and special education teachers can use collaboratively in support of inclusion in the general education classroom and school community.

The content in the handbook was developed using a thorough review of academic research and literature related to inclusion. This handbook is also informed by the wisdom and experience of knowledgeable professionals and educators dedicated to inclusionary practices in Washington state and beyond.
CHAPTER 1: COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT INCLUSION

The act of collaboration involves coming together, working together, and sustaining relationships. The word “collaboration” includes the smaller word, “labor”. Collaboration is laboring over a problem or task together in order to affect an outcome. It is based on the belief that working together is more effective than accomplishing a task alone. Collaboration is essential for successful inclusion in schools, and a hallmark of inclusionary practices.

Collaboration in schools is “when teachers work together to diagnose what they need to do, plan and teach interventions, and evaluate their effectiveness.” High Leverage Practices (HLP) outlines three primary reasons educators collaborate in schools to include: 1) increase student success, 2) organize and facilitate effective meetings, and 3) work with families. There are many barriers to collaboration in schools, including school structures and educator mindsets. General and special education teachers have historically operated in a two-track system where beliefs and practices in education follow different paradigms, a different research base, epistemology, and perceived responsibilities. A collaborative and unified school culture focused on inclusion requires that educators reimagine disability as natural, examine school norms and beliefs to reduce barriers to collaboration, and work together to create conditions for all learners to be successful in the general education classroom and school community.

Collaboration is key to sustaining inclusion. For inclusion to be possible:
- Collaborative practices must be schoolwide.
- Inclusive mindsets and beliefs must support collaboration.
- Roles and responsibilities must be redefined.
- Educators must have opportunities to develop communication and collaboration skills.
- Collaborative teaming and co-teaching must be strategic.
- Collaboration must be culturally responsive.
- Collaboration must occur across grade levels and learning environments.

Case Study: Inclusion for Billy

Billy is a student with disabilities who did not spend his school years in a self-contained classroom, despite the recommendation of the IEP team. At the start of second grade, his communication, social, and academic skills were significantly behind other students his age. His parents were asked to consider a self-contained classroom that would have been a 30-minute bus ride from home. The general education teacher reported not having the skills to teach Billy in her classroom, and the special education teacher said she did not have the time to support inclusion. His parents were adamant he needed to be in the enriched environment of the general education classroom. They knew he would be most motivated to learn and grow when part of a dynamic curriculum, typical social and language models, and routines within the school community.

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Billy was included in general education classrooms more than 80% of the day every year from second grade until high school. Billy became a member of the classroom and school community in a way not possible had his education been in a self-contained classroom. His parents advocated for the opportunity for Billy to be included, but his success in school depended upon collaboration between IEP team members, teachers, paraeducators, the district, and families.

**Schoolwide Collaborative Practices**

Billy’s story illustrates how traditional school models can pose a barrier to access and success in the LRE. Billy’s family wanted their son included in general education to the greatest extent possible with support, but the school and district were designed to teach students with disabilities in a separate classroom, and in different ways. The educators and district lacked a shared vision for making inclusion possible but, at the end of each school year, teachers were surprised to report a positive experience with inclusion and that they developed new skills for inclusive teaching and collaboration.

A schoolwide culture of collaboration means all educators, administrators, and families work together effectively to ensure every student experiences success and belonging in the school community, and inclusion is not just dependent upon the willingness of individual teachers. In a schoolwide culture of collaboration, all teachers are involved with inclusion, sharing resources, reaching out to one another for consultation, sharing expertise and ideas, and working together with families to support the needs of diverse students. School leaders play an essential role in building a collaborative culture by inviting educators to examine traditional practices and beliefs that might be barriers to collaboration and designing structures that support collaborative practices. This work is essential within schools but must also be endorsed and supported throughout the broader system of leadership across districts.

Schoolwide systems for inclusion depend upon an ethos of equity, belonging, and quality education for all27. Systems that depend upon collaboration include Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ongoing professional development, schoolwide schedules, and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). UDL should be integrated with high leverage practices (HLPs), and specially designed instruction (SDI) for including students with disabilities in every general education classroom. MTSS utilizes collaborative teams to provide a continuum of academic and behavioral support for all students. Table 7 identifies elements of both the culture and systems necessary for successful collaboration.

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Table 7: Collaboration Across System Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schoolwide Culture of Collaboration</th>
<th>Schoolwide Systems of Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Shared vision that all students belong.</td>
<td>• Integration of UDL and SDI.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared goals for inclusion.</td>
<td>• Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared responsibility for student success.</td>
<td>• Schoolwide schedules for MTSS, collaboration, and co-teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Schools and classrooms welcoming to all families.</td>
<td>• Cross disciplinary professional development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional learning communities (PLCs) for educators.</td>
<td>• School leadership committee for inclusion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Celebrations of student achievement.</td>
<td>• Community and family engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Person-first language.</td>
<td>• Dedicated resources for collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Showcasing successful collaboration and inclusion.</td>
<td>• Monitoring of schoolwide systems of collaboration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mindsets and Beliefs that Support Collaboration**

Mindsets conducive to collaboration are open to possibilities, respectful and tolerant of different approaches, and willing to participate in the process of reflection and change. Collaboration can be difficult when different beliefs and unchecked bias become barriers. In the story of Billy, the second grade general education teacher believed that Billy did not belong in the general education classroom and needed specialized help with learning that she was not able to provide. The special education teacher and other members of the IEP team concurred that the self-contained classroom was designed for students like Billy who were significantly behind in academic and social skills, and that mainstreaming opportunities would be sufficient for social integration. Every school member of the IEP endorsed the decision that inclusion was not appropriate for Billy, despite what the parents wanted for their child. Resolving the problem which stemmed from different perspectives about what was best for Billy and a bias toward separating students with disabilities was only possible with a mediator.

Historically, in traditional school models, students receiving special education services have been viewed as needing to ‘fit in’ or ‘earn their way’ into general education classes. This perspective reflects bias toward students with disabilities and can be a barrier to collaboration and inclusion. Bias refers to stereotypes, assumptions, and prejudices that develop over time and can unconsciously influence discriminatory actions and decision making. Everyone has implicit unconscious bias about people and life, and bias does not always align with personal beliefs. Teachers may care deeply about students with disabilities and believe they deserve a quality education, and at the same time have bias that students with cognitive disabilities don’t belong in general education based on assumptions related to learning. Actions that result from bias may include disability-based placement in a separate classroom, supplanting instead of adapting lessons, ignoring a student with disabilities in class discussions, lowering expectations, or assuming a student with disabilities won’t be accepted by nondisabled peers. Such actions based on bias

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have deprived students with disabilities for decades of enriched content, language models, and social experiences that occur every day in general education classrooms. Educators are in positions to make critical decisions affecting the lives of students, and the impact of bias can be reduced through reflection and self-awareness.

Reflection Activity: Beliefs About Inclusion

Self-Assessment: Beliefs About Inclusion

Read the belief statements below about inclusion and match your beliefs with the ratings, then reflect on your responses. Consider how your responses might reflect lived experiences or bias, and how differing viewpoints among team members might impact collaboration.

Instructions:

For each belief statement, choose one of the following ratings that corresponds with your position.

A. I agree with this statement.
B. It depends on the commitment of educator(s).
C. It depends on student needs and student readiness.
D. Maybe with system changes.
E. I don’t believe this and/or I have doubts.

Belief Statements about Inclusion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Belief Statements about Inclusion</th>
<th>My Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The academic needs of students with disabilities can be met in general education classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education teachers can meet the unique needs of students with disabilities when given information and support.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General and special education teachers need to share responsibility for educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special education teachers provide valuable input and strategies for meeting the needs of students in general education classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal Reflection:

- What experiences might have influenced your responses?
- Can you recognize bias in your responses and possible actions that might result from bias?
- How might opposing viewpoints among team members be a challenge for collaboration?

An inclusive mindset might agree with the statements above or believe the statements depend on the commitment of educators. Conditional beliefs in the statements based upon disabilities or system limitations may reflect bias, which can lead to dismissal or deferral of change. It is understandable that some educators and families would have reservations or concerns about inclusion based on experiences or beliefs. While differences of opinion are natural, opposing beliefs and bias can be barriers to collaboration if not addressed individually and as part of the teaming process. A schoolwide culture of collaboration and vision for inclusion can help teams transcend mental model barriers and bias to promote understanding and consensus building.
At the core of collaborative work, educators must ask, “how can we ensure each student with a disability has equitable access to the school community, curriculum, and activities as students without disabilities”? Effective collaboration depends upon positive mindsets, a shared vision, redefined roles (see Appendix B), and school restructuring. In addition, working with colleagues and families also requires strong interpersonal skills, trust, courage, openness, communication skills, and knowledge of strategies. Cook (2002)\(^3^0\) identifies characteristics of effective collaborators:

1. Recognizing that inclusion is complex and requires joint and sustained effort.
2. Acknowledging the creativity generated by working collaboratively.
3. Combining the effectiveness of teachers skilled in content and curriculum with skills in adaptations and special education processes.
4. Participating willingly in joint problem solving and welcoming the personal and professional support of colleagues.
5. Recognizing and valuing the personal learning and growth that results from collaboration.
6. Reflecting on own educational practices and looking for ways to be more effective in teaching and collaboration.

**Inclusive Language**

Inclusive language reflects the belief that disability is natural, and that different abilities and ways of doing things is respected. The language used to talk about students with disabilities not only reflects a mindset, but influences perceptions of disability and the role of educators. When educators refer to students as “yours” or “mine”, “sped students”, “those kids”, or “tier 3 students” it reflects predetermined expectations, otherness from “regular” students, and division of responsibility among educators based on student disability. If a teacher comments that a student won’t listen, the problem appears to be with the student for not following directions instead of adults taking responsibility to modify their actions to improve understanding. Patterns of language reflect mindsets toward disability and require conscious effort, reflection, and teamwork to change.

All people are unique in different ways, and disability is only one aspect of identity. The use of person-first language acknowledges that every student is more than what might be assumed by their disability. By choosing inclusive language and acting to reduce barriers in systems and environments to include the diverse needs of all students, schools and society can also minimize the impact of disability on individuals. Rather than perceiving the challenges of disability as residing in the student, educators should consider how the environment or expectations can be adapted or better communicated. In addition, educators can use language that brings students with disabilities into the community, referring to them as “our students” or by their names. Also, when describing what students can’t do, use language that reflects a growth mindset such as ‘working on it’ or ‘not yet demonstrated’ to reflect a belief that students can learn and follow expectations given time and opportunities\(^3^1\).

**Culturally Responsive Collaboration**


\(^3^1\) Yeager, D. and Dweck, C. (2012). Mindsets that promote resilience: When students believe that personal characteristics can be developed. *Educational Psychologist, 47*(4), 302-314.
School culture is central to how learning takes place. The culture is reflected in everyday habits, practices, and interactions and develops from shared meanings and beliefs. It is greatly influenced by the dominant culture in society, uniform standards, and systems of accountability. Culturally responsive collaboration in teams helps to maintain parity when collaborating with colleagues and families. Parity is acknowledging that each member of a team has value and can make equally meaningful contributions.

Cultural responsiveness in a team means members recognize and respect different styles and norms of communication and social behaviors. Teams must work empathetically to ensure members have voice, a sense of belonging, and opportunities to be agents of change. Anchoring discussions and decisions in an understanding of justice and equity helps to expand possibilities for all students, and keeps teams focused on shared goals and outcomes.

Collaboration for inclusionary practices is justice oriented, student centered, and culturally responsive. A social justice-oriented approach in schools reflects an overarching commitment to equity and makes concerted efforts to recognize how rules, norms, and values can privilege some and exclude others.

The following are steps for culturally responsive teaching and teamwork based on the work of Geneva Gay (2002):

- Develop a knowledge base on cultural diversity by exploring alternate perspectives on education, rules, socialization, discipline, etc.
- Ensure curriculum, intervention plans, and instructional decisions are culturally relevant and do not disempower others or reinforce stereotypes.
- Demonstrate cultural caring and build a learning community.
- Maintain cross-cultural communications.
- Consider modifying instructional strategies or curriculum for cultural relevance.

**IEP Teaming: Roles and Responsibilities**

A student eligible for special education means a student has been evaluated and determined to need special education because of having a disability in one of thirteen eligibility categories. Disability categories are necessary for receiving special education services but are insufficient for understanding who a student is and what they need to succeed in school. The use of disability labels can lead to assumptions and stereotypes based on characteristics associated with different disability categories and limit perceptions of what students are capable of achieving. Labels and categories for eligibility should not be used to predetermine student needs, design services, or determine placement. Decisions about how and where to support students with disabilities should be based upon a comprehensive review of information about strengths, skills, needs, and preferences of the student from various sources, including the family, as well as observations in natural environments.

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34 WAC 392-172A-01035
Collaboration between educators and families is fundamental in the provision of rights for students with disabilities. IDEA mandates students with disabilities have access to the same general education curriculum and assessments as students without disabilities in the LRE to the greatest extent possible. In addition, IDEA mandates that Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities be developed by a team to include a special education teacher, a general education teacher, related service providers as needed, a district representative, the family, and the student, when appropriate. There are multiple other partners who could contribute to the IEP including outside agencies, community-based organizations, and family advocates. The IEP outlines the strengths, skills, needs, and preferences of individual students based on information provided by members of the team. That information is used to develop IEP goals, services, supplementary aids, accommodations, and placement(s).

**Figure 6: IEP Development Process**

The special education case manager coordinates and facilitates IEP team meetings and ensures team members have opportunities to provide input. IEP decisions are made collaboratively at each step in the process. Students with disabilities are general education students first, and they need access to general education standards and curriculum. Therefore, general education teachers play an essential role in the IEP planning and development of standards-based goals, but also in facilitating inclusion and working with others to support inclusion. In addition, the team determines IEP accommodations for general education settings, and input from the general education teacher who will be implementing those accommodations is critical.

Families play an essential role in providing information and advocating for the rights and needs of their child. When educators and families commit to sharing responsibility for student success, focus on student strengths, and presume competence, then students with disabilities can thrive. The **5C Process**, developed by TIES Center at the University of Minnesota, is a tool for IEP teams to build continuity and application of IEP goals across home and school learning environments. The 5C Process includes recognizing:

1. Components in a framework,
2. Collaboration (see Figure 7),
3. Continuity,
4. Data collection, and
5. Capacity.
Consider the following strategies for ensuring team members feel valued and engaged in the IEP process:

- Always start meetings with greetings, introductions, and a statement of purpose.
- Create an agenda and allow time for others to add items to the agenda.
- Describe the function of the IEP as a working document, and how it benefits the student.
- Use plain language and pause to allow for input, and to check for understanding of terms and discussion points.
- Focus on student strengths, interests, and goals.
- Provide opportunities for students to participate or lead a portion of the IEP whenever possible.
- Provide a draft of the IEP to families whenever possible before the meetings to support family engagement and understanding.
- Encourage the family and student to advocate for what is needed for the student to succeed.
- Share appreciation for team members time and contributions.

Collaborative Teaming in Schools

A collaborative team is two or more people working together voluntarily to accomplish mutual goals. Team collaboration can be a powerful tool to improve student access and success in the general education environment. However, teachers are often accustomed to working alone, and many school schedules do not have time built in for collaboration. Common misunderstandings about collaboration are that it happens regularly throughout the school day, everyone does it as part of their work, that skills for collaboration come naturally, and collaboration happens when everyone gets along.

Collaboration is always essential, and collaborative teaming around a specific mission is work that extends beyond what is required and can take extra time and commitment. Collaborative work is characterized as a shared responsibility, goal-oriented, and voluntary. Educators engage collaboratively as members of a shared school community, but collaborative teams work on targeted goals toward positive and systemic change for students, teachers, and schools.

To be effective as a team, educators need to be open and willing to work with others, and systems need to be in place to incentivize teamwork. School leadership can support collaborative teaming by building in structured time for collaboration, providing assistance with schedule and class changes as needed, and celebrating team successes. Collaborative team meetings can be structured or spontaneous. Structured sit-down meetings are important for co-planning, reviewing data, and documenting decisions made in response to data. Spontaneous on-the-fly meetings and emails are good for checking in, building relationships, and following up on student progress. Once the team is established, they can meet less often. Figure 8 shows how collaborative teaming involves building a team structure and goals, using teamwork strategies, creating clear methods of communication, and using planning tasks and templates to document discussions and decisions.

**Figure 8: Collaborative Teaming Components**

**Building a Team Structure**
- Define team purpose and focus
- Establish team membership
- Create and protect time and meeting space
- Develop trust
- Learn member strengths
- Involve students and families

**Teamwork Strategies**
- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Establish processes and schedules
- Make decision by consensus
- Develop shared values
- Set ground rules
- Share information
- Reflect on team process

**Communication Skills**
- Listen and interact well
- Know and trust each other
- Communicate clearly and accurately
- Be sensitive to diverse cultures and perspectives

**Coordinate Time and Actions:**
- Co-create agendas
- Organize paperwork
- Document discussions
- Follow problem-solving steps
- Write action plans
- Evaluate and improve plans

**Collaboration Skills and Strategies**

Effective collaboration depends upon school structures, skills, and mindsets, but also interpersonal skills for building trust and relationships. Individuals have different styles of collaboration and communication, and different levels of interest or engagement in working with others. Individual approaches to tasks and problems will be based somewhat on each person’s style. Awareness of your personal style of collaboration can begin with a self-assessment of collaboration skills (see [Appendix A](#) for an example).
Communication Skills for Collaboration

Communication skills are the basic building blocks of collaborative interactions, including styles and strategies for sending and receiving messages, listening, and nonverbal communication, whether in person, through email, or in school-based systems of communication. The content of a message communicated by whatever means can be understood or interpreted in different ways, depending on how the message is framed or delivered. Sometimes emotions can distract from a message, or individual styles of communication create conflict. An example is if a team member has concerns related to “who and how” the team will make progress toward a goal with a priority of being decisive and action oriented, while another team member places a higher value on generating ideas, and allowing for long-range thinking. Reconciling differences respectfully is important using strategies such as seeking clarification, staying focused on the intent of communication, and allowing for multiple perspectives to be validated.

Communication skills essential for collaboration are listed in Table 8 below. The development and practice of these skills and, awareness of barriers, can help educators engage all team members in collaboration.

Table 8: Communication Skills and Barriers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication skills</th>
<th>Barriers to Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Effective use of communication tools to deliver and receive messages and ideas.</td>
<td>• Ineffective use of communication tools that leads to confusion or misunderstandings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid giving advice unless asked.</td>
<td>• Formulating questions or responses while another person is talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend to feelings first, then content.</td>
<td>• Allowing side thoughts and conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Convey respect and openness among professionals and families.</td>
<td>• Tuning out to filter information/selective attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active listening that does not interrupt, is open, and remembers what is said.</td>
<td>• Allowing self to get distracted by environment or technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflect on what is said.</td>
<td>• Yes/no questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nonverbal communication including eye contact, respect, positive attitude, and understanding.</td>
<td>• Lack of transparency and trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Questions that are open and invite engaging conversation and contributions.</td>
<td>• Use of jargon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statements regarding students or events that are accurate and descriptive.</td>
<td>• Language barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication skills that honor cultural diversity.</td>
<td>• Incongruity of verbal and nonverbal communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Emotional outbursts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Communication with Families

Professional language and systems of communication in education are commonplace for educators, but not for most families. There are a myriad of acronyms and procedures in special education that can be intimidating and impede families as partners and participants in their child’s education. In the story of Billy, the IEP team communicated disagreement with the parent request
for inclusion both verbally and nonverbally using terms such as “mainstreaming” and “direct instruction”. The initial unwillingness of the team to consider what the parents wanted for their child created division between parents and the team. A family advocate was needed to ensure the voice and participation of the parents was considered. Recognizing and honoring the family’s everyday knowledge and expertise related to their child is critical for valuing them as members of the team. To ensure positive and productive participation of families, consider the following:

- Provide written and verbal communication related to the IEP in advance of meetings.
- Acknowledge and incorporate input from the family about their child.
- Communicate in a method and language preferred by the family.
- Use communication that is easy to understand and free of jargon.
- Maintain culturally responsive communication that considers multiple perspectives.
- Maintain respect and empathy for family concerns and their position outside of the school culture.
- Communication about people, routines, and events in classrooms (e.g., lesson themes, printed informational brochures, information about paraprofessional roles, introduce both general and special education teachers and other specialists).

**Collaborative Lesson Planning**

Collaborative planning in schools involves identifying and describing a problem or task, then bringing people together who are essential for working on the task and allowing the reciprocal exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information. The inclusion of students with disabilities depends upon collaboration between general and special education teachers and related service providers to meet regularly and transcend traditional roles.

When planning for inclusion, educators collaborate to plan for access to information and instruction, but also for transitions between classes, conditions within the classroom environment, assessments, peer interactions and mentoring, utilization of related services, and specially designed instruction. Figure 9 illustrates a process for collaborative planning between general and special education teachers.
Components of a collaborative planning process include:

- **Learning about students** is a joint activity, whereby the general and special education teacher are both involved in gathering information about a student with disabilities by observing them in different environments, reviewing assessments and work samples to determine present levels in academics and social-emotional development, and talking with families and familiar peers and adults in order to understand strengths and needs to develop meaningful IEP goals and an inclusion plan.

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** is a component of effective core instruction led by the general education teacher. The instructional plans and activities are shared with the special education teachers and together they develop adaptations as needed for ensuring access for students with disabilities.

- **Evaluating access** for students with disabilities can be done by both general and special education teachers, but when led by the special education teacher, information can be gained through observation of general education classrooms, review of progress, getting input from the student and family, gathering work samples, and documenting challenges.

- **Integration of specially designed instruction** is led by the special education teacher and can be implemented by any educator or paraeducator who understands the plan as designed by the special education teacher.

- **Teach, assess, reflect, and adapt** is done by general and special educators with input from paraeducators to maintain student participation and learning in the general education classroom.

- **Repeating the cycle** will be necessary as new units of instruction are developed and as the student develops new skills and knowledge.
Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is one way teachers can collaborate to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Co-teaching is when two or more credentialed teachers or a teacher and specialist jointly plan, implement, and evaluate instruction together in a shared setting for a specific amount of time on a consistent basis\(^\text{37}\). When general and special education teachers are in the same classroom, all students benefit from having two teachers, and students with disabilities benefit from being with a diverse group of students rather than isolated with other students with disabilities. A co-taught classroom reduces the stigma of having a disability and provides a more integrated and enriched standards-based curriculum with individualized support. Students with disabilities have better attendance and perform better academically in classes that are co-taught\(^\text{38}\).

Co-teaching is different from the collaborative planning described above, where general education teachers maintain the lead in the general education classroom and collaborate with special education teachers to support students with disabilities in the classroom. Co-teaching is shared ownership of the room, instructional planning, adaptations, grading and assessments, and outcomes for all students. In a co-teaching model, the general education teacher can be the content specialist, and the special education teacher can be a strategic partner for specialized services\(^\text{39}\). Co-teaching can also allow a flexible exchange of skills and shared roles for delivering instruction, organizing content and/or skill development. The general education teacher has content expertise, and special education staff add high leverage practices and specially designed instruction strategies that can benefit all students, such as re-teaching, reinforcing, or restating instruction to enhance learning and connections to content (see Table 9).

Table 9: Supports and Barriers for Co-Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Critical factors for Successful Co-Teaching</th>
<th>Challenges/Barriers to Co-Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Clear expectations of the co-teaching partnership, class procedures, student behaviors, class management, etc.</td>
<td>• Limited time for planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shared responsibility for grading and progress monitoring.</td>
<td>• Low sense of efficacy (or confidence) in ability to co-teach or meet the needs of students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborative planning of content, instructional arrangements, student grouping, and flexing teacher roles.</td>
<td>• Lack of commitment to co-teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compatible styles of communication and feedback between co-teachers.</td>
<td>• Lack of skills in communication and problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crossing-over to share knowledge of general education curriculum and UDL, and strategies in SDI, behavior plans, etc.</td>
<td>• Interrelational tensions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexibility with changing roles, changes in routines, and</td>
<td>• Unequal participation in the co-teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Critical factors for Successful Co-Teaching

adaptations for students with disabilities.
• Coordinated schedules for meeting, planning, delivering instruction, related service provision, transitions, etc.
• Planning adaptations (accommodations and modifications), flexible grouping, collaborative learning, and peer mentoring.
• Administrative support in setting priorities, redistributing resources, and allowing time for meeting to plan and debrief.
• A process and plan in place for resolving disagreements and conflict.

Challenges/Barriers to Co-Teaching

management of the classroom or curriculum.
• Delegating responsibility of students with disabilities to the special education teacher or paraeducator.
• Different and incompatible philosophies on teaching or behavior/classroom management.

In a co-teaching classroom, paraeducators are not co-teachers. Although they may be fundamental to supporting students and a classroom, they do not have the equivalent credentials, knowledge, or experience and expertise of licensed practitioners, and they are not employed to carry out the responsibilities of a teacher. Rather, they are in a support role, delivering services and implementing specially designed instruction under the direction of general and special education teacher (see section on collaboration with paraeducators).

Co-teaching in schools can be encouraged by administrators or requested by interested teachers. It is generally most successful when teachers willingly volunteer to be a team teacher and find a willing partner. Co-teaching is one of many ways teachers can collaborate to support inclusion, but most teachers lack understanding and experience as a team teacher. Professional development in co-teaching can help teachers develop strategies. If two or more teams in a school express interest, they will need support from administrators, but also time to develop the skills for co-teaching, which can eventually be shared and increase school and district capacity for co-teaching.

Friend and Bursuck\textsuperscript{40} describe a variety of instructional and classroom arrangements that general and special education teachers can use in a co-teaching model as described below (for a more detailed description of each, see Appendix C).

• **Lead one/Support one:** One teacher teaches and the other observes/collection data.
• **Station Teaching:** Instruction is divided into segments or steps to be completed at each station.
• **Parallel Teaching:** Same lesson delivered simultaneously by both teachers to different groups.
• **Alternative Teaching:** Small group for specialized skills while larger group learns with the lead teacher.
• **Team Teaching:**
  o **Speak and Add:** Instruction delivered together/reciprocal conversation.
  o **Speak and Chart:** Instruction delivered together/speaker/writer or media support.
  o **Skill Groups:** Each teacher is responsible for specific groups of students working on particular skills.

Collaboration with Paraeducators

Paraeducators work alongside certified staff in schools to support the growth and success of students with disabilities and other students who need extra help in schools. They are sometimes referred to as paraprofessionals, paras, or educational assistants (EAs). The following is a description of the paraprofessional role from the WAC41:

(h) paraprofessional staff and aides shall present evidence of skills and knowledge established under the rules of the professional educator standards board, necessary to meet the needs of students eligible for special education, and shall be under the supervision of a certificated teacher with a special education endorsement, or a certificated educational staff associate or a licensed staff.

Paraeducators play a critical role in ensuring students have a positive experience in school while engaged in learning and social opportunities. They can also be instrumental in supporting inclusionary practices. When paraeducators support inclusion, both general and special education teachers need to provide clear objectives and ensure paraeducators have the knowledge and skill to follow through with tasks. The special education teacher supervises implementation of specially designed instruction across learning environments, and the general education teacher works with the special education teacher to develop guidelines for the paraeducator when supporting the general education classroom.

Ongoing collaboration with paraeducators is critical for preventing student dependence, interference with peer relationships, and inappropriate instruction42. In addition, paraeducators provide valuable input and information to the team on student progress. Barriers to collaboration with paraeducators can include inflexible school schedules and provisions in paraeducator contracts that limit how they spend their time in schools. To be effective, paraeducators need professional development, but also dedicated time to collaborate with certified teachers and staff. When paraeducators are valued members of the team in support of inclusion, the team and school leadership can advocate and find creative solutions to overcome barriers to collaboration. The following are best practices for including paraeducators in team collaboration for inclusion:

- Encourage paraeducator participation in non-instructional team-building, team planning, and professional development activities.
- Create flexible schedules to allow collaboration with teams and certified educators.
- Encourage paraeducator representation on school and district leadership committees.
- Provide ongoing supervision and mentoring on specially designed instruction and social skill building.
- Assign paraeducators to classrooms to support all students and the primary teacher, while balancing time to promote student independence, and implementing SDI.
- Provide just enough student paraeducator support to promote student learning and independence.

41 WAC 392-172A-02090
Prepare paraeducators to be culturally responsive and maintain confidentiality when communicating with families.

- Clarify roles and responsibilities to paraeducators and all team members (See Appendix C).

**Building Capacity for Collaboration**

Capacity for collaboration can be developed within individual educators, in teams, and across school environments. As stated above, it does not come naturally. In fact, collaboration can be difficult, and requires sustained commitment to maintaining positive relationships and consensus-building. It cannot be forced or mandated, but must be voluntary (Jorgensen, 2018). Building this capacity in the educator depends upon reflection, introspection, interpersonal maturity, and professionalism. A culture of collaboration in the schoolwide work environment fosters and encourages educator capacity for collaboration, and effective collaboration within teams.

**Figure 10: Capacity for Collaboration**

Individual educator capacity for collaboration has a direct impact on team capacity for collaboration on behalf of students (see Figure 10). Personal styles and preferences, as well as perceived expectations affect patterns of interaction and ways of communicating. Educators do not come to the profession with the same opinions about how diverse students should be educated, and where. Differences of opinion about student needs and the role of educators often come from beliefs and values that are not apparent, even to the self. An example would be when a student exhibits disruptive behaviors, one member of a team may believe compliance and conformity is needed, while another believes tolerance and acceptance of differences is the solution.

Differences of opinion are inherent in all relationships and workplaces, and skills are needed for maintaining positive relationships while establishing and working toward common goals.

As mentioned previously, collaboration is not about liking everyone on the team, or even complete agreement. Rather, it’s about establishing a shared goal and maintaining a positive and professional working relationship, even when there are differences and conflicts. Consensus does not mean everyone agrees but rather, decisions are made based on equal participation in the discussion and process. When reaching consensus, team members can support a decision even if not in full agreement. Working with diverse colleagues, students, and families requires educators:

1) See and include multiple perspectives
2) Recognize that adults are in different stages of readiness or understanding
3) Maintain openness and flexibility with plans and agendas
4) Explore multiple ways to communicate ideas and concepts
Reflective Practice

Reflective practice means maintaining an ongoing habit of reflection by looking back and thinking about what is happening in meetings and the school environment in order to learn from experience and actively engage in decision making and change. Shön (1983)\(^{43}\) promotes reflective practice as a way for teachers to continually improve and grow personally and professionally. Reflective practice can help educators make sense of emotions, experiences, and problem situations in the context of collaboration with others. Ongoing reflection in a professional journal can help educators gain insights and feel prepared to contribute to conversations and decisions, tolerate ambiguity, and maintain open-mindedness. Self-awareness can emerge from reflective practices when mindful about personal reactions, perspectives, values, and bias.

While reflection as an individual practice can lead to personal growth and insight, there is a risk when reflecting alone that bias can be reinforced and go unchallenged when trying to make sense of self and situations. Reflective practices in a community means sharing insights and ideas gleaned from private reflections, and being open to change based upon the views, values, and needs of others. Reflection in a community can lead to fuller and more complex interpretations of situations related to collaboration, teaching, and ourselves. Overall, reflective practices can help educators hold the tension of opposites and focus on being present and open while building positive and productive relationships\(^{44}\).

Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

A PLC is about establishing a collaborative culture of shared learning experiences that build capacity for continuous improvement across the school system. PLCs can seem superficial when “educators simply call what they are doing professional learning communities without going very deep into learning”\(^{45}\). To have the most impact on the culture of collaboration in school systems, PLCs should have a purpose or focus, be inclusive of all educators and administrators, and encompasses all schools within a district and beyond. School and districtwide professional learning can be done by establishing learning goals, setting topics and themes, and sharing materials. Schools can take turns adopting a topic or theme and developing materials and presentations that can be shared across schools within a district. Topics for PLCs that focus on collaboration and inclusionary practices could be identified through surveys, Inclusionary Practices Self-Assessment, this handbook, and reviews of research and resources.


\(^{45}\) Fullan, M. (2006). Leading professional learning: Think ‘system’ and not ‘individual school’ if the goal is to fundamentally change the culture of schools. *The School Administrator*, 63(10), 10-14.
Collaboration Across Grade Levels and Learning Environments

Collaboration as an inclusionary practice will be different across grade levels and learning environments. Students with disabilities are first and foremost general education students with rights to access a basic general education as FAPE through special education services. The services provided to students with disabilities are to be provided in the LRE to the greatest extent possible. Schools provide a continuum of settings to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Collaboration across school grades and learning environments is essential in supporting students throughout their education.

Early Childhood Collaboration

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) service provision for children with disabilities ages three to five is multidisciplinary, whereby educators and related service providers coordinate the overlap of services to develop and work on IEP objectives. Strong collaboration is needed to ensure young children with disabilities make progress in the LRE. Barriers to collaboration among ECSE teams can include philosophical differences, poor communication, and lack of time for planning together. Recognizing the barriers and problem solving is essential to building a strong community of support for young children with disabilities and their families. Characteristics of ECSE services include the following:

- Emphasis on social skills and peer interactions.
- Providers mediate and facilitate child learning experiences.
- Family-centered planning.
- Connecting families with community resources and events.

Elementary School Collaboration

In elementary schools, students with disabilities are on the roster for a single general education teacher throughout the year. Collaboration between educators and service providers at the elementary level develops over that year as the team develops tiered systems and responsive interventions for equal access to academic standards. Characteristics of collaboration in the elementary grades includes the following:

- Multiple subjects taught in one classroom by one general education teacher.
- Minimal in-school transitions.
- Push in and pull out models of collaboration for special groups.
- Instruction throughout the day varies from teacher-directed to small group and project-based learning.
- Both indirect consultation and team teaching to support IEP goals.

Secondary School Collaboration

In middle and high school, students are figuring out who they are as teenagers and students, and they start thinking more deeply about their future in the world. They need to have access to a variety of core curriculum and need support and guidance as they navigate the transition from
childhood, to becoming self-aware, self-regulating, and self-determined. Secondary students need guidance in school on how to learn and respond to a variety of educators. Collaboration between secondary general and special education is about helping students get access to the things they want to learn, and experience success. Barriers to collaboration at the secondary level can include facilitating access to complex core content taught by different teachers at different times throughout the day, as well as coordinating collaboration with numerous educators to plan for and support individual students. Each secondary classroom is unique, and students can’t always adapt without an adult liaison to advocate on their behalf as they learn different systems for each class. Special education teachers need to collaborate with multiple educators at the secondary level who may bring different content area knowledge and different awareness levels of inclusionary practices. Areas where strategic collaboration can support student progress include:

- Student lead IEPs bring students in as collaborators, advocating for what they need to be successful and exercising self-awareness, self-regulation and self-determination.
- Community collaboration for community-based job placement, independent living skills such as navigating a grocery store or bus system or finding community service opportunities to build students skills and connect students to their community.
- Career and technical educator and special educator collaboration to support all students access and make progress in career and technical education classes.
- Collaboration between special educators and school counselors to support all students in their transition planning and High School and Beyond Plan development

**Transition-Age Collaboration:**

Secondary transition collaboration for students with disabilities between the ages of 18 to 21 involves different teams than for school age students, based on goals and services that support transition into adulthood and the workforce. Person-centered planning is fundamental to transitions, as are community learning experiences. Transition-age students can lead their own IEPs and direct their own High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) by setting goals and a vocational course of study related to their interests and vocational goals. Challenges include coordinating services and support from multiple agencies to create a seamless system of transition. The following are a few examples of partners who might collaborate to support successful transition:

- Student
- Families
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
- Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)
- Developmental Disability Resources
- Paraeducators
- Employment Providers and Supports
- Special Education Case Manager
- Community Businesses
- School Counselor
- Career and Technical Education (CTE) Staff
Collaboration Online

Collaboration continues to be critical for students with disabilities when planning and teaching in online instructional models. Core education and specially designed instruction to address IEP goals and objectives can be implemented in partial or fully online environments. Collaborative teams can work together online to coordinate access to general education curriculum, materials, technologies, and digitized materials. The following are examples of possible online collaboration for educators:

- Have someone with expertise pre-record a video on a topic to share in the online class.
- Team teach in an online class to deliver content, or share roles for managing technology, chats, and break out rooms.
- Schedule times to meet online to collaboratively plan instruction and student participation.

Team-Building Activity: Operational Goal Writing

Establishing clear mission and goals as a collaborative team is essential for working together effectively and efficiently. Operational goals guide the team in planning and carrying out a task and are grounded in a team mission. They are steps to achievement that are easily identified, observable, and specific. Nonoperational goals are when steps are not observable, indiscernible, and ambiguous. The team develops goals through discussion and operationalizes the goals through consensus. There should be multiple indicators of achieving a goal, and indicators should reflect both accomplishing the goal and the effectiveness of the team.

As a team activity, identify a possible team mission and write operational goals and indicators.

Here’s an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team mission</th>
<th>Operational goals</th>
<th>Indicators of meeting the goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Foster student independence in the general education classroom | • Assign paraeducator to classroom rather than individual students.  
• Write action plans for paraeducator to know when and to what extent support is provided to the student.  
• Ask the general education teacher to provide directions and communicate directly with the student. | • All students in the classroom are supported by the paraeducator.  
• Plans for paraeducator are developed and reviewed/updated collaboratively.  
• Ensure students work independently and connect directly with the teacher for help.  
• The team works together to make sure goals are clear and provide ongoing feedback to paraeducator. |

Your turn to try!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team mission</th>
<th>Operational goals</th>
<th>Indicators of meeting the goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Review the following list of collaborative team-building activities. Consider your individual practices and your school team practice to improve the collaborative team structure, develop goals, and celebrate success.

Collaborative Team-Building Activities:
- Discuss and develop a shared meaning of inclusion and why it’s important.
- Identify inclusionary practices currently in place.
- Discuss questions and concerns related to inclusion.
- Identify the vision, mission, and goals for inclusion for the team.
- Reflect on current collaborative practices.
- Identify barriers to collaboration and inclusion.
- Identify priorities for building collaborative teams and inclusionary practices.
- Identify needed professional development to expand inclusionary practices.
- Share values in relation to rules, expectations, and procedures, and acceptable alternatives.
- Identify observation goals for general education classes and across school environments.
- Agree on method of sharing information and providing feedback.
- Commitment to shared ownership of engagement and outcomes for all students.

Summary

In this chapter on collaboration for inclusionary practices, there is an emphasis on the work it takes for teams to examine school practices and create positive changes that support inclusion. Engaging in effective collaboration with colleagues and families requires team members to practice skills in communication, collaboration, cultural responsiveness, and reflective practice. Collaboration that focuses on inclusionary practices depends upon the schoolwide culture, redefined roles supported by the school and district leadership, and inclusive mindsets that believe in the strengths and potential of all students. Collaborative teams need to come together to create opportunities for students across environments and throughout their school experience.

Consider the following questions for individual reflection or small-group discussion:
- Which collaboration activities are strengths in your school or district system?
- How might these strengths be leveraged toward collaborative partnerships in support of inclusion across grade levels and learning environments?
## APPENDIX A: COLLABORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribution</strong></td>
<td>I tend not to share ideas, information or resources.</td>
<td>I share ideas, information and resources upon request.</td>
<td>I usually share ideas, information and resources.</td>
<td>I freely share ideas, information, and resources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation/Participation</strong></td>
<td>I tend not to participate or remain engaged when a project moves away from my own immediate interests.</td>
<td>I sometimes make an effort to participate and remain engaged when a project moves away from my own immediate interests.</td>
<td>I often make an effort to participate and remain engaged even when a project moves away from my own immediate interests.</td>
<td>I can be relied on to participate and remain engaged even when a project moves away from my own immediate interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of Work</strong></td>
<td>My work reflects very little effort and often needs to be checked and/or redone by others to ensure quality.</td>
<td>My work reflects some effort but occasionally needs to be checked and/or redone by others to ensure quality.</td>
<td>My work reflects a strong effort. I self-monitor to improve the quality of my work.</td>
<td>My work reflects my best efforts. I continuously make small changes to improve the quality of my work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Management</strong></td>
<td>I rarely get things done by the deadline and others often have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities.</td>
<td>I tend to procrastinate, meaning others may have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities.</td>
<td>I usually use time well to ensure that things are done so others do not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities.</td>
<td>I routinely use time well to ensure things are done on time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Support</strong></td>
<td>I am often critical of the team or the work of fellow group members when I am in other settings.</td>
<td>Occasionally I am critical of the team or the work of fellow group members when I am in other settings.</td>
<td>I usually represent the team and the work of fellow members in a positive manner when I am in other settings.</td>
<td>I represent the team and the work of fellow group members in a positive manner when I am in other settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparedness</strong></td>
<td>I forget or lose materials needed to work.</td>
<td>I make an effort to bring or find materials needed to work, but often misplace things.</td>
<td>I usually bring needed materials and come ready to work.</td>
<td>I consistently bring needed materials and come ready to work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Solving</strong></td>
<td>I usually do not participate in group problem solving with an open mind. I either tend not to share my thoughts and ideas or I inhibit the contributions of others.</td>
<td>I make an effort to participate in group problem solving with an open mind. I generally share my thoughts and ideas, but I sometimes inhibit the contributions of others.</td>
<td>I usually participate in group problem solving with an open mind, sharing thoughts and ideas without inhibiting the contributions of others.</td>
<td>I consistently participate in group problem solving with an open mind, sharing thoughts and ideas without inhibiting the contributions of others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Dynamics</strong></td>
<td>I do not know how to gauge my own impact on the group, and am generally unaware of team dynamics.</td>
<td>I occasionally know how to gauge my own impact on the group and am somewhat aware of team dynamics.</td>
<td>I often know how to gauge my own impact on the group and am generally aware of team dynamics.</td>
<td>I consistently know how to gauge my own impact on the group and am routinely aware of team dynamics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### St. Cloud State University Collaboration Self-Assessment Tool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactions</td>
<td>I rarely listen to, respect, acknowledge, or support the efforts</td>
<td>I sometimes listen to, respect, acknowledge and support the efforts</td>
<td>I usually listen to, respect, acknowledge, and support the efforts</td>
<td>I consistently listen to, respect, acknowledge, and support the</td>
<td>Interactions with Others: I rarely listen to, respect, acknowledge, or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Others</td>
<td>of others. I allow conflict or personal differences to interfere</td>
<td>of others, but at times allow conflict or personal differences</td>
<td>of others, but I occasionally allow conflict or personal differences</td>
<td>of others. I occasionally allow conflict or personal differences</td>
<td>support the efforts of others. I allow conflict or personal differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>with communication.</td>
<td>to interfere with communication.</td>
<td>to interfere with communication.</td>
<td>to interfere with communication.</td>
<td>to interfere with communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>I like to either lead or follow but am uncomfortable when</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable with role flexibility but attempt to move</td>
<td>I can assume both roles (leader and follower) but am more</td>
<td>I can easily move between leader and follower, assuming either role</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>functioning outside my perceived role.</td>
<td>outside my perceived role.</td>
<td>comfortable in one role than the other.</td>
<td>as needed to accomplish the task.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>I rarely engage in self-reflection after collaborative activities</td>
<td>Self-reflection occurs after collaborative activities when</td>
<td>Self-reflection usually occurs after collaborative activities, but</td>
<td>I consistently use self-reflection after collaborative activities.</td>
<td>Reflection: I rarely engage in self-reflection after collaborative activities, but tend to focus on the behavior of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but tend to focus on the behavior of others.</td>
<td>prompted or reminded by others.</td>
<td>most often when things don’t go well.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Score:**

- **Max score:** 44 points

**Guide to Scoring:**

- **10–25:** Collaboration skills are emerging
- **26–34:** Collaboration skills are developing
- **35–44:** Collaboration skills are established

**Personal reflection:** What have you learned about yourself by completing this rubric? What skill area do you want to target for personal improvement? What one thing could you do tomorrow to begin your skill enhancement?

**Interpersonal vs. Intrapersonal skills:** Shaded boxes represent - interpersonal skills, clear score boxes represent - intrapersonal skills.

- **Interpersonal score**
- **Intrapersonal score**

*note that the scores will most likely be different as there are unequal numbers of
APPENDIX B: REDEFINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COLLABORATION

Roles and responsibilities evolve as schools move from mostly separate yet parallel education models to a more integrated model of shared time, resources, and expertise. Inclusionary practices must be school-wide rather than a teacher at a time.

Activity: Below are the redefined collaborative roles and responsibilities for students, families, educators, and administrators. Please review roles individually and/or as a team, reflect on your role and practices, and set goals toward increasing collaboration as an inclusionary practice.

Families and Students

- Family opportunities to visit the classrooms.
- Teachers and administrators welcome families into decision-making processes for student achievement and instruction.
- Communication throughout the year, and not just related to IEP.
- Families are included in all school-based functions and volunteer opportunities.
- Families and students collaborate in writing IEP goals.
- Input is solicited from families when school policies and procedures are updated.
- School-based parent-teacher associations and site councils include students with disabilities and their families.
- The school connects families with community resources.
- Families are included in school-based leadership teams for inclusion.

General Education Teacher

- Have ownership for students with disabilities in the general education classroom.
- Create a classroom culture that honors diversity and fosters a sense of belonging.
- Include the special education teacher and related service providers as equal partners in the planning, delivery, and assessment of learning.
- Utilize practices of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiation for diverse learners.
- Participate in the planning and implementation of behavioral support.
- Actively participate in the development and implementation of IEPs.
- Actively participate in providing guidance and support to personnel working with SWD.
- Communicates routinely with special education teachers and staff.
- Work collaboratively with special education teachers and related service providers to implement specially designed instruction.
- Recruit and train students to be tutors and peer buddies.
- Implements accommodations and modifications.
- Monitor and provide information to the team and family on academic, social, and IEP progress in general education.
- Co-teach with special educators.
- Provide guidance and clear expectations for paraprofessionals in the classroom.
- Prepare summaries on student participation and progress in general education for team meetings.
Special Education Teacher or Related Service Provider

- Actively participate with general education teachers and others in collaborative planning, instruction, development of communication plans, and the evaluation of academic and social progress.
- Include the general education teacher as an equal partner in the planning, delivery, and assessment of learning.
- Model strategies for supporting students with disabilities such as facilitating peer support, fostering independence, and embedding interventions.
- Identify and communicate adaptations for instructional methods and materials.
- Ensure that general education teachers have a copy of the IEP/goals.
- Coordinate participation in the Individualized Education Plan.
- Collaborate with others to develop schedules and interventions for paraeducators and assistants.
- Observe students with disabilities in the general education setting.
- Work with others to coordinate assessments and grades with general education teachers.
- Work with others to coordinate ongoing meetings and progress monitoring.
- Provide workshops on research-based methods for students with disabilities to teachers and educational assistants, and school staff.
- Pre-teach and reteach skills and content as needed.
- Work collaboratively to keep families informed of student progress.
- Plan for transitions between classes and within class, as well as grade to grade.
- Teach cooperative group lessons on social and academic skills.
- Co-teach with general educators.
- Create snapshots of IEPs for general education teachers (if not done by automated system).
- Work with others to train, direct, and supervise paraeducators.
- Mentor and manage duties of paraprofessionals working with students with disabilities.
  - Communicate clear expectations and feedback for working with students.
  - Develop schedules and partnerships with other educators.
  - Communicate paraeducator role with co-teachers and families.
  - Model desired strategies for services, behavior support, independence, and social skills.

Paraeducator

- Know strengths and skills for the role and request needed training.
- Maintain regular communication with special and general education teachers, as well as related service providers.
- Teach individuals and small groups as directed by general and special education teachers.
- Provide support to the whole class as needed and directed by lead teachers.
- Discuss teaching and management strategies with educators related to student goals.
- Receive and implement training for interventions.
- Monitor and document student progress as directed.
- Interact with all students in ways that build positive relationships among peers in academic and non-academic activities.
- Provide support to all students and the whole class, while being available to implement SDI and behavior support for students with disabilities.
- Maintain confidentiality and abstain from informal discussions of school or student issues,
information or problems outside of school or in the presence of students or unauthorized adults.

- Maintain positive relationships with families and only communicate about student progress with teacher’s approval.
- Reflect and improve on teaching, record management, and behavior management.
- Facilitate student independence and relationships with lead teacher and peers.
- Build on student strengths and reinforce positive behaviors.

**Administrator: Building and District-Level Leader(s)**

- Communicate a district wide vision and mission of inclusionary practices.
- Facilitate collaborative practices aligned with district and school wide vision and mission.
- Implement school wide systems for collaboration and inclusion such as UDL and MTSS.
- Develop master schedules that allow time for collaboration and shared planning.
- Ensure student access to general education curriculum, textbooks, assistive technology, and evidence-based teaching strategies.
- Provide opportunities for educators and families to develop collaboration skills.
- Provide Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that support inclusionary practices.
- Address collaborative skills and practices in teacher reviews and evaluations.
- Ensure all students have access to co-curricular opportunities.
- Redefine roles of educators and staff to support collaboration and inclusionary practices.
- Supervise paraeducators and consider effectiveness in collaboration and inclusion support.
- Promote the inclusion of the families of students with disabilities in school leadership committees and parent-teacher associations.
- Provide release time and opportunities for professional development for educators and staff.
- Allocate resources that allow time for educators to collaborate and support inclusionary practices.
- Balancing and reconciling conflicting goals, priorities, and practices that don’t align with the vision and mission of inclusionary practices.
- Maintain ongoing review of effectiveness of school/district-wide collaborative practices.
## APPENDIX C: CO-TEACHING MODELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Teaching Model</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Visual/Layout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead one/Support one:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One teacher teaches and the other observes/collcts data, etc.</td>
<td>Communicate in/out boxes that do not interrupt teaching.</td>
<td>Lead and Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary teacher designs and delivers instruction.</td>
<td>Behavior documentation and homework charts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support teacher “drifts” to provide assistance.</td>
<td>Materials station-(both teachers need access).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for those new to collaborative arrangements.</td>
<td>“See Me Later” cards for teacher communication.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drawback:</strong> If used indiscriminately or exclusively can default to special education teacher as “assistant”.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Station Teaching:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Station Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional content is divided for small groups.</td>
<td>Use of timers and signals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students move from station to station.</td>
<td>Practice routines as a class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One station can be independent work or peer tutoring.</td>
<td>Have colored index cards stating student role at stations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities are integrated.</td>
<td>Table tents with directions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning involves dividing content and coordination of delivery.</td>
<td>Always have something for them to turn in.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drawbacks:</strong> can include noise and activity, content may need to be adapted differently in each group, time must be monitored.</td>
<td>Provide anchor activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parallel Teaching:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Parallel Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching same content at same time to small groups.</td>
<td>Break groups by learning styles or interest.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose is to lower student-teacher ratio.</td>
<td>Create heterogeneous groupings (vs. skill level).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good for drill and practice, test review, projects.</td>
<td>Include brain breaks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not good for initial instruction unless both teachers are prepared.</td>
<td>Teach with a timer to keep everyone on track.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drawbacks:</strong> noise and activity levels high, needs to be paced equally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternative Teaching:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-teaching or reteaching content.</td>
<td>Use mini dry erase boards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One teacher works with a small group while the other teacher teaches a large group.</td>
<td>Have accessible computer station.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk is students with disabilities will be stigmatized by repeated groupings. Avoided by changing composition of the group (differentiate by learning style, interest, etc.)</td>
<td>Create individualized folders with appropriate work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Teaching:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Team Teaching Models:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both teachers are responsible for planning and instruction of all students.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Speak and Add</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires greatest level of mutual trust and commitment.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Speak and Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires flexibility, especially with teaching style.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Skill Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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