



# Inclusion Solutions

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## A Note from the Editor

We are nearing the end of 2001 and the West Michigan Inclusion Network is wrapping up another successful year. During this year, we have had the opportunity to sponsor five evening educational meetings, hold two advocacy training sessions for parents, hold our second **Walk for WIN**, see our mailing list grow to over 700 and advocate for many parents who continue to struggle not only to get their children included, but to make it a successful experience.

The end of this year was capped off by our second annual inclusive education conference, **Celebrate the Possibilities**. Boy!! Did we ever do that on December 7!! Over 270 educators and parents attended this one-day conference at the Eberhard Center in downtown Grand Rapids. It was great to see many school staff sitting with parents, learning together about the philosophy as well as the nuts and bolts of inclusive education. Most participants expressed great satisfaction with the conference overall. We hope to only keep making it better so that parents and school staff from around the state will be

able to continually fine-tune their knowledge base about best practices for students with disabilities.

I particularly want to thank the WIN board members and advocates who worked so hard to make our conference a success. Nearly everyone played some part, from designing the brochures to actually presenting at the conference. This conference would not have happened without their dedication to children with disabilities and the vision of inclusive lives for them.



Greetings from the Conference!

Last, a huge thank-you to Grand Valley State University for donating the Eberhard Center facilities and staff time. It was a beautiful sunny day and we all enjoyed the view of the Grand River when we could find a second to talk and compare notes.

I look forward to 2002 as a year to continue building and strengthening parent-professional partnerships. I hope you will join us in this endeavor.

Happy Holidays!!



## Wish List

(For the holidays and beyond)



Physicians learning more about people with disabilities and give parents a more truthful and positive picture of the wonderful lives people with disabilities can lead.

Parents never feeling the need to grieve or be sad about having a child with a disability.

Therapists and other professionals helping children with disabilities and their families learn about accommodations, assistive technology, and strategies for success, instead of trying to "fix" a child through intrusive therapies.

Parents choosing to be their own IFSP service coordinators so they can maintain their family's privacy, autonomy, and self-determination.

Parents allowing their preschool-age children with disabilities to remain in their natural, inclusive environments, instead of special ed preschools.

Administrators and educators following special ed law and ensuring children with disabilities attend the school they would attend if they didn't have a disability, in age-

appropriate regular ed classrooms, with appropriate modifications and supports.

The U.S. Congress fully funding IDEA as promised in 1975.

The U.S. Dept. of Education taking immediate and proactive steps to insure IDEA is followed in all states, so parents will no longer need to wage protracted battles with schools.

Vocational-rehabilitation workers respecting the employment goals of adults with disabilities and helping them achieve these goals.

Adults with disabilities following their dreams and getting real jobs in the community, instead of waiting and waiting on the system.

Parents and people with disabilities creating community by using the rich supply of generic services and natural supports in their communities.

Passage of federal legislation that would enable funding to follow people with disabilities to the homes of their own choice.

From **Revolutionary Common Sense**, Vol. 1, Issue 4... BraveHeart Press

## Board Members

- ◆ Barb Spidell
- ◆ Clark Goodrich
- ◆ Kathy Vogel
- ◆ Dr. Barbara Doumanian
- ◆ Rita Berlin
- ◆ Annetta Davis
- ◆ Shaun Walters
- ◆ Lauri Stein
- ◆ Jeff Pellerito
- ◆ Michelle Woods

## Advocacy Consultants

- ◆ Deanna Cowden
- ◆ Mary VandeWater



### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of WIN is to further the quality inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms with appropriate supports.

Contact WIN at:  
**West Michigan Inclusion Network**  
**P.O. Box 889**  
**Ada, MI 49301**

E-mail us at [wmichinclusion@aol.com](mailto:wmichinclusion@aol.com) or  
 call our offices at: **616-954-9424**

**If you have any ideas for this newsletter; we can post websites, events, meetings, and articles that involve inclusion.**

Parents, do you need assistance in getting your child fully included in their neighborhood school?

WIN provides telephone and in-person inclusion advocacy services to a nine county West Michigan area.

Teachers, do you need help including a student with a disability in your classroom?

Call WIN to obtain assistance and resources.

Happy holidays from all of us at WIN



## Graphic Organizers: An Inclusion Solution

What are graphic organizers? They are visual displays that teachers use to organize information in a way that makes it easier for students to learn and retain. Using graphic organizers can help all students in a classroom as well as students with disabilities. Some examples of graphic organizers are Venn diagrams, semantic webs and genealogical trees.

In order to understand why graphic organizers are so helpful, one needs to understand schema theory. In effect, schema theory states that new information must be linked to preexisting knowledge. The teacher's task is to ensure that the child has prior knowledge related to the concept being taught and to provide a means to assist the child in making the necessary connections between that and his or her prior knowledge. To better understand schema theory, it helps to examine the cognitive approach to learning.

The cognitive approach tries to understand how incoming information is processed and structured into memory. Students are bombarded with a lot of information on a daily basis. Information enters the sensory register and is held there for only a few seconds. The information is either processed immediately or it is forgotten. If the student chooses to process the in-

formation is either processed immediately or it is forgotten. If the student chooses to process the in-

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## Upcoming Events

Further information on two spring WIN events will be arriving if you are on the WIN mailing list. For more information about these programs, please contact WIN at 616-954-9424 or email at [wmichinclusion@aol.com](mailto:wmichinclusion@aol.com).

The PEAK Parent Center presents its **2002 Conference on School Reform and Inclusive Education**, January 17-19, 2002, in Denver, Colorado. If interested call PEAK Parent Center (719) 531-9400 or Char Hill at (616) 957-4934.

The Third Annual "Walk for WIN" has been scheduled for Saturday, June 8.

## Using Graphic Organizers, an inclusion solution

### Continued from page 3...

formation, it moves into short-term memory. At this point, the newly received information must be rehearsed by the student or it will be lost. The longer a piece of information remains in short-term memory and is actively used, the greater the chance that this information will move into long term memory.

Long term memory can then be divided into three parts: Procedural memory, Episodic memory and Semantic memory. Semantic memory stores facts and general information in networks of connected ideas and relationships. *Generative learning* states that if learners are to discover or truly understand the new information presented, they must actively integrate this new information into their existing knowledge. The concept of semantic memory is grounded in this type of learning.

Schema theory explains this integration further. Schema theory states that a person takes this new information and stores it in pre-existing hierarchies or channels. This theory sets the groundwork for advance organizers which, when presented at the beginning of a lesson, orient the students to information that the teacher is about to present. The graphic organizers are visual displays used to organize information.

These processes help students integrate the new knowledge into their scaffolds. The most critical

component of schema theory to remember is that information that fits into a student's existing scaffold is more easily understood, learned and retained than information that does not fit into that schema.

For example, if a student with a disability has difficulty learning information in a content-area class, one might determine, based on schema theory, that the student may have a problem fitting the information he or she has learned into his or her existing scaffold of knowledge. Although there are many reasons for this, one explanation could be that the student may not have the proper background knowledge.

It is known that most students with learning disabilities have difficulties processing information; thus, they may lack academic achievement in one or more areas. Given the lack of background knowledge and the inability to organize the information, it may be difficult for a student with learning disabilities to retain this newly learned information. Helping the student link new information to an existing knowledge base is one way teachers can assist students in learning new information in content-area classes.

Graphic organizers are relatively easy to create.

- 1) Select the information you intend to present to the students. This may be a chapter, or a story, or a certain concept.
- 2) Decide what key components are necessary for the student to learn.
- 3) Create a graphic representation of the information. The graphic chart should identify the key concepts or components and help illustrate the linkages among the key elements of the concept.
- 4) Help the students see the connections by examining the information in the graphic organizer.

Graphic organizers can be used at all age levels for students and lend themselves to use in many different kinds of content. They can benefit teachers, students and parents. They provide teachers with a clearer understanding of what they want to address in their classes. They provide students with a road map to follow as they expand their schemas by linking them to existing knowledge. They truly contribute to the ultimate goal ---student learning.

Adapted from TEACHING Exceptional Children, Jan/Feb 2000



## Attitudes of Elementary and Secondary Students Towards Their Peers with Disabilities

**A recent study indicates considerable differences in attitudes of students in special education model and inclusive model elementary and secondary schools toward peers with disabilities. Most marked were differences at the secondary level. Findings were based on one on one interviews with students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and secondary graduating year in Canadian schools.**

### •Friendships:

In Special Education model schools students were aware of peers with disabilities but social and academic separation was apparent. Secondary students knew few peers with disabilities by name and friendships were rare. Elementary students did know the names of some peers with disabilities when integration programs were in place. Friendships were uncommon.

**Students in inclusively structured schools** knew the names of peers with disabilities. Academic and social relationships were the order of the day. Many elementary and secondary students indicated that they were friends of peers with disabilities. Some students were known to pretend friendship in order to gain some type of advantage.

### •Teasing and Insulting Behavior:

Teasing and insulting of peers with disabilities was a dynamic in Special Education model schools, particularly at the secondary level. Name calling, planned public embarrassment, and negative physical reactions to the presence of peers with disabilities were reported. Teasing and insulting behavior was attributed to a focus on differences, opportunities to set up situations humorous to non-disabled peers, and

active desire to avoid association with peers with disabilities.

Teasing and insulting behavior occurred in **Inclusive model schools**, but was described as rare. Those who tormented peers with disabilities were considered to lack maturity.

### •Advocacy for Peers with Disabilities:

Many students in Special Education model secondary schools reported that they actively intervened when peers with disabilities were tormented, though some chose not to be involved. Elementary students reported few instances where advocacy was required.

As few instances of tormenting behavior were reported in **Inclusive model schools**, responses tended to be hypothetical, "if I were to see something", scenarios. Within that context secondary students indicated that they would intervene personally or report an incident to authorities. A number of interviewees suggested that peers acting inappropriately might be helped by an educational program which discussed disability and its effects. A subset volunteered the view that some teachers might benefit from such a program as well.

### Support for Exclusion or Inclusion:

Students in Special Education model schools supported full time or part time segregation for peers with disabilities. Students with disabilities were believed to need help which could be provided only in segregated environments. Few questioned the Special Education model. None suggested an Inclusive model.

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"The name we give something shapes our attitude toward it."

- Katherine Paterson

## Participation for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Rural Ionia County

Ionia is a small county with a population of 61,700. Seventy-two percent of the community is rural. It is located halfway between Grand Rapids and Lansing, with limited access to resources available in urban areas. Ionia is a low-income area with the median income of \$36,357 being significantly less than the state median of \$48,700. The total student population is 13,000, and the students identified with an autism spectrum disorder currently number 53.

Autism was not recognized as a disability in the Ionia

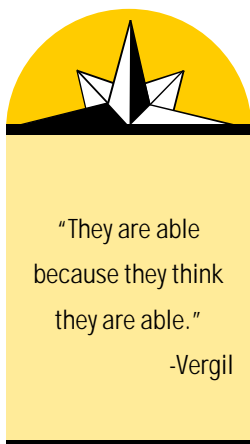
County Intermediate School District until 1986. The first students identified with autism were referred through the "Early On" process and attended the Pre-Primary Impaired classroom.

Program development became an issue when those first students were too old to maintain PPI eligibility. The district evaluated existing programs, which were those available in Grand Rapids and Lansing, traditional small type "A" classrooms that had a large adult to student ratio and in which all students had autism.

Questions we asked included, "What are the goals for these students and where can we best meet those goals?" Also, "What are the needs and strengths and how can we use a student's strengths to meet his /her needs?"

Meeting the needs of students with ASD individually, in their home school, in their own community has been a precedent established in Ionia County since the inception of the program. It was logical

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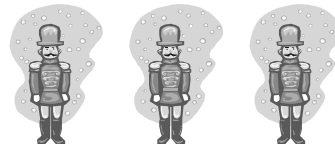
### Elementary and secondary attitudes ...Continued from page 5

•**Inclusive model students** rarely mentioned placement other than in the regular classroom for peers with disabilities. It was accepted that peers with disabilities could succeed at their own level and that it was a peer responsibility to support them in their work. The few mentions of Special Education placement indicated that such placement was inappropriate and not needed.

It is hoped that this study soon will be reported in the literature in fuller form. The recentness of completion has not permitted the time needed to draft a full report. Findings presented above are preliminary in nature.

Gary Bunch, York University, Toronto  
Information taken from Inclusion.com

Dr. Gary Bunch is a professor and researcher at York University in Toronto. He has been working tirelessly for decades to create the possibility for full inclusion for all. Presently, he is completing a critical new piece of research which confirms with hard data all the hunches and wonderful anecdotal evidence which most of us are familiar with. It confirms that there are dramatic attitudinal changes as a result of inclusive education. The final formal paper is still being created, but Gary has released this preliminary report. We hope it is useful to you. Contact Gary directly if you want to be informed about when the full and final report is completed. E-Mail: [gbunch@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:gbunch@edu.yorku.ca)



## ASD... continued from previous page

that if the goal is to live and work in a typical environment, then participating in that environment, practicing and learning and making friends in a typical environment, is essential.

The Ionia County Intermediate School District (ICISD) delivery system has been modified and evaluated. While the ICISD provides support and recommends programming, local district staff also have input into decisions about student needs and programs. The philosophy from the ICISD is to develop a program with full inclusion and make modifications based on individual student needs. Local districts can support or alter the ISD recommendations.

Information and education about autism has been the most valuable tool for facilitating support for students with autism. The annual summer in-service for professional staff receiving students with autism is a tradition that began in 1989. The theme "Understanding the Difference is the Key", comes from an expression by Gary Mesibov, director of TEACCH. Currently, the summer in-service is a six-hour program that covers basic information about autism, as well as strategies to offer support including sensory tools and visual strategies.

Autism Awareness and education activities comprise a significant portion of the ICISD autism program. Student's peers are included in awareness activities and local teachers, kitchen staff, and bus drivers have all been offered opportunities to learn about autism. In response to requests from parents and staff, the autism team has presented to students co-workers and employers, church members, sports teams, etc.

Paraeducators who provide direct support are an essential feature of the ICISD program. They are very skilled individuals who receive extensive training through the ICISD. The training includes 18 hours in the summer and an additional half-day each month and the autism program supervisor and her staff provide it. Topics have included, "Understanding behavior", "Evaluating your Para-style", based on the work of Diane Twachtman-Cullen, and "Words

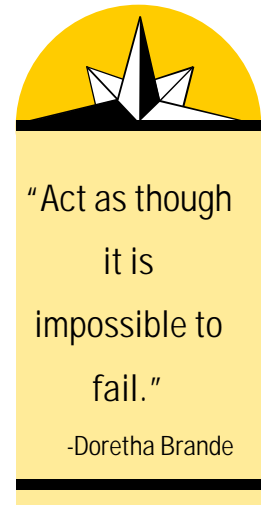
Don't Count", which emphasizes the need for visual supports.

Two unique features of the ICISD autism program include building case managers and paraeducator mentors. After the most recent long-term study process in 1999, local district special education directors identified case managers in each building where students with autism attend. Case managers meet at the ICISD monthly for in-service on autism related issues. There are three paraeducator mentors. They each have a caseload of students and paraeducators, and meet with them regularly to provide support and help modify tools. Mentors review social stories, schedules, and observe paraeducators working with students.

Family and social support are essential to a comprehensive program for students with autism. The ICISD sponsors a parent support group that meets several times a year. Speakers have included Sally Burton-Hoyle and Ann Carpenter from Autism Society of Michigan (ASM), Luke Tsai, M.D., and Judy Coucouvanis from the University of Michigan Hospital, and Ann Heller from Wayne State University.

Currently three days of parent and paraeducator in-services are planned on positive behavior support. The number of students with autism continues to increase in Ionia County as it does elsewhere in Michigan, and the ISD constantly assesses the efficacy of services provided to students. The philosophy that preparing students to become social, working community participants requires practice and experience in a normal environment remains the guideline for decisions made for education of students with autism.

-Cathy Macfarlane,  
Administrator of Autism Program  
Ionia ISD



## *Inclusion Defined*

I find it exciting that on Friday, December 7th, 2001, over 270 interested people attended the second annual conference on inclusive education sponsored by the West Michigan Inclusion Network. The conference entitled "Celebrate the Possibilities" was attended by professors, K-12 administrators, special education and general education teachers, para-professionals, parents, people with disabilities, advocates, students and interested community members. All of these people were hungry for knowledge on how to educate children with a variety of needs in general education classrooms. Many of the participants I talked with were energized by the personal stories, eager to return to their classrooms to attempt the new strategies they learned for providing accommodations and adaptations and were looking forward to planning for the new year. All conference attendees should be commended for taking the time out of life's busy schedule to learn more about inclusive practices.

Inclusion is still a very controversial topic. I was reminded of this as I sat in on many conversations at the conference. I heard people saying "Inclusion is good for some, but I am not sure it is for everyone" or "I see the social benefit, but what about the academic needs?" and "I am amazed at the growth in all my students in my classroom since I have been involved with inclusion". Within these conversations I was also reminded that many people still do not fully understand the definition of inclusion and how this philosophy differs from mainstreaming. I heard people saying "we do partial inclusion in my school" or "We have been doing inclusion for years, we just changed the name, we used to call it mainstreaming" and "Our students are included for lunch and their specials". It is because of these comments that I realize the need for education in the basic premise of inclusion and mainstreaming are still very crucial for everyone involved in education. For this reason, I would like to share the academic definitions of these terms.

**Inclusion:** Attendance by students with disabilities in the same school as peers without disabilities, natural proportion of students with disabilities, zero reject philosophy, age appropriate grade and class placement with no classes designed as self-contained for students

receiving special education services. Special education support is provided in general education and other integrated learning environments.

**Sailor 1990**

**Mainstreaming:** Self-contained special education classes, in which students spend the majority of their day in the special class but attend selected general education classes with non-disabled peers. The classes are often non-academic classes such as physical education, music, art, lunch and recess.

**Lilly 1979**

In elementary schools, science and social studies are also considered non-academic subjects. However, in middle and high school, science becomes an academic subject, while social studies remains non-academic. Therefore, many children are mainstreamed into science and social studies classes as well as their "specials".

A simple way to look at these complicated definitions is to realize that in inclusion, the environment changes to fit the needs of every child, while in mainstreaming, the child must change to fit the expectations of the general education classroom. Questions like "Is Abbie ready to be mainstreamed? Can she meet the class requirements?" are asked. In an inclusive classroom we ask, "Is the classroom ready for Abbie? Are we able to meet her individual needs?"

My first experience teaching in an inclusive environment in 1989 did not meet the letter of the definition of inclusion. The school, at that time, was still providing instruction for students with special needs in segregated environments. Another experience in teaching in an inclusive environment was in a school in Kentucky. That classroom also did not meet the academic definition, given the fact that 9 out of our 29 students were labeled with emotional impairments. As a result of this ratio, we did not meet the guidelines for natural proportion. However, each of these classes did meet the spirit of the definition, they were great places for all students to learn where we provided thoughtful,

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# Ways to Donate to WIN

We want to thank all of you who have supported our organization during the past year with your donations. Our organization cannot exist without this support. In addition to donating through United Way, our Walk for WIN or our annual appeal, there is now another way to help.

WIN is now participating in the eScrip program along with many other organizations and schools in Michigan. You may already be donating money to another organization through this program, but you can designate more than one. Here is how it works:

- \* Go to one of the following Spartan Stores: *Prevo's, Family Fare, Great Day, Forest Hills Foods, Food Town, Ashcraft's Markets or Glen's Markets.*
- \* Ask for a Key Tag at the store and fill out a form designating the West Michigan Inclusion Network as an organization you wish to support. Fill in our organization eScrip number **34117**.
- \* Scan your key card when checking out each time you shop. WIN will receive a small percentage of every purchase you make.

Frequently asked questions:

**Can I support more than one organization?** Yes, you can designate three organizations on your Key Card.

**Does each organization get the same amount of funding?** Yes. According to eScrip, just because you sign up for a second or third organization does not mean your first choice gets less money than previous. In other words, they do not divide your total purchase donation by two or three instead of one.

If you have more questions, visit online at [eScrip.com](http://eScrip.com) or visit your local Spartan Store. This is an easy and great way to give!!



"Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you help them to become what they are capable of being"

-Johann von Goethe

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## Inclusion defined

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academic and social instruction for all learners taking into consideration individual differences.

The definition of inclusion is a goal for which each class and school should strive. There is no one right way to create inclusive classrooms within inclusive schools. But what these definitions do tell us, is there is no such thing as "partial inclusion". If you

aren't fully included, you are excluded. Exclusion to any degree, does not fit any component of the true philosophy of inclusive communities whether we are talking about individual classrooms or entire schools. As the new year approaches, I encourage each of you to explore the many ways you can go about making your classrooms, school and/or com-

munities truly inclusive for all its members. I look forward to seeing all of you at the third annual conference on inclusive education to discuss your progress toward that goal.

-Dr. Barbara Doumanian,  
Prof. of Special Education,  
GVSU