

Inclusive Support Guide

By: Christina Marsack

Based off of Smith Middle School

Troy, Mi

Grades 6-8



I have created this guide based on a middle school, Smith Middle School, in the Troy School District. I talked briefly with the assistant principal, Joseph Hosang, of this school. He was very helpful in providing me with material about this school. I asked him about the special education department and if inclusion was used in his school. He elucidated that mainstreaming was used, but that most of these students were in a special education class for the majority of the day. He also informed me that of the 750 students in the school, 35 of these are in special education. I received Smith Middle School's "Parent Handbook", as well as a "Curriculum Guide". Throughout this guide, I have referred to these two sources.

This guide is based off of the Smith Middle School that exists in the 2004-2005 school year. My ideas are based off of this school at this time, but my aim is to create a guide showing the possible shift in ideas, protocol, curriculum, class structure, and overall atmosphere from the school year of 2004-2005 to 2012-2013. I have used this school as a model and have used numerous sources as references to shift this school into an inclusive environment. I have seen the practice of inclusive education act as a positive in the lives of the general student population, as well as in the lives of students with disabilities. I believe that all students can benefit from the implementation of inclusive education in academic, social, emotional, and athletic contexts.



Inclusion within schools has been a worldwide movement and has received particular attention in South Africa. In fact, page 27 of the text, Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners, by Michael Peterson and Mishaal Hittie states, "...South Africa, a country in which apartheid has existed for many years, has begun implementing a national inclusive education initiative as part of its efforts to transform its postapartheid educational system (Naicker, 1999)." I have found an article, *Able Voices on Inclusion/Exclusion- A People in Their Own Words*, published in the International Journal of Special Education by Dennis Francis and Nithi Muthukrishna that discusses inclusive education and its impacts on students at the high school level in South Africa. "This article presents a study that examined the life experiences of ten disabled students enrolled in secondary school in a rural context in South Africa... findings in this study support the arguments put forth by Edwards, Armstrong & Miller (2001) that inclusion is not the binary opposite of exclusion, and that inclusion will not overcome exclusion. Evidence of exclusion will always be found in practices of inclusion. The challenge is constantly to subject these notions and practices to interrogation and deconstruction within the micro-practices of an organisation such as the school and its community." This article further emphasizes the importance of deconstructing compliant mindsets, which affirm the practices of inclusion in our schools and communities. "In July 2001, the Ministry of Education released Education White Paper 6 entitled, *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (Department of Education,

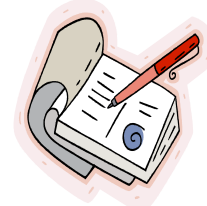
2001)... it recommends a shift in thinking about *special needs and support services* towards a commitment to the development of an inclusive education and training system.” This article goes on to provide a definition of inclusive education. “Inclusive education is defined as

- Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all children
- Acknowledging and respecting difference in children, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV status, or other infectious diseases
- Broader than formal schooling, and acknowledges that learning occurs in the home, the community, and within formal and informal contexts.
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula, and environment to meet the needs of all learners
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of educational institutions, and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning. (Department of Education, 2001:6-7).”



This article also illustrates barriers to learning and development. These barriers are defined as, “...those factors that lead to the inability of the system to accommodate diversity, thereby, causing learning breakdown and preventing learners from gaining access to equitable educational provision.” There are many barriers that exist in South Africa that are also common within the United States. Those mentioned to exist within South Africa include: “Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of difference; an inflexible curriculum; inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching; inappropriate communication; inappropriate and unsafe built environment; inappropriate and inadequate support services; inadequate policies and legislation; the non-recognition and involvement of parents; inadequate and inappropriately trained education managers and educators.” The barriers mentioned here are ones I aim to further address later in this support guide. This article also encourages the need for building numerous levels of support for both learners and educators.

The implications of the research documented in this article raised many points that have relevancy to the topic of inclusion specifically in the school setting. “The findings in this study raise certain critical issues. Firstly, a lesson to be learned is that there is a need to move away from over-simplistic notions of inclusion. Institutional access alone or a change of site does not automatically result in that learners being included. The notion of inclusion requires ongoing and rigorous analysis of the context into which learners are included.” In redefining the structural organization within Smith Middle School, it is important to remember to continually assess and critique how learners are being included. If we simply interprets an



inclusive structural organization as one that serves to needs of all students, we may not be administering what we think, hope, and know is best for all students. The second point reads, "...inclusive education cannot occur without introducing fundamental transformation to the system. This study reaffirms the critical need for a systemic approach to inclusion, and the need to continually probe issues of curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, and social relations in schools and communities." The issues mentioned in the second point, are all ones that deserve proper and adequate attention. Inclusive education requires that these issues be addressed. The last issues states, "the findings in the study suggest that social equality in the form of equal access to general education provision does not guarantee equity. Inclusive education initiatives that do not engage with relations of power and issues of equity can undermine the goal of social justice and democratic participation. On the positive side, inclusion can promote an awareness of difference and social exclusion, and an ongoing engagement of the complexities inherent in policies and practices."

To access this article, refer to the following address:

[http://www.internationalsped.com/documents/\(11\)%20Francis%20and%20Muthukrishna.doc](http://www.internationalsped.com/documents/(11)%20Francis%20and%20Muthukrishna.doc)

Inclusion Movement/Aim for Smith Middle School

The movement that aims to hold schools accountable for appropriately providing services for students with special needs continues to grow and change. In fact, page 20 of the text, Inclusive teaching: *Creating effective schools for all learners*, by Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie states, "In the 1980s parents and professionals began to question the effectiveness of separate special education programs. Madeline Will (1986), assistant secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and herself the parent of a child with a disability, developed the federal **Regular Education Initiative (REI)** calling for special and general educators to share responsibility for the education of children with disabilities." The text continues to explain a model created during this time, which is referred to as "class merging". This organizational model involves an entire special education classroom, which is composed of students with mild disabilities, merging with a regular education class. In this model, teachers co-teach. There were many individuals who were concerned with this model, specifically advocates for placement of students with severe disabilities in neighborhood schools and the organization that is currently known as TASH.

Page 20 of this text illustrates how this movement continues to grow. "In the late 1980s, President George H. W. Bush called a governor's summit conference on education... this conference called for substantial restructuring (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), for active learning approaches, and for the use of **push-in services** instead of **pull-out programs** for children at risk of educational failure. These ideas build on a growing base of research showing the negative effects of tracking children in homogeneous ability

groups (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Oakes, 1985; Ogle, Pink, & Jones, 1990; Wheelok, 1992)."

The depiction of inclusive education on page 21 is the type and extent of inclusion this guide aims to cultivate over time for Smith Middle School. The inclusive education I aim to develop within this school system is described as, "1. Inclusion of *all* students, with mild to severe disabilities, in general education classes. 2. Provision of supports and services within the general education class for both teachers and students (push-in services)." The overall goal for Smith Middle School is to develop a school in which inclusion exists for all students and implement services and supports that aid the student and teacher populations. It is my aim to develop push-in services, rather than pull-out services.

Information that should be known related to LRE

Page 25 of this text outlines major points related to the principle of least restrictive environment. These points include the following: "(1) Schools must, in good faith, consider inclusive placement of all students, no matter the severity of the disability; (2) students and teachers must be provided necessary supports and supplementary services; (3) although costs, the amount of teacher time, and impact on other students may be considered, the standards for these factors are so high that denial of an inclusive placement based on these issues is rarely supported (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997)."



Description of School

Smith Middle School
5835 Donaldson
Troy, MI 48085
248.823.4700

Smith Middle School is composed of numerous classrooms, a gymnasium, boys and girls' locker room, pool, cafeteria/stage, media center, art room, choral and band rooms, technology lab, counseling center, main office, teacher's lounge, kitchen, mechanics room, and home economics room. About 750 students attend this school and of these students 35 of them receive special education services. The students who receive these services are mainstreamed for parts of the day.

Current Mission Statement

"The staff of Smith Middle School believes the future our students face will be rich in opportunities and challenges. In a cooperative partnership with home and community, we are committed to prepare our students to become contributing members of a global society. By nurturing self-confidence and respect for others, by guiding students in the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and by instilling in them a desire to become life-long learners, our vision can be fully realized."

I think that this mission statement can be altered to promote a more inclusive school mission for all students. I have incorporated Smith Middle School's current mission statement, ideas from Hillside Elementary School's mission statement, as well as my own ideas and words to improve this mission statement to encourage growth for students within an inclusive school setting.

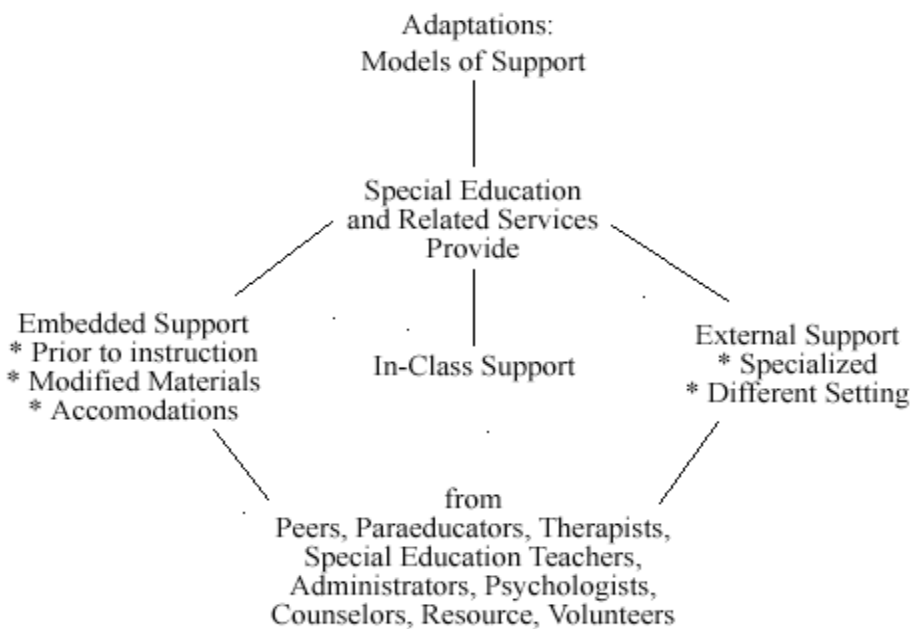
Modified Mission Statement

The staff at Smith Middle School believes that students learn best in an environment which integrates curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and one that addresses multiple intelligences, learning styles, and interests. We believe that learning can be more fully achieved in a partnership with home and community and we are committed to prepare our students to become contributing members of society by creating an environment where all students can develop a sense of belonging. Our vision is for students will develop respect for self and others and a desire to become life-long learners.

Support/Roles

There are many types of support that can be used by teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff members that can be used to benefit all students who are placed within an inclusive environment. The website, http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/strategies/content_behavior.html, was referred to in coming up with the following:

This is one way to look at the variety of supports for adaptations:
(This graph is taken from the above site)



Teachers can gain support from a collaborative team. Page 97 of the text, *Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners*, by Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie states, “Another useful preventive approach is **collaborative consultation**, in which we work together with one or more professionals to explore strengths, needs, and strategies for a student. Sometimes a team of teachers and specialists meet on a regular basis to discuss children’s needs. In other cases, individual teachers and support staff talk one-on-one,” Individuals who can provide support within the school environment include: *occupational therapists, *physical therapists, *speech pathologists, *administrators, *psychologists, *teachers (general/special educators), *counselors, *paraprofessionals (a.k.a. paraeducators), *school social worker, *parents, *bus drivers, *volunteers, *integrative consultant, *ESL & bilingual specialists, *groups in divorce, bereavement, concerned persons, & social skills, *police liaison officer, *students, etc. Communication among members of the collaborative team is important.

We have added many supported services since moving toward developing an inclusive school setting. As of last year, we considered the following to be support services:

1. Integration Consultant
2. ESL and Bilingual Programs
3. School Social Worker
4. School Psychologist
5. Speech Therapist
6. Police Liaison Officer
7. Special Education Programs
8. Reading Support Programs
9. Groups in Divorced, Bereavement, Concerned Person, Social Skills

As can be noted, support services have been adjusted to aid in developing an inclusive school environment. Proper supports have been added for students with disabilities, such as, a speech pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist.

Staff Information



Principal.....	Stuart Redpath
Assistant Principal.....	Joseph Hosang
Special Education Teachers.....	Yvonna David, Melissa Kratz, Doug Meyer, Joann Williams
Speech Pathologist.....	Judy Schmitz
Psychologist.....	Carolyn Raetzke
Social Worker.....	Paul Kernstein
Integrative Consultant.....	Mary Walby

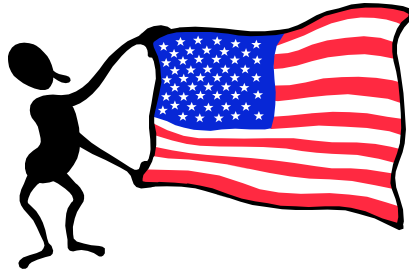
***These are staff members at Smith Middle School who I find to be important supports within the building, as well as the general education teachers who are involved in inclusive education.



Each member of Smith Middle School's staff provides an important role in delivering services to students, families and parents, as well as other staff members. The staff composes a web, in which each member is inter-woven to create a masterpiece of outcomes. Listed above are the names and positions of just a few of the staff members here. In successfully moving toward an inclusive school, it will be imperative that these members create a collaborative team unit and work together in driving efforts to reach our goals.

Some of our students receive services from the speech pathologist. The speech pathologist works with students to express themselves improve their communication of vocalizations. For students with severe speech delays, the speech therapist integrates sign language, picture communication, and/or electronic devices into her approach with these students.

Our staff is fortunate to paraprofessionals School's classrooms. out enormously with all aim to encourage these work with students also the general students.



have wonderful within Smith Middle These individuals help students. It is our individuals to not only with disabilities, but population of

The school nurse is needed for students with certain health complications, to make referrals, to supply the classroom teacher with materials to work within the classroom, and often makes home visits. The nurse ensures that all students are up to date on immunizations and health care.

The school psychologist administers and evaluates testing. This individual is responsible for evaluating a student's psychological development, learning and behavior. The school psychologist also develops behavior intervention plans (BIPs). The psychologist works with parents to help develop appropriate interactions within the home and the community.

The occupational therapist looks for ways to help students achieve fine motor skills. This therapist works with parents in numerous ways and recommends equipment, if necessary.

Physical therapists work with students to help develop gross motor skills. These therapists also contribute information to parents and teacher regarding adaptive equipment.

The school social worker collaborates with families to allow them to better understand and cope with their child's special needs. The social worker also acts as a liaison between families and community agencies.

School administrators provide support and help oversee the overall school and its well-being. Administrators play an important role in shifting the teaching practices within this building to include all students. In fact, both the principal and assistant principal have adopted a motto: “Children that



learn together, learn to live together.” (This motto has been taken from <http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/>.) This motto has actually carried into every elementary, middle, and high schools within the Troy School District. Administrative workers are sought usually after other sources have been contacted and yet unresolved.

Parental Involvement and Support

The reasons parents should get involved in their child’s life are endless. Parents are important educators of their own children. In fact, on page 8 of the text, Parents as Partners in Education, by Eugenia Hepworth Berger states, “Home is the first



classroom. Parents are the first and most essential teachers. (Boyer, 1991, p. 33) Parents are the first nurturers, socializers, and educators of their children.” This quote emphasizes the significance of parents as educators. Parents are able to educate their children in numerous different fashions.

There are numerous ways in which parents can get involved in their child’s learning at Smith Middle School. Parents are encouraged by school staff to get involved. This can be done by:

- joining committees (i.e. SPTO)
- attending school functions
- responding to school obligations (i.e. parent-teacher conferences)
- helping their child improve their schoolwork (i.e. tutoring)
- providing encouragement
- organizing appropriate study time and space
- modeling desired behavior
- volunteering time or resources

- engaging in communication with their child's teacher or other school staff personnel

There are many positive effects of parent involvement. The following are benefits taken from the course pack, Parenting Intervention ELE 6070, by Margo Edwards:

1. Student achievement increases regardless of the parent's own education, economic, or ethnic/racial background.
2. Student attitudes are more positive.
3. Negative student behavior decreases.
4. Graduation rates are higher.
5. Students have higher grades, better attendance, and complete homework more often.
6. Teachers become more enthusiastic.
7. Teachers have higher expectations for students.

Smith Parent Teacher Organization

The Smith Parent Teacher Organization (SPTO) is a great way for parents to get involved in their child's school. Parents of Smith Middle School students are automatically a member of SPTO at no charge. Parents can get involved by attending monthly meetings. This organization supports school activities through participation, rather than through fund-raising efforts. SPTO coordinates volunteers to work in the clinic, Stop and Shop, which is the student bookstore, media center, dances, and numerous other functions throughout the year.

Open House

Each year in the fall open house is held. This is a great way for parents to meet their child's teachers, and gain insight related to grading policies, curriculum, homework, and classroom procedures. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend open house. Since Smith Middle School is seeking an inclusive environment, open house is a great way to encourage teacher-parent conversation related to this new news.



Parent-Teacher Conferences



Conferences are held bi-annually in the months of November and March. On these days, students receive an early dismissal. Conferences are held in the gymnasium on a first-come basis. Smith Middle School (as of the 2003-2004 school year) had 85% support at these conference sessions from students' legal parents or guardians. At any time, individual conferences can be arranged by the teacher, parent, or other staff personnel.

Effective Communication

Pages 74-76 of the text, Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners, by Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie, discusses many strategies that help create effective communication between the teacher and family. From this source, here are important communication tips:

- *Explain how our teaching works and helps children learn.*
- *Be a resource and support for families.*
- *Listen reflectively.*
- *Communicate positively about children.*
- *Ask for input, ideas, and involvement of families.*
- *Engage in parent-teacher conferences and planning meetings.*



Teachers can positively communicate about their students to parents/guardians by:

*communicating positive strengths about the student (i.e. via notes home, verbal comments, telephone calls, email, & parent-teacher conferences), *communicating problems in the most personal and positive manner possible, and *creating a partnership plan between themselves and the parent.

Support Provision & Collaboration

Support can be provided in many different ways. Some of the ways support can be provided include the following: *students helping students, *paraprofessional support, *professional development, *collaborative

consultation, *building support team, *collaborative teaching, and through *in-class related services. The aim in Smith Middle School is to develop numerous levels of support. Levels of support our staff is working on increasing:

- Parent/guardian support
- Service specialists (i.e. speech/occupational/physical therapists)
- Peer support
- Professionals within the school (i.e. social worker, psychologist, nurse, counselor)
- Paraprofessionals/Paraeducators
- Support teachers (i.e. Title I, Gifted, ESL/bilingual, Special, Teacher Consultant)
- School staff (i.e. bus driver, janitor, lunch aides, office staff)

These members can collaborate together and form a team to get the most accomplished and develop a complete system of support. Page 130 states, “Collaborative teams involve two or more teachers who work together at various levels of intensity, from periodic collaboration on a learning activity to teaching lessons collaboratively to a larger group of students,” (Peterson, 2003).



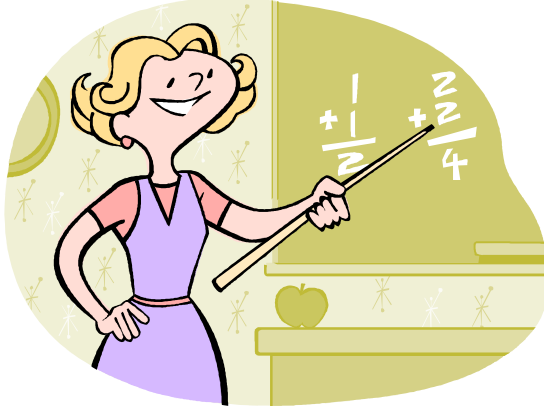
Support/Collaboration

The text, Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners, chapter 5, Support and Collaboration: Getting Help and Building a School Community, by Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie outlines numerous inclusive teaching supportive strategies. These strategies can be utilized by members at Smith Middle School.

There are many things students can do to assist other students. Students can serve as peer buddies, mentors, tutors for their peers, as well as members within circles of support.

The teaming within the school system is also an important support strategy. Teaming can exist in many different forms. Examples of teams include: <child study teams, <teacher and support staff teams, <consultation and collaboration with community agencies, <collaborative consultation, and <coordination of student services.

Two school support programs, learning support centers and counseling, are mentioned in the text.



These two types of support programs currently exist at Smith Middle School. Smith has two full-time counselors, Christine Summerell and Jennifer Hartenburg. Groups on divorce, bereavement, and social skills are offered. Smith also holds a group for concerned people.

Collaborative teaching comes in many different forms. The following are all types of collaborative teaching: \diamondcommunity volunteers, \diamondteam teaching among general educators, \diamondin-class support by paraprofessionals, \diamondin-class team instruction, and \diamondsupport from teachers and specialists providing in-class collaborative teaching.

Support can also be obtained through areas addressing professional development and growth. Teacher support networks, critical friends, conferences, professional organization, dialogue groups, and professional development inquiry are all aspects that can provide support for individuals.

Staff can utilize and encourage *students helping students, *professional development and growth, *collaborative teaching methods, *support programs within the school, and *teaming to encourage a positively growing inclusive environment.

Multiage Teaching

Page 126 illustrates another useful technique of teaching. This technique is called multiage teaching. “In **multiage teaching**, students from two to three typical grades learn together in one classroom, using the same curriculum and staying with that teacher for two to three years.

Teachers engage students in projects that explore questions and facilitate mutual helping by older and younger students. In a multiage classroom students work in pairs or small groups as the teacher moves from group to group or conferences with students,” (Peterson, 126). Research has exposed many academic and social benefits to multiage teaching. Multiage teaching could be used within the middle school, but if inclusive education grows in the Troy School



District might also be placed in an elementary school.

Bus Transportation

In the 2004-2005 school year, Smith Middle School had segregated busing for students with severe physical impairments and the student population. A shift in this segregation that exists for busing made in order to facilitate an school environment. The aim in is to properly equip each bus driver with the proper knowledge and equipment needed to terminate exclusion in the busing system. By the 2012-2013 school year, buses will be equipped with the accommodations needed to carry students with disabilities. Students with disabilities and the general population of students at this time will receive busing services at the same time and on the same bus.



more
general

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Questions for follow-up classroom discussion

After a school presentation from Norm Kunc, it would be beneficial to have a follow-up discussion. The questions I've included in this support guide can be found at: <http://www.normemma.com/sosquest.htm>. These questions are intended for high school students. My aim is to adapt these for use at the middle school level. I think that both a presentation by Norm Kunc and a classroom discussion on his presentation would have many benefits for the student population. I think that the information that would be presented by Norm Kunc would benefit the student body, would orient students to information related to this social justice issue, and would help pave the way toward inclusive education. The conversation that could be facilitated within each individual classroom after the presentation could also be helpful in sharing ideas and reflecting. Students would be able to share their opinions, learn from their peers, and gain a greater understanding through reflection.

Multi-Level Lesson Plan

(Michelle Matteredra, 2003)

Name of Lesson: “We’re Not Going to Take It”

Overall Goals:

1. To strengthen teamwork and leadership skills
2. Learn how to work in a team
3. Help make decisions

Learning Activities:

1. Concept Webbing
2. Role-playing
3. Learning through music
4. Creating own political song or poem

Assessment and Evaluation:

1. Rubric will be given for music lesson
2. Performance assessment is used for the song/poem

“We’re Not Going to Take It” is a lesson on the frustrations felt by the English Colonists in the 1700’s. During this lesson, students will use computers to locate songs related to frustration. There will be a music lesson connecting the frustration of the colonists to the frustration used in music today. The students will then write their own song or poem about frustration. The students will contribute using their strengths, such as, writing ability, verbal expression, and art. This lesson will demonstrate the students’ understanding of the colonial frustration.

Overview of a Peer Mediation

I attended a peer mediation that went on at a school, Smith Middle School, in the Troy School District. This middle school program is overseen by two faculty advisors including eighth grade science teacher, Mary MacNair, and assistant principal, Joseph Hosang.

The mediation process has a format that is universal to this school and probably many others. It started off when the mediators introduced themselves and obtained the disputants’ names. The mediators explained the seating arrangement and what their roles are as a mediator. The roles of the mediators are to serve as a helper without judging. Mediators are to stay neutral and keep the mediation confidential. Next, ground rules and the mediation process were discussed. Ground rules include no interruptions, no name calling/put downs, for individuals to be truthful, and to work to solve the problem.

The general flow of the mediation process (used in this school) is as follows: *each person is given a chance to talk, *both think of solutions, *both choose and agree on the best consensus, and *the solution is put in

writing. Then, disputants share their story and are instructed to use “I-statements”. Mediators must decide who speaks first and restate what is heard. After each disputant shares their side of the story, the next step is to solve the problem. Ways to solve the problem are brainstormed and suggested by the disputants. A list of solutions is made. Then, disputants decide the solution they want to implement. The mediators ask if the solution is fair, understandable, and realistic. Lastly, an agreement is written and signatures are obtained from everyone at the mediation.

The mediators are chosen by teachers. Students either accept or decline this position. If a student accepts the position of a mediator, he or she undergoes an all day training session. During this training session, students are given a folder with pamphlets. They practice mediations and discuss what should and should not be done.

Assistive Technology (a.k.a. adaptive/enabling technology)

Taken from www.resa.net/regioniv, assistive technology devices is defined, “The term, “assistive technology device” means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of children with disabilities.” (From the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476, Section 1401 (a) (25).)

Assistive technology is important in integrating within the classroom for students with special needs. In supporting an inclusive education movement, obtaining and utilizing assistive technology for students who would benefit is important. Assistive technology can entail many different types of devices. There are both low and high technology. Page 450 states, “**Low-tech** solutions are often simple manual adaptations that require little cost or sophistication—though they often reflect great creativity... **High-tech devices**, on the other hand, involve more sophisticated engineering...” (Peterson, 2003).



***Examples of High-tech devices include:

- Computers

- Electric wheelchairs
- Electronic alternative communication devices

***Examples of Low-tech solutions include:

- Large pencils
- Communication boards
- Increased font

Assistive technology should be implemented into the classroom based on the individual needs of students requiring such devices. In fact, this type of technology is required. Page 453 reads, “Assistive, or adaptive, technology is required under IDEA for students with disabilities and can be written into a student’s IEP (Kelker & Holt, 2000). Given the requirement, most state variations on intermediate school districts provide support for assistive technology for students with special needs... **Closing the Gap** provides both an online and a hard-copy catalogue of hardware and software,” (Peterson, 2003).

References from the Text

Chapters 9, 11, and 12 of Inclusive Teaching: Creating Effective Schools for all Learners by Michael Peterson and Mishaal Hittie, discuss peer support within the school. Chapter 11 discusses community. Tying in with the text, I feel that a program, such as peer mediation, builds a sense of community. Page 321 of the text states, “Community occurs when diverse people develop relationships and work together so that each person is supported by the group in growing, learning, and coping with challenges; when the group works together to accomplish common goals in an atmosphere of mutual respect and care; and when a flexible balance of emotional support and productivity occurs (Shaffer and Anundsen, 1993).” This quote emphasizes what community is. I think that what is discussed here represents many of the contributions that the peer mediation program is accomplishing. From what I heard and saw, I think that the peer mediation program encourages relationships from diverse individuals, allows students to work with teams, and cope with their challenges in a positive manner. I think that each of these attributes creates a sense of belonging and are characteristics of a positive and productive community. The following characteristics are mentioned in this text to be key components of a good community: *belonging, *inclusion, *support and care, *contributions and responsibility of all members, *democratic problem solving, and *reaching out. Many of these characteristics included in the text can be found within

the peer mediation program in the Troy School District. Chapter 12 also mentions peer supports. In fact, page 371 states, “Students can help one another in many ways. We can create structures such as “peer buddy” programs, in which students work together on certain assigned topics or help a newcomer... When we expect learners to help and teach the how, they do so in ways that are invaluable in encouraging those with behavior struggles. No matter what the problem—whether it is about the loss of a boyfriend, a bad grade, or calling names, and whether the children are very young or in high school—students can help each other through problems. Indeed, students often accept the help of a peer when they will not talk openly to an adult.” This information is applicable to the peer mediation program. I feel that students may feel comfortable discussing their problems because of the confidential nature of this program, as well as the fact that they are talking with their peers.

Relevancy to an Inclusive Setting

It is my aim to revise the current peer mediation program so that it would incorporate students with special needs into all aspects of the system. Currently, all mediators are students without disabilities. I think that by including students with disabilities into this program many benefits would result. In fact, I believe that all students would benefit. It is my aim to revise this program so that it is inclusive for all students. In doing so, new perspectives disabilities and opportunity to classroom will be



will be introduced, students with those without will be given the work together, and an inclusive community that seeks to problem-solve established.

The Story of the Stranger

High School Assembly

Questions for follow-up classroom discussion

1. What surprised you about Norman's presentation? What did you expect to hear in his talk; how was it different from you expected.
2. What did you learn about disabled people that you didn't know before the speech?

3. Norman said he felt he had to be better or different than he was in order to be liked. Do you think most people feel this way? In what ways do you think kids and adults feel they have to be better?
4. Tell me in your own words why Norman said he didn't want to be cured of cerebral palsy. What do you think about Norman not wanting to be cured?
5. What was the point of the story about the boy who became the basketball star?
6. What did Norman mean when he said we need to have a common enemy to feel like we belong.
7. What are the voices in your head that you think you need to argue with?
8. What did Norman mean by "seeking the story in the stranger?" How do you do that? What makes that difficult to do?

VIDEOS RELATED TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Michael Peterson
Fall, 2003

Law and the IEP.

- The IEP: A Tool for Realizing Possibilities. PEAK Parent Center.

Introduction to Inclusive Education.

- Inclusion: NBC Nightline. 1995. O'Hearn elementary school in Boston.
- Collaborating for Change: Including All of Our Students. San Francisco Public Schools.
- Inclusion: Issues for Educators. 1998. 20 minutes.
- Making Inclusion Work.
- Together We're Better: Introduction to Inclusion. Tape 1.
- The Two Faces of Inclusion: The Concept and the Practice.
- DeMything Inclusion.

Norm Kunc: Civil rights activist with a disability.

- A Credo for Support. Norm Kunc.
- Inclusive Education: Rediscovering our Right to Belong. Norm Kunc.
- The Habits of Exclusion: Norm Kunc.
- The Story of the Stranger. Norm Kunc. Story of Norm's experiences in high school.

Early childhood inclusive teaching.

- ABC's of Inclusive Child Care.

High schools.

- Peer Support in a High School. Toronto.
- Inclusion High.
- High School Inclusion. Souhegan.

Stories of individual children being included.

- Inclusion: Kids Like Me.
- Snapshots: Inclusion. Allyn and Bacon.
- Sean's Story.
- Step by Step: Heather's Story. Comforty.
- Jackie.
- Choices. Inclusion Series.
- King Gimp. HBO.
- Families, Friends, Futures. Comforty.
- Heather's Story: Program Highlights. Comforty.

Collaboration and Co-teaching.

- Teaching Students with Special Needs: Working Together; the IEP; the Collaborative Process.
- Child Study Team. Troy Public Schools. 1995.
- Facing Inclusion Together through Collaboration and Co-Teaching.
- Educator's Perspectives on Changing Roles and Structures.
- The Power of 2: Making and Difference through Co-teaching.

ADHD and teaching.

- ADD & Ritalin.
- Beyond the ADD Myth: Classroom Strategies and Techniques. National Professional Resources.

Designing instruction for diversity.

- Collaborating for Change: Instructional Strategies for All Students.
- Multiple Intelligences: Discovering the Giftedness in All. Thomas Armstrong.
- How Are Kids Smart: Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom. With Howard Gardner.

Adapting instruction.

- Language Arts: Lesson Plans and Modifications for Inclusion.
- Strategies for Making Curriculum Accommodations. Wendy Dover.

- Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms.

Standards and Inclusion: Can We Have Both?

Building a community of learners.

- Emotional Intelligence: A New Vision for Educators. National Professional Resources.
- Community of Learners. The Leona Group.
- Friends Club.
- Students and Parents' Perspectives on Inclusion.
- Being Together.

Person-Centered Planning and circles of friends.

- Together We're Better: MAPS & PATH. Tape 3.
- With a Little Help From My Friends.
- All Means All: Introduction to Circles, MAPS, and PATH.
- Dream Catcher. University of New Hampshire.

Teacher Education

The site, <http://www.normemma.com/indxread.htm>, provides numerous different readings related to inclusive education. Readings cover a broad spectrum of categories. This site breaks books into the following categories:

- Inclusive Education: Rationale
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- Societal Values & Attitudes
- Disability & Sociology: Professionalism
- Disability and Sexuality
- Women With Disabilities
- Family Issues & Disability

It is my aim to instill teacher education related to inclusion within Smith Middle School. I hope to do so by encouraging teachers to read books, journals, and articles related to inclusive education practices, methodology, and issues. I would like to choose a new text each quarter throughout the

year, in which teachers (and possibly other staff members, including ancillary staff) will be responsible for reading. Textbooks would be made available for those responsible for reading them. It would be wonderful to set up a fund to promote teacher education related to inclusive practices. A meeting would be held for staff members to discuss and reflect upon the chosen textbook. In doing so, staff can learn from each other, as well as deciding how this information can be applied to Smith Middle School and each staff members' specific students. It would also be great to see the use of inclusive education readings be used as a precursor for improving and implementing new techniques into the school system that would promote a more effective inclusive environment.

Norm Kunc

www.normemma.com

Norman Kunc is a firm believer and an insightful individual in terms of inclusive education because he believes that inclusion has the potential to make schools better for all kids. When I attended one of his presentations, he provided me with the following information.

He grew up in Toronto and went to a segregated school until eighth grade. Kunc has cerebral palsy and a speech impediment. Kunc attended speech therapy and believes that he can speak more clearly after having stopped attending speech therapy. His own background allowed him to personally connect with the application of inclusive education. Kunc thinks that segregation is ridiculous. He believes that one cannot learn to live in the real world on the side.

He has visited numerous segregated classrooms and found that there wasn't a lot of learning going on. Kunc thinks that segregation goes on because of administrative convenience rather than the best interest of the kid. Kunc compared mainstreaming to kids with disabilities trying to play musical chairs. He stated, "Mainstreaming is trying to get kids with disabilities into a game of competitive musical chairs." He also said, "Inclusion is changing the rules of musical chairs so that all kids belong."

Kunc discussed Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. He made a very interesting point. Our society focuses on self-esteem coming from the inner-self; however, Kunc pointed out that self-esteem can only come in the context of belonging. According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, one must first belong before ever achieving self-esteem. He thinks that our schools work on self-esteem issues in a backward manner because schools typically work on self-esteem without first belonging. Without inclusion, students will fail to feel a sense of belongingness. Kids can't gain self-esteem until they belong, but they will never belong until inclusion is implemented. Kunc pointed out a very important principle. "People do their best work when they are in an environment where they feel valuable and that they belong."

Kunc discussed four different responses to diversity: marginalization, reform, benevolence, and valuing. The first is marginalization. This response views a disability as a deviance. The idea here is: “out of site, out of mind...” Marginalization results in extermination, aggression, segregation, and avoidance. The next response is to reform. This response views a disability as a deficiency and results in rehabilitation, assimilation, and remediation. The mentality behind reforming is: “you can be with us only if you are like us...” Benevolence is a response that results in tolerance, burden, resignation, and patronization. This response views a disability as a tragedy and carries a mentality of: “if we must...” The last response is valuing, which results in respect, understanding, acceptance, appreciation, equal worth, mutual benefit, and belonging. Those who value view a disability as diversity and possess the mentality that diversity is normal. In regards to this last response to diversity, Kunc stated, “We must see disability as diversity rather than trying to fix, separate, or be nice to them. Disability is a normal, inevitable part of human diversity. There will always be disabilities.”

Kunc described the disability spread. The disability spread refers to how a disability is only a small part of an individual, but those who view individuals with disabilities often make the disability a major part of a person. I found this portion of Kunc’s explanation to be very true to what I’ve seen. People often view those with disabilities to have the disability to make up a substantial portion of who these individuals are. Kunc stressed that a disability is only a part of what a person is and not the entire person.

The importance of Norm Kunc in terms of inclusive education is two-fold. Firstly, his life experiences can be used as yet another example of the importance of inclusive education. Secondly, I believe that educators, staff, students, and parents can all benefit from the insight related to inclusive education that this man possesses. Among the many gradual changes that I would like to see at Smith Middle School, bringing Norm Kunc into this school to talk about his views related to inclusive education is something that I’d like to implement. I believe that this man’s presentations would be beneficial for students, parents, and all members of staff. He is a strong advocate, incredibly knowledgeable, and a social justice speaker. [Information related to this can be found within this guide.]

***Taken from page 28 & 29 of the text, Inclusive teaching: Creating effective schools for all learners, by Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie. My aim in including this piece by Norm Kunc is for the staff and others who will work with students with special needs. I believe that this piece reflects how individuals with disabilities would like to be related to. It would be wonderful to see this piece placed on teachers’ desks, in the school office, and in other various places around the school as a reminder.

A Credo for Support

By Norm Kunc

Throughout history,
people with physical and mental disabilities
have been abandoned at birth,
banished from society,
used as court jesters,
drowned and burned during the Inquisition,
gassed in Nazi Germany,
and still continue to be segregated, institutionalized,
tortured in the name of behaviour management,
abused, raped, euthanized, and murdered.

Now, for the first time, people with disabilities are taking their rightful
Place as fully contributing citizens. The danger that we will respond with remediation
and benevolence rather than equity and respect. And so, we offer you...

A Credo for Support

Do Not see my disability as the problem.
Recognize that my disability is an attribute.

Do Not see my disability as a deficit.
It is you who see me as deviant and helpless.

Do Not try to fix me because I am not broken.
Support me. I can make a contribution to the community in my way.

Do Not see me as your client. I am your fellow citizen.
See me as your neighbour. Remember, none of us can be self-sufficient.

Do Not try to modify my behaviour.
Be still and listen. What you define as inappropriate
may be my attempt to communicate with you in the only way I can.

Do Not try to change me, you have no right.
Help me learn what I want to know.

Do not hide your uncertainty behind "professional" distance.
Be a person who listens, and does not take my
struggle away from me by trying to make it all better.

Do Not use theories and strategies on me.
Be with me. And when we struggle
with each other, let that give rise to self-reflection.

Do Not control me. I have a right to my power as a person.
What you call non-compliance or manipulation may
actually be the only way I can exert some control over my life.

Do Not teach me to be obedient, submissive, and polite.
I need to feel entitled to say No if I am to protect myself.

Do Not be charitable towards me.
The last thing the world needs is another Jerry Lewis.
By my ally against those who exploit me for their own gratification.

Do Not try to be my friend. I deserve more than that.
Get to know me. We may become friends.

Do Not help me, even if it does make you feel good.
Ask me if I need your help. Let me show you how you can best assist me.

Do Not admire me. A desire to live a full life does not warrant adoration.
Respect me, for respect presumes equity.

Do Not tell, correct, and lead.
Listen, Support, and Follow.

Do Not work on me.
Work with me.

Questions for follow-up classroom discussion

After a school presentation from Norm Kunc, it would be beneficial to have a follow-up discussion. The questions I've included in this support guide can be found at: <http://www.normemma.com/sosquest.htm>. These questions are intended for high school students. My aim is to adapt these for use at the middle school level. I think that both a presentation by Norm Kunc and a classroom discussion on his presentation would have many benefits for the student population. I think that the information that would be presented by Norm Kunc would benefit the student body, would orient students to information related to this social justice issue, and would help pave the way toward inclusive education. The conversation that could be

facilitated within each individual classroom after the presentation could also be helpful in sharing ideas and reflecting. Students would be able to share their opinions, learn from their peers, and gain a greater understanding through reflection.

The Story of the Stranger

High School Assembly

Questions for follow-up classroom discussion

1. What surprised you about Norman's presentation? What did you expect to hear in his talk; how was it different from you expected.
2. What did you learn about disabled people that you didn't know before the speech?
3. Norman said he felt he had to be better or different than he was in order to be liked. Do you think most people feel this way? In what ways do you think kids and adults feel they have to be better?
4. Tell me in your own words why Norman said he didn't want to be cured of cerebral palsy. What do you think about Norman not wanting to be cured?
5. What was the point of the story about the boy who became the basketball star?
6. What did Norman mean when he said we need to have a common enemy to feel like we belong.
7. What are the voices in your head that you think you need to argue with?
8. What did Norman mean by "seeking the story in the stranger?" How do you do that? What makes that difficult to do?

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