

## ***Least Restrictive Environment***



### ***What is Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)?***

Murawaski (2009) defines the Least Restrictive Environment as

A legal specification from the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that students with disabilities are to be educated *to the greatest extent* possible with their general education peers.

### ***Why should we be practicing LRE in our schools?***

Research suggests that inclusive classes produce positive results in the areas of academics and social interactions (Lamport, Graves & Ward 2012). It has also been shown that students with disabilities demonstrate higher scores on standardized tests after a year within a co taught class (Hang & Rabren 2009).

### ***How does this affect the integration of Oklahoma C3 Academic Standards?***

C3 has come to Oklahoma and with this comes the practice of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). According to research, co teaching will be one of the most effective methods for delivering instruction to all students (Jimenez, Graf & Rose, 2007). This method in conjunction with the new curricular standards will give teachers the ability to reach all learners on their level without losing the integrity of the information being taught. It also promotes the idea of Least Restrictive Environment and educating all students within the same setting. The idea of co-teaching to promote LRE is simple; place two teachers of equal licensure in the same room and use one of the recommended models to address the various learning styles of all students within the class (ie: Parallel Teaching, Alternate Teaching, Teaming etc ) Friend, 2007.

# CONTINUUM OF STUDENT NEEDS



Oklahoma State Department of Education

Continuum of services is a crucial part of a child's education and the most effective way to decide placement in the least restrictive environment available for students with disabilities. Using the chart above, the various levels of support are clearly stated and should be referred to often when considering educational placement for a student with a disability.

*Out of Class Supports:* This is for students receiving consultation services in which the special education teacher communicated regularly with the general education teacher about the students' progress as a full time general education student. This can also refer to a student that is only receiving accommodations to level the playing field in the gen ed setting such as extended time for tests, use of a computer for writing assignments etc.

*In Class Supports:* This is for the student being Co-Taught for 80% or more of the school day in which a general education teacher and special education teacher work together to provide whole class instruction in a general education setting. Support facilitation refers to the student with disabilities being served in a general education setting without a special education teacher in the room full time. It's more of a collaborative effort between the two teachers to work together, even indirectly to provide the necessary supports for success.

Specialized Placements: This is a situation in which the IEP Team feels that the student needs additional supports that cannot be accommodated in the previous 2 ways due to the extent of support needed. Examples of this would be a resource room or a fully self-contained setting.

- This is a model we are trying to move away from, but all children are unique as are their disabilities and some students will require maximum supports possible to be successful in any educational setting. It is best practice to start in the blue end of the continuum and move from there as needed for student's success.



#### References:

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