



INCLUSIVE “BEST PRACTICES” PROJECT



The Inclusive "Best Practices" Project is a collaborative effort among BLaST Intermediate Unit 17, the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), and participating school districts. The goal of the Project is to create a digital video case library, with accompanying professional development resources, that illustrates exemplary practices in inclusive instructional settings.

Teachers and other school personnel are nominated by their building or district administrators as employing exemplary practices in inclusive settings. Nominations are reviewed by PaTTAN in conjunction with IU representatives, and then nominees are scheduled for video-taping sessions of actual classroom lessons as well as follow-up conferences and interviews. The content developed through this collaborative project provides web-based, interactive professional development tools and resources for in-service as well as pre-service educators.

The major components of the Inclusive Practices Project can be accessed at the following website URL: <http://www.iu17.org>, under the “**Best Practices**” **Project** heading at the top of the BLaST IU 17 website page. We have organized “drop down” menu sections for each of the Project’s components:

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GENERAL INFORMATION

This section provides an overview of the Project goals, professional resources included in the Project, roles and responsibilities of members of the Project Planning Team, and contact information.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES RESOURCE MODULES

Using resources from the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education and the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), we have assembled a variety of resources on inclusive practices that can be utilized, along with the Project videos, to develop customized professional development workshops and classes for pre-service and in-service educators. These Professional Development Modules include "downloadable" Power Point presentations and research briefs that can be locally adapted and shared with educators.

INCLUSIVE "BEST PRACTICES" VIDEOS

As part of the collaborative Inclusive Practices project, a digital video case library of "best practices" has been developed to illustrate how teachers in actual classroom settings are planning and implementing curriculum, instructional techniques and materials, and assessment strategies to provide access to the general education program for students with disabilities.

This section includes videos of teachers incorporating research-based practices that have proven to enhance the learning and achievement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. We are also incorporating videos and presentations of featured schools and school districts who "welcome all students", including those with disabilities. The structure and content of these videos are designed to complement the [Professional Development Resource Modules](#), so that these resources can be utilized for customized professional development workshops, classes, and in-service programs for schools, school districts, intermediate units, and colleges and universities.

Inclusive "Best Practices" videos developed and posted on the Project website include the following:

- **Disabilities Awareness Program/Classroom Lessons**

This section features Meg Ralston, an Autistic Support Consultant for BLaST Intermediate Unit 17 (who herself has a physical disability), as she collaborates with local school districts to plan and teach lessons to elementary school students aimed at helping them understand, appreciate and include those with disabilities. Videos include an interview with Meg that provides an overview of this exemplary program, as well as clips from an actual first grade lesson entitled "We are more alike than we are different!"

- **Educating Students with Complex Support Needs**

“Students with complex support needs are those students with disabilities who comprise about 1-2 % of all students. These students most often are assessed via the PASA, rather than the PSSA, and may include students who have intellectual disabilities and/or may need life skills support, multiple disabilities support, autistic support or physical support; and also may require augmentative communication systems and assistive technology in order to access, participate and progress in learning.” (PaTTAN, 2012.)

This section contains excerpts from interviews and classroom lessons of teachers and paraprofessionals educating students with significant cognitive and/or physical disabilities. These video clips also illustrate the effective utilization of supplementary aids and services, including assistive technology devices.

- **Co-Teaching**

Co-teaching is becoming one of the fastest-growing inclusive practices in schools today. This “best practice” occurs when two or more professionals jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space. The video clips in this section contain responses of several teachers to interview questions relative to their experiences in implementing this model, as well as video clips that illustrate these teachers implementing co-teaching strategies in their classrooms.

- **Mathematics Instruction**

This section incorporates video clips of teachers utilizing effective instructional strategies for helping a wide range of students learn mathematical concepts and problem-solving processes. These include concrete-representational-abstract strategies, mnemonics, graphic organizers, and direct instruction.

- **Reading Comprehension / Active Student Engagement (Dr. Anita Archer): Pennsylvania Response to Intervention and Instruction Initiative (RtII) for Secondary Schools**

*"Anita Archer, Ph.D., recipient of eight outstanding educator awards, has taught elementary and middle school students and has been a faculty member at San Diego State University, the University of Washington, and the University of Oregon. She currently serves as an educational consultant to school districts on effective instruction, classroom management, language arts instruction, and study skills instruction. She is a nationally known presenter and has authored training and curriculum materials, chapters, and books. Among her works are the acclaimed REWARDS reading program and the Tough Kid Video Series."**

During December 2009 and March 2010, Dr. Archer visited five Middle Schools in Pennsylvania as part of Pennsylvania's [Secondary Response to Intervention and Instruction initiative \(RtII\)](#). These schools included FDR Middle School in the Bristol Township School District, Chartiers Valley Middle School in the Chartiers Valley School District, Clairton Middle School in the Clairton City School District, Swatara Middle School in the Central Dauphin School District, and Drexel Hill Middle School in the Upper Darby School District.

While visiting these schools, Dr. Archer taught several demonstration lessons that illustrate effective "before, during, and after" Reading instructional strategies for developing comprehension skills in a variety of subject areas by actively engaging students in their learning. Following each demonstration lesson, she conducted "de-briefing" sessions with teachers to review the strategies and skills that she demonstrated during these lessons.

Video segments from Dr. Archer's demonstration lessons can be viewed under the "Classroom Instruction Video Clips" heading in this section.

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- [Content Literacy](#)

Students have achieved Content Literacy when they have acquired the skills and strategies that they need to master content and are able to manipulate and generalize that content to other learning situations. In short, they are able to "read to learn". This section includes videos illustrating Content Literacy skills and strategies, featuring interviews and classroom lessons facilitated by teachers from school districts within Intermediate Units 9, 10, and 17.

Also included in this section is a link to several "Strategic Literacy" videos developed by Dr. Anita Archer, a talented author and beloved teacher of teachers. She has developed a video series series illustrating "strategic literacy" instruction as one of her many gifts to the educational community. Produced with support from the Sonoma County, California, Office of Education, it is made available to the public at no cost. The series addresses strategic literacy instruction in grades K-8 using a "research to practice" approach grounded in pragmatic real-world applications. Each video is 4 to 10 minutes long and incorporates a particular strategic focus.

- **[Role of Paraprofessionals and Other Support Personnel in Educating Students with Disabilities](#)**

Paraprofessionals, whether they serve as instructional and/or personal care assistants, play an important role in providing services for students, teachers, and parents, as well as enhancing access to the general education program for students with disabilities. This section features interviews and classroom lesson clips of paraprofessionals and other support personnel, such as a licensed practical nurse and educational interpreter, in providing assistance and support for students with disabilities.

- **[Using Data to Guide instruction: Towanda Area School District](#)**

This section highlights interviews and team meetings for the “Data Room” program recently implemented in the Towanda Area School District as part of their Response to Intervention initiative. The videos illustrate teams of teachers and administrators collaborating to analyze student achievement data in order to develop and implement action plans to address the classroom learning needs of all students.

- **[Transition Programs and Services for Students with Disabilities: Wellsboro Area School District](#)**

Students with disabilities are provided a variety of programs and services to enable them to transition effectively from school to adult life. This section incorporates a video resource produced for the Wellsboro Area School District that describes and illustrates the collaboration and communication among school district personnel and local/regional governmental agencies to facilitate access to these transition programs and services for students and parents.

The teachers, paraprofessionals and other personnel portrayed in these videos are representative of the exemplary dedication and support being provided to ensure full access to the general education program for students with disabilities. The professional development modules and videos focus on instructional and assessment strategies being utilized by teachers and other school personnel in working with all students to ensure their success in a Standards-Aligned System.

BOOK STUDIES: INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

The opportunity for professional educators to engage in professional development through organized book studies is also a valuable component of our Inclusive Practices Project. We have assembled a small library of current books on strategies for including students with disabilities in school programs. We have acquired several copies of each title, and group members may use and keep their selected books during and following the book study activities.

This section includes a printable brochure that describes the Book Study program, and an annotated bibliography that summarizes the content of each of the books in the Inclusive Practices professional library. Excerpts from a video of a culminating book discussion meeting facilitated by Amy Breon, an Educational Consultant from IU 17, are also posted in this section.

Since the project's inception, twenty-five groups from participating school districts and/or Intermediate Units have completed collaborative Book Studies on Inclusive Practices. We are quite pleased with the response to this component to the project, as over 450 teachers and administrators have engaged in this professional development experience. In addition to reading the books and conducting face-to-face meetings, the majority of participants also engaged in online collaboration and reflection via *Wikis*, *Moodle*, or similar applications.

If you have questions or need additional information regarding the Inclusive “Best Practices” Project please contact:

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