

## Inclusion in the United States, 2000-2010

Scot Danforth, San Diego State University

1. Policy background
  - a. Special education services and classroom placement determinations are governed by federal law (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, started 1975, slight modifications since)
  - b. 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (called No Child Left Behind) dramatically increased accountability of states to federal government in regard to student achievement as measured by standardized test scores.
    - i. End of common testing exemption for students with disabilities
    - ii. Mandatory tracking and reporting of scores of students with disabilities as a sub-group for each school, district, state (states now allowed 2% exemption in most recent version)
  - c. 2004 IDEA reauthorization includes implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI), a broad systematic, multi-tiered effort to address learning difficulties in the general classroom in order to prevent referrals to special education
2. Federal data on classroom/school placement
  - a. See Graphic showing trends for All Categories, Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Learning Disability
  - b. General trend in past 10 years is gradual increase in percent of students with disabilities educated in general classrooms over 80% of school day
3. What we know:
  - a. Research indicates that students of color (primarily African-American and Latin-American males) are two to three times more likely to receive a disability label than White students
  - b. Despite lack of federal data, there is evidence to indicate that students from low income families experience similar increased risk of labeling
  - c. Research indicates that once students of color are categorized in the special education system, their chances of receiving an education in a general classroom are much less than White students with disabilities
4. Questions:
  - a. Why is the level of placement in general classrooms gradually rising?
    - i. What is the impact of RTI?
    - ii. What is the impact of No Child Left Behind?
    - iii. Other policies?

- b. Are high school graduation rates also rising? If so, for whom? If so, is there any relationship between inclusion and graduation from high school?
- c. Are students of color experiencing more inclusion? If not, why not?