

## Augustana College

### EDUC/SPED 110 Foundations in American Education

Concepts addressed:

**INCLUSION, MAINSTREAMING, AND LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

**INCLUSION:** Inclusive education means that all students in a school, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers, and support staff. The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its 1997 amendments make it clear that schools have a duty to educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms.

**MAINSTREAMING:** Mainstreaming is an educational method that includes many different kinds of learners in the same classroom, instead of separating students according to their learning abilities. The term mainstreaming was first used in the 1970s and describes classrooms where students with disabilities and students who do not have disabilities are together. In a mainstreamed classroom, all kids, including gifted kids and children with disabilities, learn together in the same classroom. Mainstreaming is now more commonly known as inclusion, and many school systems today are using inclusion in their districts.

**LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT:** Generally, a child with a disability should be served in the regular classroom with as much interaction with his or her non-handicapped classmates as possible. A child with a disability may only be removed from the regular classroom when the nature or severity of the disability is such that the education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily, even with the use of supplementary aids and services. However, for specific areas of intensive training, it is appropriate to remove a child from the regular classroom. For example, a child with a reading disability may appropriately be educated in most academic areas in the regular classroom with assistance in note taking and test taking, but it may be necessary to remove the child from the classroom to work in a small group or one-on-one specifically in the area of reading. The child's placement and the services he or she will receive depend on the child's individual needs, not on administrative convenience.