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– A Continuum of Services, Not Settings –

Does anyone else cringe when they hear the “C” word? How often have you heard that a school offers a “**Continuum** of services” and then it is explained they have self-contained classrooms, resource rooms, and *if* a student is “ready,” he/she can be in a general education class for part of the day? Sounds like a continuum of *settings*, not services.

Students with diverse strengths and needs can be successful in *one* setting, the general education classroom with a continuum of services and supports! The continuum of services and supports can be two people team-teaching in the classroom (sharing the planning, instruction and assessment responsibilities for all the students); materials and assistive technology tools readily available in the general education classroom; professional support for the teachers, which includes sharing theory, discussion, modeling, practice, feedback, and coaching; natural supports from classmates; individualized accommodations and modifications; matching instructional supports to students' interests; and/or a combination of several of these services.

The knowledge base of how supports and services can be “pushed into” general education classrooms have increased. The research on inclusion and its positive outcomes has been published, a variety of co-teaching models are available, technology tools have been invented, successful examples of inclusion exist across this continent and others, effective instructional strategies have been designed and implemented, we know how classmates can provide natural supports, universal design for learning creates more learning opportunities for all...the question remains, all we doing our best offering a continuum of services—not settings—given the knowledge we have?

Identify your vision: What supports are needed in the general education class so your child, or a student you know can be successful?

Use your voice: Initiate conversations with the people who have to power to make a difference and ask what will it take to have a continuum of services in ordinary classrooms and places.

Work together: Find allies and together take that first step!

Please let me know if you're interested in one of my presentations and/or customized consulting and coaching. Remember, what we anticipate, determines what we find!
Charmaine Thaner