

Preface

MAKING INCLUSION WORK

Four special education categories account for the majority of students receiving special education services. Half of all students served are represented by the specific learning disabilities category; speech or language impairments (19%), mental retardation (11%), and emotional disturbance (8%) are the remaining high-prevalence categories. Together, these four groups of students represent almost 90% of all students with disabilities (aged 6 through 21) in public school special education programs, and large numbers of them, especially in elementary schools, are taught more often in general education than special education classrooms. While general education teacher preparation programs have adjusted to this shift in practice by providing a course or two on special education teaching strategies, a need remains for a practical, “how-to” handbook reflecting best practices for including students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Making Inclusion Work addresses what works when teaching students with disabilities in general education classrooms. It is designed to accompany methods texts in general education, including but not limited to those in language arts, math, science, social studies, and history. Our experience is primarily in special education, with specialized methods courses in inclusion, effective teaching, behavior instruction, and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). We have been consistently confronted with and impressed by the challenges that special education and general education teachers face in including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Our approach is one of practical applications of “special education practices” (e.g., developing individualized education programs, using diagnostic testing, differentiating instruction, improving behavior and motivation, and assisting families).

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A body of literature exists on effective special education practices. This information is typically presented in special education methods courses that often are not part of the general education teacher's course of study. Our experiences over more than 30 years of preparing special education teachers and demonstrating what works in teaching students with high-incidence disabilities have illustrated continuing needs to increase understanding of special education concepts that affect general education classrooms, to apply special education concepts and skills to inclusive classroom situations, and to increase cooperation among special and general educational professionals, administrators, related-service personnel, and parents. *Making Inclusion Work* addresses these needs and is grounded in our more than 20,000 hours of professional development experience in preparing teachers as well as graduate and undergraduate students to teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

CONTENT OF THIS BOOK

The content of this book is a direct reflection of concerns expressed by teachers and teachers-in-training in their work with the ever-increasing numbers of students with diverse needs as well as the diverse nature of the general education classroom. Put simply, these professionals express the need to understand who these students are, how they are identified, and what to do with them in their classroom. In addition, both general and special educators express the need to understand the practice of collaboration and considerations as to how to successfully work with colleagues, families, and other professionals providing services to students with disabilities. Content addressing these needs is included in the book.

In Chapter 1 ("What Is Special Education?") we describe the current special education system (i.e., numbers of students, expectations) and critical processes related to it (e.g., factors involved in identifying students with disabilities, the prevalence of students receiving special education services, and the impact these students with disabilities have on inclusive classrooms). The goal is to start the book with everyone "on the same page" regarding contemporary special education.

In Chapter 2 ("Why Do We Have Inclusion?") we review the social, political, and legal basis for both general education and special education. We describe the history of special education with particular attention to key laws and legislation that drive contemporary practices, especially inclusion.

An individualized education program (IEP) is a defining aspect of special education services. General education teachers often have little or no knowledge of components of an IEP or their responsibilities with

regard to them. In Chapter 3 (“What Is an Individualized Education Program?”) we define what the IEP is and the fundamental parts of it, describe the legal implications of the IEP and the reason(s) it exists, and describe the constituents of the IEP team and the charge/goals of this group. The roles of general education personnel are highlighted.

Effective teaching involves planning for the needs of all students. General education teachers are confident in their abilities to plan for general education students, but they are much less confident in their abilities to plan for special education students. Deciding how to organize the classroom space has much to do with how successful instruction that takes place there will be for all students. Chapter 4 (“What Is Classroom Organization?”) describes classroom organization in relation to instructional strategies that are effective in working with students with disabilities in general education settings (e.g., organization of the physical space to accommodate the needs of all students and considerations to enhance the climate of the classroom so as to afford opportunities for maximum academic and social growth for all students).

Effective teaching involves meeting the needs of all students with appropriate lessons, and the focus of Chapter 5 (“What Works for Lesson Organization?”) is the importance of planning appropriate lessons. The chapter illustrates (a) how to use lesson plans (traditional six-step plans as well as others) in the included classroom setting, (b) how to integrate general lesson plans with the individual plans appropriate for students with disabilities, and (c) how to organize and present lessons with attention to varying learning styles and methods of instruction.

Responding positively, encouraging students, and promoting social acceptance are important to successful inclusion of students with disabilities. Chapter 6 (“What Is Behavior Management and Motivation?”) discusses interventions that have proven to be successful in promoting positive behavior. The importance of consistency is emphasized, and motivational techniques that work in general education classroom settings are highlighted. Consideration is also given to creating a positive classroom climate that supports students with disabilities as productive, capable members in social groups.

Given the impact of reading on all content areas, Chapter 7 (“What Works in Teaching Reading?”), by LuAnn Jordan and Jennifer Diliberto, gives special attention to programs and techniques that foster success in early and later literacy skills. We discuss the role of direct instruction in reading in a variety of classroom settings and describe specific modifications or accommodations that increase the likelihood of success in reading.

Teaching students how to approach instructional tasks (i.e., using learning strategies) is one of the most effective approaches for students with learning disabilities. In Chapter 8 (“What Are Cognitive Strategies?”)

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we describe specific learning strategies that have been demonstrated to be effective by researchers at the University of Kansas (one of us has received training in the strategies approach and used her expertise to prepare this chapter). The chapter also includes descriptions of additional learning strategies and learning style considerations in relation to fostering successful academic performance of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

A primary responsibility of classroom teachers in making inclusion work is adapting the curriculum to meet special needs of students with disabilities. This means making changes that provide learning assistance. In Chapter 9 (“What Are Effective Accommodations and Modifications?”) we describe the differences between accommodations and modifications for students included in general education classrooms. We also define and discuss additional terms used with regard to adapting instruction to meet the needs of all students in the general classroom setting, and we describe commonly used modifications and accommodations, as well as where and when they are incorporated into inclusive settings. To assist general education teachers in adapting the curriculum, we provide specific examples, illustrations, and applications of modifications and accommodations.

Once students with diverse needs are placed in the classroom, it is necessary to consider monitoring progress on a daily, consistent basis and to complete and use assessment in relation to the standard course of study to the maximum degree possible. In Chapter 10 (“What Works for Ongoing Assessment, Data Collection, and Grading?”) we illustrate important considerations in collecting and recording data in a simple, manageable format and provide information about presenting grades for students with disabilities, with attention to the role of all professionals involved in the process.

As parents and families are the core to a child’s life, Chapter 11 (“What Assistance Do Parents and Families Need?”) gives attention to issues regarding diversity and their impact on school performance. We address issues regarding poverty and its impact on school performance and provide a discussion of the importance of home-school communication, with attention to specific techniques that facilitate this process.

In Chapter 12 (“What Works for Communicating, Consulting, and Collaborating With Other Professionals?”) we attend to collaboration among professionals and consider the roles of these individuals in working with students with diverse needs. We describe strategies and techniques that facilitate collaboration and communication among school personnel and others supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms, and we provide examples of successful collaboration with attention to how and why they were successful.

No Child Left Behind is not only a law but a way of thinking. In Chapter 13 (“The End Is Just the Beginning!”) we discuss the latest law to have profound impact on students with diverse needs and disabilities. We address the impact of the law on teachers and other professionals working with students with disabilities in general education classrooms. We also focus on the future as an extension of the information presented in the text.

Our intent was to provide an accessible, exciting, engaging book that would be comprehensive, compelling, and complete. We believe that our combined experiences in providing professional development in public school systems and higher education institutions across the country have created a unique partnership that makes this book an exceptional learning opportunity. We also believe that our practical experiences in the field and our continuing deep record of academic research and scholarship provide a sound basis for considering issues affecting progress in America’s schools. We hope you enjoy the book!