INSTRUCTOR'S REVIEW COPY — NOT FOR SALE

Second Edition

Inclusion

Effective Practices for All Students

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Introduction

The U.S. society's desire for knowledgeable and responsible citizens is reflected in the numerous laws and public policies that promote education for the nation's children and youth. For example, as early as 1918, every state in the union passed compulsory school attendance laws providing, and requiring, a free public education for all children (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). Ironically, these *universal* attendance laws did not apply to all students. Those with disabilities could be, and often were, denied the opportunity to receive their free public *compulsory* education. Until the 1970s, access to school could be withheld if a school district claimed it was unable to accommodate a student with special needs—an exclusionary practice that was usually upheld in the courts.

Two cases illustrate the extreme insensitivity of these exclusionary practices (Yell et al., 1998). In 1919, the Wisconsin Supreme Court allowed the exclusion of a fifth-grade student who had a disability that caused speech problems, facial contortions, and drooling. The reasons for the exclusion: The school district claimed that the student's presence *nauseated* teachers and students and impacted discipline and academic progress negatively. Although the student was not hearing impaired, the school district recommended that the student attend a special day school for students who were deaf. In 1958, the Supreme Court of Illinois held that the state's compulsory attendance laws did not apply to those whose limited intelligence precluded the ability to benefit from a good education. This included students who were considered "feeble-minded" and "mentally deficient." The message was clear: Those with intellectual disabilities would not benefit from education, so why provide one to them.

Fortunately, several significant legislative acts, including the landmark PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA), provide access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all children regardless of their disability status. No longer are students denied an education because of their special needs and behavioral characteristics. The *total* exclusion of students with disabilities from educational settings was stopped by the historic litigation and federal legislation of the 1970s.

However, access to schooling alone does not automatically result in an appropriate education. Even though students with disabilities are provided full access to schools, practices in some schools actually limit full participation in appropriate academic and social activities. Some students with disabilities are *functionally excluded,* meaning that they occupy the same locations as their peers without disabilities, but they do not truly participate in the academic and social activities of the school. Moreover, they are not given supports that offer an opportunity to thrive and succeed in general education settings (Turnbull, 1993). The students with disabilities appear superficially to be part of the general education environment but are never fully integrated into the academic and social fabric of the school community. Unfortunately, many of these practices are so institutionalized and subtle that well-intentioned educators fail to notice when they occur. Consider how the following examples of placement in the general education environment do not allow for truly inclusive educational opportunities:

- Placing students with behavioral challenges in segregated classrooms with few opportunities to interact with normally achieving peers
- Assigning secondary students with disabilities to large subject area, general education classes with no organizational supports, peer assistance, or curricular accommodations
- Relegating students with disabilities to segregated lunch, physical education, and recess periods and locations that are removed from their age-appropriate peers
- Placing elementary students with disabilities in general education classrooms and having a special-education teacher provide them with instruction in separate groups away from their classmates

Although today we have clearly moved beyond the total exclusion of students with disabilities, more work

Pause & Reflect

Think of an instance when you were part of an activity or event but felt that you were *functionally excluded* from full participation. Describe the elements of the situation that made you feel uncomfortable or uneasy. Could you have been made to feel truly part of the activity? How?

needs to be done to minimize instances of functional exclusion. As noted by Sarita, the parent in our opening vignette, her daughter Krista believed she was truly part of her subject-area classes when she was provided with naturally occurring **peer tutoring**. Clearly, access to inclusive environments is not enough to ensure belonging and academic success. We believe that the first steps in facilitating true involvement—the *functional inclusion* of all students—are an understanding of the evolution of special-education service delivery, the legal foundations of inclusive special education, and an awareness of emerging issues and controversies that impact typical school and classroom practices.

The Evolution of Inclusive Special Education Services

The current delivery of inclusive education has been shaped by special education's rich social history, landmark litigation and legislation, significant political events, and the courageous advocacy of parents. An awareness of the evolution of inclusive education will enable you to understand why practices such as appropriate dispositions, collaboration, and positive behavioral supports (discussed in later chapters) are essential to successful student outcomes.

From Segregation to Inclusion

Until the 1960s, most students with disabilities were educated in settings that were segregated from peers without disabilities for most or all of the school day. Those educated on regular school campuses were typically isolated from other students in separate wings or in basements of the main school building. Others were educated in separate schools that served only students with disabilities (McLeskey, 2007). Many criticized these segregated settings as ineffective, stigmatizing, and resulting in low expectations for those students (Deno, 1970; Dunn, 1968; Johnson, 1962). Furthermore, a disproportionate number of students who were identified with mild disabilities and educated in these settings were poor children from diverse backgrounds. Such findings led to a call to mainstream students with mild disabilities into general education classrooms for at least part of the school day (Dunn, 1968).

As educators were mainstreaming students with disabilities, they made several assumptions regarding these students and their education (see Figure 2.1). Mainstreaming addressed only students with mild disabilities, not those with severe disabilities. Moreover, students with disabilities were assumed to belong to special education and were simply visiting the general education classroom, primarily to improve their social skills or improve academic skills if they could work at grade level. The responsibility for student outcomes remained with special education.

Placing students with disabilities in general education classes without organizational supports, peer assistance, or curricular accommodations is not effective inclusion.

At the same time, policies of **normalization** and **deinstitutionalization** were being implemented (Nirje, 1972; Wolfensberger, 1972). Normalization required agencies to provide persons with disabilities with living and learning experiences that were as "normal" as possible. Skills to be taught were those that would allow greater independence and life patterns that were parallel to those of people without disabilities. And the instructional procedures for teaching these skills were to be as close to

Figure 2.1

Comparisons of Assumptions Underlying Mainstreaming and Inclusion

Mainstreaming addresses the needs of students with mild disabilities.	**Inclusion** addresses the needs of all students with disabilities who benefit from inclusive placements.
Mainstreaming is provided to students as a privilege.	**Inclusion** is a student's basic right.
General education teachers volunteer to teach students with disabilities who are **mainstreamed.**	All general education teachers are expected to teach students with disabilities who are **included.**
To be **mainstreamed,** students are expected to fit into the general education classroom.	The general education classroom is changed to support students who are **included.**
Special education is responsible and accountable for students who are **mainstreamed.**	When students are **included,** general and special education share responsibility and accountability.

"normal" as possible. The policy of deinstitutionalization resulted in a decline in the number of persons living in large residential institutions and an increase in the number living with their families and in smaller community-based residences. Community facilities were intended to be homelike and included foster homes, group homes, intermediate-care facilities, and sheltered apartments. In these smaller facilities located in neighborhood communities, individuals were to receive services traditionally provided only in the institutions (Westling & Fox, 2009).

By the 1980s, advocates and researchers were concerned about the effectiveness of mainstreaming (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). Even with efforts such as the **regular education initiative (REI)**—a largely special-education effort to have general and special-education teachers share the responsibilities of educating students with disabilities in mainstream settings (Will, 1986)—concerns regarding mainstreaming continued, as a result of the following:

- Students with disabilities were not making adequate academic progress.
- Only the needs of students with mild disabilities were addressed; thus, many students with more severe disabilities did not have access to the general education classroom and curriculum.
- Few changes were occurring in general education classrooms to accommodate for the needs of students with disabilities.
- Additional collaboration was needed between general and special education to provide more support for students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

In response to these concerns, the inclusion movement began in the mid-1980s, resulting in major changes (see Figure 2.1). You will note that the assumptions underlying *inclusion* differ significantly from those underlying *mainstreaming*. For example, advocates of inclusion consider the education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms to be a fundamental right for all students with disabilities and the instruction of these students to be the responsibility of every general education teacher. Furthermore, proponents of inclusion assume that general and special educators will share the responsibility and accountability for educating students with disabilities and that students with disabilities will be as much a part of the educational community of the school as are other students who do not have disabilities. Finally, the collaboration between general and special educators is expected to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate supports, ensuring adequate progress academically and socially.

Increasing numbers of students with disabilities have been included in general education classrooms since the mid-1980s (McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, & Hoppey, 2011; Williamson, McLeskey, Hoppey, & Rentz, 2006), but controversy continues to surround the movement. The major concern relates to positions taken by some advocates regarding **full inclusion** (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Kauffman, 1993; McLeskey, 2007). Full inclusion suggests that all students with disabilities be educated for the entire school day in general education classrooms. In recent years, however, educators have placed less emphasis on full inclusion and more on including all students with disabilities as members of the school's academic and social community. Furthermore, policy makers and administrators have increasingly emphasized student outcomes as a key element of inclusive efforts.

Civil Rights and Parent Advocacy

The **civil rights movement** of the mid-20th century had a monumental effect on the lives of many members of disenfranchised groups, including individuals with disabilities. Until the mid-1970s, no guarantee existed that a child with a disability would receive a free and appropriate public education. Schools educated only one in five children with disabilities, and many states had laws that explicitly excluded students with certain types of disabilities. Mirroring the earlier efforts of civil rights workers for African American schoolchildren, advocates for people with disabilities used the schools as a prominent battleground in efforts to achieve equal rights and due process of law. In fact, many of the original decisions rectifying the exclusion and segregation of students based on race were expanded to include students with disabilities (Murdick, Gartin, & Crabtree, 2002).

In the courtroom, as well as in the court of public opinion, parents and civil rights advocates took on state governments and school districts to ensure that students with disabilities had access to a FAPE (Weintraub & Abeson, 1976). Using the precedent of *Brown v. Board of Education* of Topeka, Kansas (1954)—in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that African American students attending segregated schools were not receiving an equal education—disability rights advocates made the case that access to an appropriate education was being denied because of the students' disabilities. The *Brown* plaintiffs and those advocating for children with disabilities were very similar. Both groups (1) challenged segregation in education, (2) proved they were denied equal educational opportunities, and (3) advanced an enduring public policy that views the function of school as meaningfully educating *all* students (Turnbull, Stowe, & Huerta, 2007).

One constant in the enduring legal processes of gaining access to education for students with disabilities has been active parent advocacy. Although many parents would have preferred to invest this time into their own quality-of-life efforts (Soodak et al., 2002), significant legislative gains such as the original passage of EAHCA (PL 94-142) would not have been possible without these efforts. Today, it is likely that you will encounter many parents of students with disabilities actively advocating for the inclusion of their children. The majority of parents of students with disabilities support inclusion and believe it contributes positively to

Active parent advocacy has been a major factor in securing inclusive programming for students with disabilities.

social, emotional, and academic development (Duhaney & Salend, 2000). With greater access to appropriate role models and friendships, parents like Sarita at Heritage High School see inclusion contributing positively to their children's socialization, self-image, happiness, and confidence.

You will also find that parents have several realistic concerns about inclusion. Among the more prominent issues are the availability of qualified personnel and the ability of teachers in general education settings to provide needed supports. Many parents, particularly those of children with severe disabilities, fear that too many educators do not have the necessary skills and resources to implement inclusion effectively and that there is no long-term plan or vision connected to the delivery of services. Consequently, many parents believe they must be extremely vigilant, ensuring that their children are not mistreated or isolated, or just not receiving the services to which they are entitled when placed in general education settings (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Erwin & Soodak, 2000; Meaden, Sheldon, Appel, & DeGrazia, 2010).

Current Status of Inclusive Practices

Today, most students with disabilities are educated in their neighborhood schools and in general education classrooms. Table 2.1 represents the extent to which students who are

Table 2.1 Percentage of School-Aged Students with Disabilities, Ages 6–21, Served in Different Placement Settings in the 2008–2009 School Year

	Percentage of Time Spent Inside of General Education Classroom			
Disability	**Most of the School Day (80% or more)**	**Some of the School Day (40%–79%)**	**Limited Amount of the School Day (less than 40%)**	**Separate School/ Residential or Correctional Facility/Private School/ Home-Hospital Setting**
Speech–language	86.5	5.7	4.7	3.1
Developmental delay	61.8	20.1	16.2	1.9
Visual impairment	62.2	13.7	12.7	11.4
Other health impairments	60.4	24.4	11.2	4.0
Learning disabilities	61.6	27.9	8.4	2.1
Orthopedic impairment	51.5	16.5	24.7	7.3
Hearing impairment	53.7	17.1	15.7	13.5
Traumatic brain injury	45.0	23.1	23.0	8.9
Emotional disorders	39.3	19.3	23.1	18.3
Autism	36.3	18.2	35.7	9.8
Deaf-blindness	31.2	16.3	28.5	24.0
Intellectual disabilities	17.3	27.0	48.2	7.5
Multiple disabilities	13.7	16.4	45.9	24.0
All disabilities	**58.5**	**21.4**	**14.9**	**5.2**

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2011).

identified with different disabilities are served in inclusive or in more restrictive settings. These data reveal that students with mild disabilities (i.e., speech–language impairments, developmental delays, visual impairments, other health impairments, and learning disabilities) are educated in general education classrooms for most or all of the school day. Students who are placed in the more restrictive settings include those who are identified with multiple disabilities, intellectual disabilities, deaf-blindness, autism, and emotional disturbance.

Most students with disabilities—about 80%—spend a sizable portion of their school day in general education settings.

On average, across the United States, about four of every five students with disabilities spend a substantial portion of the school day (40% or more) in a general education classroom; the remaining one in five students spends very little time in a general education classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Wide variation, however, exists among states, local school districts, and even across schools within districts in the percentage of students with disabilities who are educated in inclusive settings. For example, up to 87% of all students with intellectual disabilities are educated in general education settings for most of the school day in one state, but in other states, very few of these students are educated in these settings (Williamson et al., 2006). The rate of inclusion appears to depend on the extent to which inclusion is a priority in the individual schools and districts.

Pause & Reflect

How would you convince others that inclusion is not only a disability "problem" that requires solving? What strategies would you employ to ensure that inclusion is viewed as a core value applied to all students and integrated in schools?

Clearly, more and more students are being educated in neighborhood schools and general education classrooms. Nonetheless, as many parents of students with disabilities know, access—and the official numbers used to index integration into the inclusive environment—is not enough. As mentioned earlier, access to general education settings must not functionally exclude students from successful participation but must truly result in significant involvement in the school community. To meet this goal, inclusion cannot be viewed strictly as a disability issue. Efforts to improve services and include students with disabilities require initiatives that benefit all children and schools (Bricker, 2000; Lee, Soukup, Little, & Wehmeyer, 2009).

Dianne Ferguson, a special education scholar and parent of a child with a disability, related how her thinking of inclusion changed as a result of her family's efforts to secure a more "normalized" school experience for her son Ian (Ferguson, 1995). With severe and multiple disabilities, Ian was in self-contained classrooms with few opportunities for contact with nondisabled peers. Through her research and advocacy, Ferguson found that typical efforts to mainstream or integrate students with disabilities did little to fully facilitate full participation in the learning community. Inclusion efforts merely relocated the special education but did little to change the perception that the students were "irregular," even when they were in "regular" classrooms. The challenge was to find out how to create an environment where a person with a disability is truly part of the community (an experience Ian had when in a drama class).

Ferguson realized that if inclusion were to really work, tactics would need to change. Rather than merely "adding on" to the existing systems to accommodate a few students,

inclusion had to be viewed as a core value that applied to all students, regardless of disability status. For inclusion to really work, it must be viewed as

> a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children and youth as active, fully participating members of the school community; that views diversity as the norm; and that ensures a high quality education for each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching, and necessary supports for each student. (Ferguson, 1995, p. 285)

A View from the Principal

Margaret Huckaby Embraces Inclusion

Ask Margaret Huckaby, principal of Heritage High School, about her inclusive educational philosophy and she will tell you in no uncertain terms that every student is worth *a best effort*. Where did this strong conviction come from? A former vocal music teacher, Margaret taught students with and without disabilities, and found that the presence of a disability did not prevent a student from enjoying and benefiting from choral activities. In fact, she found that with the right mix of accommodations, encouragement, and peer support, her students regularly assisted one another in order to improve the overall quality of the group's performance. As with the adolescents on the popular television program *Glee*, Margaret's students were able to look beyond their differences and work together toward a common goal. By focusing on student strengths, modeling cooperative problem-solving strategies, and being sensitive to interpersonal dynamics, Margaret found that her *best effort* was paying off. Among the many positive outcomes: Students with disabilities, many of whom had experienced problems making friends, were becoming more socially active in and out of school, were behaving more appropriately, and were actually enjoying school.

As she moved on to administrative positions, Margaret found that several of the team-building strategies she applied as a vocal music teacher with students were useful in advocating her inclusive education philosophy with sometimes reluctant faculty and staff. For example, when faced with the rare and daunting opportunity of opening the newly constructed Heritage High School (HHS), Margaret encouraged her new teaching staff to (1) infuse essential notions of equity and opportunity into an inclusive mission statement for the school and (2) develop explicit processes that ensured that all students would have opportunities to receive a quality education—their *best effort*. To complete these challenging activities, she emphasized the importance of administrators, teachers, and professional staff being able to work together in a climate of trust and mutual respect. To promote these values, a number of staff retreat activities—from bowling tournaments to scavenger hunts—were scheduled. These activities provided faculty and staff with opportunities to experience the value of working together toward a common goal. Over time, the faculty and staff began to trust one another, and realized that they could address a wide range of academic and behavioral challenges in the general education environment. Confidence and trust were also promoted by Margaret's insistence on frequent open communication about the "nuts and bolts" necessary for successful inclusive programming implementation.

How did all of this turn out? Nine years after the opening of HHS, inclusion is no longer a novelty for teachers or an embarrassing stigma for students. Like drivers' education, advanced placement classes, and spring football practice, the full range of inclusive programming techniques—co-teaching, consultation, behavioral support, and universal design for learning—are essential components of the fabric of the HHS experience. For Margaret Huckaby, there are a number of sources of satisfaction. Hearing from parents, such as Sarita, that the school's emphasis on supportive inclusion has led to meaningful improvements in their family's life is very gratifying. Still, Margaret's greatest source of satisfaction comes each June, during commencement ceremonies, when she has the opportunity to confer full academic diplomas to students with disabilities. Margaret knows that these are students who would be in a far different place if they were not seen as worth *a best effort*.

Summary

Providing an inclusive education for all students requires an understanding of the evolution of special education service delivery, the legal foundations of special education, and an awareness of emerging issues. We presented the following major points in this chapter.

The evolution of inclusive service delivery

- Until the 1960s, the majority of students with disabilities were educated in segregated settings for most or all of the school day.
- Mainstreaming was a policy of integrating students with mild disabilities into general education settings, although those students still "belonged" to special education.
- The inclusion movement, founded on the assumption that general and special educators share responsibility and accountability in educating students with disabilities, gathered strength in the mid-1980s.
- Parents and civil rights advocates used the precedent of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) to achieve access to education and due process of law.
- Parents of students with disabilities tend to support inclusion but remain concerned that too many educators lack the skills to implement such programming effectively.
- Today, most students with disabilities are educated in their neighborhood schools and in general education classes.

The major legislative acts that are the legal foundation for special education and inclusion

- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), the most recent iteration of the landmark Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975, is the most significant legislative effort supporting the education of students with disabilities.
- IDEA, a confluence of significant legal decisions and principles, ensures that all students, regardless of their disability, receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- As part of IDEA, an individualized education program (IEP) containing current students' levels of functioning, annual goals, special education and related services, projected dates of services, and the extent of participation in the general education environment guides instructional efforts.
- Under IDEA, students and their families have procedural due process protections and are ensured of receiving a nondiscriminatory assessment of strengths and weaknesses.
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a comprehensive federal initiative designed to improve the educational performance of *all* students, mandates compliance to high standards and sanctions states and schools that fail to meet set criteria.
- The major components of NCLB are strong accountability for results, expanded flexibility and local control, scientifically based teaching methods, expanded options for parents, and highly qualified teacher requirements. These components are having a substantial impact on how all students are being educated.
- Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) are significant pieces of legislation that provide protections for students with disabilities who do not match the definitions provided under the IDEA statutes.
- Section 504 considers a child with a disability to be one who functions as having a disability.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act expands protections to prohibit discrimination in employment and public accommodations.

Inclusion today: Multi-tiered RTI frameworks

- Much of the increased access and enhanced support observed in inclusive schools can be attributed to the increased use of multi-tiered RTI service delivery systems.

- Although there is no one type of RTI framework, most systems consist of prevention and intervention tiers; evidence-based practices; screening, identification, and progress monitoring; and intervention delivery methods—and some are beginning to integrate UDL.
- The implementation of RTI has been successful in addressing the academic and behavioral needs of elementary students in inclusive general education classes, yet it is likely that these systems will require changes in the roles and responsibilities for both general and special educators.

Tomorrow's challenges

- Although it is generally accepted that some students with disabilities are unable to meet the same standards as their peers, educators and policy makers continue to struggle with determining how best to set high standards and assess academic progress.
- A severe and chronic shortage of highly qualified and fully certified special education teachers may derail efforts to deliver collaborative and supportive inclusive programming.

Addressing Professional Standards

Standards addressed in Chapter 2 include:
CEC Standards: (1) foundations, (8) assessment, (9) professional and ethical practice

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