also tend to be lower than their peers in emotional intelligence. The term *behavior disorder* is often used interchangeably with *emotional disturbance, emotional disability,* or *emotional handicap,* and you may encounter any of these in your work. Researchers prefer the term *behavior disorder* because it focuses on overt behaviors that can be targeted and changed (Turnbull, Turnbull, & Wehmeyer, 2013).

Students in each of these categories require extra assistance to help them succeed in the general education classroom.

Students Who Are Gifted and Talented

As a classroom teacher, you'll likely also work with learners who are gifted and talented, students at the upper end of the ability continuum. What is it like to be gifted or talented in a general education classroom? Here are the thoughts of one 9-year-old:

> Oh what a bore to sit and listen,
> To stuff we already know.
> Do everything we've done and done again,
> But we still must sit and listen.
> Over and over read one more page
> Oh bore, oh bore, oh bore.
> Sometimes I feel if we do one more page
> My head will explode with boredness rage
> I wish I could get up right there and march right out the door.

(Delisle, 1984, p. 72)

Although we don't typically think of gifted and talented students as having exceptionalities, they often have learning needs not met by the general education curriculum, and they need special services to reach their full potential. The National Center for Education Statistics (2011c) reports that over 3 million students are gifted and talented, slightly more than 6% of the total student population. At one time, the term *gifted* was used to identify these students, but the category has been enlarged to include both students who do well on intelligence tests and those who demonstrate above-average talents in a variety of areas such as math, creative writing, and music (Hardman, et al., 2011).

Meeting the needs of students who are gifted and talented requires both early identification and instructional modifications. Conventional procedures often miss students who are gifted and talented because they rely heavily on standardized test scores and teacher nominations; as a result, females, students with low socioeconomic status, and students from cultural minorities are typically underrepresented in these programs (Gootman & Gebelof, 2008; J. Lewis, DeCamp-Fritson, Ramage, McFarland, & Archwamety, 2007). To address this problem, experts recommend more flexible and less culturally dependent methods, such as creativity measures, tests of spatial ability, and peer and parent nominations in addition to test score or teacher recommendations.

As a general education classroom teacher, you will probably be responsible for adapting instruction for students who are gifted and talented, because special programs for these students have declined in recent years. Different ways of helping these students are typically based either on **acceleration**, which keeps the curriculum the same but allows students to move through it more quickly, or on **enrichment**, which provides richer and varied content through strategies that supplement usual grade-level work. Table 3.2 lists different acceleration and enrichment options. Failure to address the needs of these students can result in gifted underachievers, with social and emotional problems linked to boredom and lack of motivation.

Revisiting My Beliefs

This section addresses the fifth item in *This I Believe*, "Experts in special education advocate the creation of special classrooms to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities." This statement isn't true; special educators recommend that students with exceptionalities should be educated in general education classrooms, whenever possible. This movement toward inclusion reflects research that suggests that these students learn more and develop more effective social skills when they have opportunities to interact with other students in general education classrooms.

TABLE 3.2 Acceleration and Enrichment Options for Students Who Are Gifted and Talented

Enrichment Options	Acceleration Options
1. Independent study and independent projects	1. Early admission to kindergarten and first grade
2. Learning centers	2. Grade skipping
3. Field trips	3. Subject skipping
4. Saturday and summer programs	4. Credit by exam
5. Simulations and games	5. College courses in high school (Advanced Placement Courses)
6. Small-group inquiry and investigations	6. Correspondence courses
7. Academic competitions	7. Early admission to college

Adapting to Students' Abilities and Exceptionalities: Your Role as a Teacher

Teaching and You

Do you have an exceptionality? Did you know any students with exceptionalities when you were in school? Do you have any of these students in your close circle of friends? How were students with exceptionalities treated by other students in the schools you attended?

Because of inclusion, you—the general education teacher—now are central to helping students with exceptionalities learn and develop to their full potential. You will have three important roles in this process:

- Identify students you suspect have exceptionalities.
- Collaborate with other professionals.
- Modify instruction to meet students' needs.

This process begins with identification, an important first step in understanding and diagnosing learning problems. Following identification, classroom teachers collaborate with special educators and other support personnel to design and implement the IEP. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, classroom teachers adapt instruction to meet the learning needs of students with exceptionalities. The process begins with identification.

Identifying Students with Exceptionalities

Because you work directly with students every day, you are in the best position to identify students who may have exceptionalities. For example, Celina's ongoing observations of Rodney—in the case study at the beginning of this section—led her to conclude that "his engine is stuck on fast" and he might need special help. No one else in the school was in a better position to raise the question of whether or not Rodney needed additional support. The same was true for her experiences with Amelia.

In the past, a **discrepancy model** was used to identify students with exceptionalities. This model looked for differences between:

1. Performance in the classroom and scores on standardized tests
2. Scores on intelligence and achievement tests
3. Intelligence test scores and classroom achievement
4. Subtests on either intelligence or achievement tests

Performance in one area, such as an intelligence test, should predict performance in others; when the two were inconsistent, a learning problem was suspected.

Many experts became dissatisfied with the discrepancy model, arguing that it identified a disability only after a problem surfaced, sometimes after several years of failure and frustration (Lose, 2008). Instead, they argued, educators need

early screening measures, so they can prevent failure before it occurs. Critics also contended that the discrepancy model didn't provide specific information about the nature of the learning problem or what should be done to correct it.

The **response to intervention (RTI) model of identification** addresses both of these problems. RTI typically begins at the start of the school year with pretesting designed to identify potential learning problems as early as possible (Samuels, 2011). If a potential learning problem is identified, the classroom teacher adapts instruction in an attempt to meet the student's needs. Common interventions include working with individual students while the majority of the class does seat work, one-on-one tutoring outside of regular school hours, and small-group work. RTI also emphasizes developing study strategies, such as highlighting important vocabulary, using a dictionary, reading assignments aloud, and finding a quiet place to study free of distractions. If the interventions are unsuccessful, a learning exceptionality is likely. You will note what works and what doesn't and document how the student responds to the intervention. This is the source of the label "response to intervention."

Collaboration

Collaboration with other professionals is your second important role in the inclusion process. Initially, inclusion provided for additional services to help students with exceptionalities function in general education school settings (Turnbull et al., 2013), but the concept of collaboration gradually replaced this additive approach. Collaboration involves communication with parents and other professionals, such as special education specialists, school psychologists, and guidance counselors, to create the best possible learning environment for students with exceptionalities. You will work closely with special education teachers to ensure that learning experiences are integrated into the general education classroom curriculum. For example, rather than pulling a student with special needs out of the classroom for supplementary instruction in math, a special education teacher will coordinate instruction with you and will then work with the student in your classroom on tasks linked to the standard math curriculum, as the following example illustrates:

Sharon Snow notices that Joey Sanchez is having difficulties with three-digit addition problems. After checking the IEP she has helped design in collaboration with the special education team, she finds that mastering math problems such as these is one of Joey's goals. She meets with Ken Thomas, the resource teacher, after school, and examines some recent work samples from Joey's math homework and quizzes. They discover he is having trouble with problems that involve place value and carrying values over to the next column, such as the following:

$$345$$
$$+296$$

During the next week, when Sharon's class is working on similar problems, Ken stops by Joey's desk to help him. At first, they work in the back of the room, and Ken reviews place values for him. When Ken thinks Joey understands how place value affects the addition problems, he sends him back to his seat to work on the next few problems. Both Sharon and Ken monitor Joey's progress carefully so he won't get discouraged. When the number of problems seems to overwhelm Joey, Ken breaks them down into smaller blocks of five, providing feedback and encouragement after each block. Slowly, Joey starts to catch on and gain confidence. Collaboration is working.

Collaboration enabled the classroom teacher and the special educator to coordinate their efforts to help Joey succeed.

Unquestionably, having learners with exceptionalities in your classroom will make your teaching more demanding, but helping a student with a disability

adapt and even thrive can be one of the most rewarding experiences you'll have as a teacher. One teacher shared this story about her efforts to help a student struggling with a communication disorder.

> At the end of the year, his dad took me aside and said, "We don't know what we would have done without this program. We were getting desperate. He's a different child today from what he was in August. We are so happy. He is just a different little boy" That felt pretty good. (Kostelnik et al., 2002, p. 129)

In *Teaching and You,* we asked if you knew any students with exceptionalities in the schools you attended. Most of us did, either directly or indirectly, and some of us had family members who struggled in school. It isn't easy being different or struggling to understand topics that seem effortless for other students. When you work with these students in your own classroom, try to remember your own struggles in encountering challenging topics, and help them in every way you can.

Modifying Instruction to Meet Students' Needs

Modifying your instruction to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities is your third important role. But the modifications you will use will not differ drastically from your general instruction practices (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). "In general, the classroom management and instruction approaches that are effective with special students tend to be the same ones that are effective with other students" (Good & Brophy, 2008, p. 223). In other words, you don't teach students with exceptionalities in ways that differ fundamentally from the way you teach all students; you simply do it that much better.

You can use these instructional modifications to help learners with exceptionalities succeed in your classroom (Turnbull et al., 2013):

- Teach in small steps, and provide detailed feedback on homework.
- Involve students with exceptionalities by calling on them as often as other students in your classes.
- Carefully model solutions to problems and other assignments.
- Provide outlines, hierarchies, charts, and other forms of organization for the content you're teaching.
- Increase the amount of time available for tests and quizzes.
- Use available technology.
- Teach learning strategies.

In inclusive classrooms, teachers play a major role in identifying students needing extra help, collaborating with other professionals, and adapting instruction to meet students' needs.

The last item on the list is particularly important. Students with learning difficulties often approach tasks passively or use the same strategy for all objectives (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). These students can learn to use strategies, and strategy training is one of the most promising approaches to working with students having exceptionalities, but the strategies need to be taught explicitly (M. Coyne, Carnine, & Kame'enui, 2011). For example, a student with a learning disability in reading was taught the following strategy. In attempting to understand the content of a chapter, he first looked at the chapter outline to see how the chapter was organized. Then, he used the outline as a guide as he skimmed the chapter. He then read the chapter to himself aloud, stopping every few paragraphs to summarize what he had just read. If he was unable to summarize the information, he reread the section.

Success is essential for struggling learners, and you'll need to provide additional support to help students overcome a history of failure and frustration and to convince them that they can succeed if they're willing to make the effort. For instance, while the majority of the class is completing a seat-work assignment, you might work with an individual student or a small group; this is how Sharon and Ken helped Joey with his math skills. Positive reinforcement and support are crucial. One teacher reported,

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Anytime Brian did what I asked him to do, I made sure to help him recognize that he had been successful. I would make a little face, put my thumbs up, or say, "Good job." I wanted him to get the message "You're doing okay," or "You're on the right track." Sometimes, I just wanted him to know that I saw him and noticed what he was doing—not because he had accomplished anything in particular, but just because it was fun to have him around. (Kostelnik et al., 2002, p. 127)

Peer tutoring has also been used effectively, providing benefits to both the tutor and the person receiving the tutoring. It not only helps with content learning, but also provides an opportunity for students to interact with and learn about students with exceptionalities.

Home-based tutoring programs that involve parents are especially effective (Vaughn & Bos, 2012). Parents often want to help with their children's schooling but aren't quite sure how. Some simple directions and encouragement from you are often all that parents need.

TECHNOLOGY and TEACHING: Employing Technology to Support Learners with Disabilities

Julio is partially deaf, barely able to use a hearing aid to understand speech. Kerry Tanner, his seventh-grade science teacher, works closely with the special education instructor assigned to her classroom to help Julio. Seated near the front of the room to facilitate lipreading, Julio takes notes on a laptop computer during teacher presentations. Other students take turns sharing their notes with him so he can compare and fill in gaps. He especially likes to communicate with other students on the Internet, because this levels the communication playing field. When he views video clips on his computer, he uses a special device with earphones to increase the volume.

Jaleena is partially sighted, with a visual acuity of less than 20/80, even with corrective lenses. Despite this disability, she is doing well in her fourth-grade class. Terrence Banks, Jaleena's teacher, has placed her in the front of the room so that she can better see the chalkboard and overhead projector and has assigned students to work with her on her projects. Using a magnifying device, she can read most written material, but the computer is giving her special problems: The small letters and punctuation on websites and other information make it difficult for her to use the computer as an information source. Terrence works with the special education consultant in his district to get a monitor that magnifies the display. He knows it's a success when he sees Jaleena quietly working alone at her computer on the report due next Friday.

Assistive technology, a set of adaptive tools that support students with disabilities in learning activities and daily life tasks, can be a powerful tool for students with exceptionalities. These assistive tools are required by federal law under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and include motorized chairs, remote control devices that turn machines on and off with the nod of the head or other muscle action, and machines that amplify sights and sounds (Heward, 2013; Roblyer & Doering, 2013).

Probably the most widespread use of assistive technology is in the area of computer adaptations.

Adaptations to Computer Input Devices

To use computers, students must be able to input their words and ideas; however, this can be difficult when visual or other physical disabilities impede standard keyboarding. Enhancing the keyboard, such as making it larger and easier to see, arranging the letters alphabetically to make them easier to find, or using pictures for nonreaders are adaptations that accommodate these disabilities (Schultz, 2012). AlphaSmart, one widely used program, helps developing writers by providing spell-check and word-prediction scaffolding. When a student hesitates to finish a word, the computer, based on the first few letters, then either completes the word or offers a menu of suggestions, freeing students to concentrate on ideas and text organization.

Additional adaptations bypass the keyboard altogether. For example, speech/voice-recognition software translates speech into text on the computer screen (Roblyer & Doering, 2013). These systems can be invaluable for students with physical disabilities that affect hand and finger movement. Other adaptations use switches activated by an eye or body movement, such as a head nod, to interact with the computer (Schultz, 2012). Touch screens also allow students to go directly to the monitor to make responses.

Research also indicates that students with learning disabilities encounter difficulties translating ideas into written words (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2012). Speech-recognition technology eases this cognitive bottleneck by bypassing the keyboard, helping to produce initial drafts that are longer, with fewer errors.

Adaptations to Output Devices

Adaptations to computer output devices also assist learners with exceptionalities (Roblyer & Doering, 2013). For example, the size of the display can be increased with a special large-screen monitor, such as the one Jaleena used, or with a magnification device. For students who are blind, speech synthesizers read words and translate them into sounds. In addition, special printers can convert text into Braille and Braille into text.

Diversity in Your Classroom

These technologies are important because they prevent disabilities from becoming obstacles to learning. Their importance to students with exceptionalities is likely to increase, as technology becomes a more integral part of classroom instruction.

Students will be naturally curious when you introduce any of these new technologies into your classroom. Use this as an opportunity to discuss the whole topic of exceptionalities: emphasize that everyone is different, with unique strengths and abilities, and that knowing these allows us to make the most out of what each of us possesses.

Check Your Understanding

4.1. Define the concept of *intelligence,* and explain how the idea of multiple intelligences changes this definition.
4.2. Explain the legal foundation of special education.
4.3. What are the major categories of exceptionalities found in classrooms?
4.4. What roles do classroom teachers play in helping students with exceptionalities succeed in their classrooms?

For feedback on these exercises, go to the appendix, *Check Your Understanding,* located in the back of this text.

"I found the reason why there's a special in special education: those children are such special gifts to our world, and where people saw a disability, I saw a possibility. And I knew that it would be my job to help them reach their possibilities."

DANIELLE DOVACH, 2011 Teacher of the Year, New Jersey

CHAPTER

3 Summary

1. **Explain how cultural diversity influences learning and how effective teachers respond to this diversity.**

   - As students from diverse cultural backgrounds enter our classrooms, they bring with them unique attitudes and values. Sometimes these cultural attitudes and values complement school learning; at other times, they don't.

   - Diversity also results in differences in the cultural interaction patterns students bring to our classrooms. Often the interaction patterns of the classroom conflict with those of the home. Teachers who recognize this problem can adapt their instruction to meet the needs of students and also teach them how to adapt to the interaction patterns of the classroom.

   - Educational responses to cultural diversity have changed over time. Initially, the emphasis was on assimilation, or socializing students to adopt the dominant social norms and patterns of behavior. Multicultural education, and especially culturally responsive teaching, recognizes, accommodates, and builds on student cultural differences.

   - Urban areas are often called "gateway cities," because many of the immigrants to the United States first settle there. Consequently, the number of cultural minorities attending urban schools is large. In addition, many of these recent immigrants don't speak English as their first language.

2. **Describe the major approaches to helping EL students learn.**

   - Language diversity is increasing in U.S. classrooms. During the 1960s and 1970s, the federal response to this diversity was to encourage bilingual programs. Currently, the federal emphasis is on the rapid acquisition of English with little or no emphasis on preserving students' home languages.

   - Educational responses to language diversity range from recognizing and building on the home language to teaching English as quickly as possible. Currently, despite research that suggests advantages for maintaining the first language, political sentiment favors teaching English as quickly as possible.

   - Teachers who have EL students in the classroom can do several important things to help them learn. In addition to creating a warm and inviting classroom, they can provide multiple opportunities for students to practice their developing language skills with their peers. Teachers also should use a variety of concrete examples and graphics to illustrate abstract ideas and concepts.

3. **Explain how gender differences influence school success and how effective teachers respond to these differences.**

   - Males and females are different, and these differences reflect genetic influences as well as differences in the way society treats boys and girls. Parents also exert powerful influences on gender differences.

   - Evidence suggests that both boys and girls encounter problems in today's schools. For girls, these problems focus more on achievement and career choices, especially in math, science, and computer science, whereas for boys, the problems are more behavioral and connected to learning problems. Suspected causes of these problems range from societal and parental expectations to differential treatment in classrooms. Teachers play a major role in ensuring that gender differences don't become gender inequalities.

4. Explain how schools have changed the ways they help students with exceptionalities.

- The legal foundation for special education was established in 1975 with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. IDEA, combined with later amendments, mandates a free appropriate public education, protection from discrimination in testing, parental involvement, a learning environment that doesn't restrict learners, and an individualized program of study for learners with exceptionalities.

- Students with exceptionalities require extra help to reach their full potential. The majority of students with exceptionalities fall into four major categories: learning disabilities, communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, and behavior disorders. A substantial number of students with exceptionalities are also gifted and talented.

- General education classroom teachers collaborate with other professionals to provide individualized educational services to students with exceptionalities. This collaboration begins with helping to identify students with exceptionalities, continues with collaboration during the creation of IEPs, and extends into the classroom, where teachers adapt their instruction to meet the learning needs of these students. Throughout this process, the teacher maintains continual communication with parents, school administrators, and other school professionals.

- Effective teachers use the same basic instructional strategies that work with all students, but they also provide additional support for students with exceptionalities. The emphasis is on helping students with exceptionalities succeed on their academic tasks. Effective teachers use modeling, provide peer and one-on-one tutoring, break large tasks into smaller ones, provide visual aids, use assistive technology, and teach students how to use learning strategies.

Important Concepts

acceleration
assimilation
assistive technology
behavior disorders
bilingual maintenance language programs
collaboration
communication disorders
cultural diversity
culturally responsive teaching
culture
disabilities
discrepancy model of identification
emotional intelligence
English as a second language (ESL) programs
English learners (ELs)
enrichment
ethnicity
exceptionalities
gender bias
gender-role identity

gifted and talented
immersion programs
inclusion
individualized education program (IEP)
individualized family service plan (IFSP)
intellectual disabilities
intelligence
learning disabilities
learning style
mainstreaming
multicultural education
multiple intelligences
response to intervention (RTI) model of identification
single-sex classes and schools
special education
stereotype
students with exceptionalities
transition programs

Portfolio Activity

Exploring Cultural Diversity

InTASC Core Teaching Standards 2: Learning Differences

The purpose of this activity is to introduce you to the cultural diversity in an area where you might teach. Contact the State Office of Education in a state where you're thinking of teaching (addresses and websites can be found on the