

Second Edition

Inclusive Teaching

The Journey Towards Effective Schools for All Learners

J. Michael Peterson ✈ Mishaël M. Hittie



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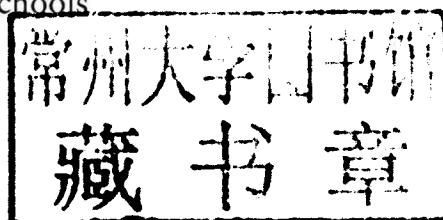
SECOND EDITION

J. Michael Peterson

Wayne State University

Mishael Marie Hittie

Eisenhower Elementary School, Southfield Public Schools



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To Georgie Ellen Peterson and Todd A. Hittie, without whose love and support this book would not have been possible.

Throughout the world, educators and policy makers talk about their commitment to educating all children well. Yet, at the same time it's hardly a secret that children in schools are segregated from one another on the basis of many characteristics, particularly race, wealth, and disability. Our read of the evidence, the research, is that this arrangement is harmful to children and does not teach them how to function in a healthy society. The good news, however, is that committed, courageous, creative people throughout the world are working very hard to create different types of schools: schools where all children learn well together; where separate schools and classrooms for students with various special needs are relegated to a painful past; where children learn how to function as an inclusive, caring community; and where real learning and thinking rises to new heights.

In this book, we invite you to join this worldwide movement, to journey toward becoming an inclusive teacher who values and celebrates all children, not just some. We use the metaphor of a *journey* because it fits the experience of those who have sought to become inclusive teachers. Few of us had experiences of inclusive teaching growing up, so learning about inclusive teaching truly *is* a journey.

We will also challenge you to think in new ways about teaching children with differences. Rather than accepting the way schools are as a given and “including” a few students, we will explore strategies by which you will seek to design your teaching from the beginning so that truly diverse children learn well together, are challenged at their own levels of ability, and receive the support they need within a community of learners to which they know they belong. You will find that inclusive teaching improves learning and growth for *all* students, including students with special needs. By the end of our quest together, we think you will find that this perspective makes a great deal of sense—and we hope that you will never think about teaching in the same way again.

Much of the information we share in *Inclusive Teaching* derives from our own teaching and action research in schools. We have particularly drawn from an intensive qualitative study of 15 inclusive schools that was conducted through the Whole Schooling Research Project, a 3-year study funded by the U.S. Department of Education that explored inclusive teaching on a daily basis (Peterson, Tamor, Feen, & Silagy, 2002). Our

understandings have been further deepened as we have worked to connect schools in urban, suburban, and rural areas to promote effective learning for all students as part of the Whole Schooling Consortium (see www.wholeschooling.net). Finally, your two coauthors have collaborated in this work and have also spent much time talking and learning together in Mishael Hittie's elementary classroom where she has set out, over the last decade, to be an effective inclusive teacher.

Beyond “Inclusion” to Inclusive Teaching

The unique purpose of this book is captured in the following question, which we hope you will carefully ponder:

How can we teach so that children with dramatically different abilities, personality styles, cultures, and languages learn well together?

This is what being an *inclusive teacher* and creating an *inclusive school* is all about.

Organization of the Book

Each chapter includes a mix of (1) theory and research; (2) concrete stories that help you visualize and feel the emotional impacts of issues and approaches; and (3) practice—applied strategies that can be used in the classroom. Each chapter also seeks to paint a picture of the sometimes painful realities we see in schools, realities that often sharply contrast with best practices. Our hope is that the mix of vision, theory, research, story, and practice will help you learn at a deeper level, to understand the why and how, and ultimately to link emotional and cognitive intuition with systematic, practical action. Each chapter contains some or all of the following special features:

- ***Journey into the Classroom:*** Detailed peek into a classroom to explore key strategies being implemented for inclusive teaching.
- ***Bumps in the Road:*** Exploration of problems and challenges that occur that hinder effective inclusive teaching from becoming a reality, and discussion of strategies regarding how to deal with these issues.
- ***Champions of Inclusion:*** This five-segment piece offers practical insights regarding small but important ways that inclusive teaching can be promoted by everyone in the school community, from janitors and secretaries to teachers and speech therapists.
- ***Traveling Notes:*** A summary of the key ideas at the end of each chapter.
- ***Stepping Stones:*** Ideas for activities to extend your understanding and moving toward putting ideas into practice.
- ***Backpack:*** Key online and print resources related to each chapter.
- ***Sights to See:*** Links to online videos that illustrate information and strategies in each chapter.
- ***Schools to Visit:*** Brief profiles of real schools—with contact information provided—that are seeking to include all children in learning together.
- ***Cartoons*** by Michael Giangreco that bring humor and truth to our theme.

Supplements for Students and Teachers

Several supplements are available for use in university classes and professional development to accompany this text.

PowerPoint. PowerPoint transparencies are available for each chapter. Designed by the authors, these can be downloaded to use in presentations and dialogue in classes and training sessions.

Web Site. The authors maintain a comprehensive Web site based on this text that they use in their own teaching. (see <http://www.wholeschooling.net/InclTchingWeb/index.html>). This site is available for use by anyone. Based on information in the chapter, the site provides many forms that can be downloaded and used in learning exercises, links to valuable resources related to each chapter, syllabi for courses, learning assignments, and examples of student work over the last 10 years.

Instructor's Manual. The Instructor's Manual provides resources and suggestions for learning activities that may be used in university classes and professional development sessions based on each chapter in the text. Rubrics are provided for learning assignments used by Michael Peterson in his university classes. Text questions are provided for each chapter in various formats.

About the Authors

For us, writing this book has also been a journey. We are a father–daughter, university professor–teacher team.

Michael Peterson is a professor in the College of Education at Wayne State University in Detroit, where he has taught courses in inclusive education since 1994; before this he directed the Developmental Disabilities Institute. He has more than 30 years of experience working with children and adults with disabilities and teachers and service providers. In 1997 Michael and colleagues organized the Whole Schooling Consortium, a school renewal network based on a framework in which inclusive education is a central component. The consortium works with schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings (see www.wholeschooling.net).

Mishaal Hittie began her teaching career in 1997 as a support teacher in an inclusive school. She has taught third, fourth and fifth grade, often looping with her children, and a Grades 3 to 5 multiage class. In her classes she's had children with a variety of disabilities (cognitive, emotional, learning, blindness), children of different ethnic groups, and children from low- and high-income backgrounds all learning together. She participated in the Whole Schooling Research Project, in which the researchers studied her school and classroom to understand and document effective inclusive teaching practices.

We've been excited about our own journey—about learning, writing, thinking, and exploring together. Our goal is to share our discoveries with you and to help prepare you for your own trek of development and growth. We hope you find the path enjoyable, rewarding, and valuable as you seek to be an effective teacher of highly diverse children learning *together*.

Acknowledgments

Michael: I would like to thank the first teachers who taught me about inclusive community, my parents, J. W. and Juanita Peterson. Together they have modeled inclusion, support, and care. My wife, Georgie, taught me about good teaching as she taught our children and about community as we built a family. My son, Shawn, has helped me understand the importance of critical reflection, perseverance, and caring relationships. Joyful has been the opportunity to learn with and from my colleague and daughter, Mishaal, who has become a passionate leader toward inclusive teaching.

Mishaal: I would like to thank my parents for their demonstration of how to live in and create inclusive communities wherever they go. My mother, Georgie, taught me how to love with my whole heart and soul and that learning is a joyous part of daily life, not confined to school. I get my love of learning and reading from her. My father, Michael, taught me to persevere and to always strive to improve. From him I get my passion for teaching. He has become a friend and confidant who has challenged me in my teaching.

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From both of us: We both have many colleagues who have influenced and supported us in learning about inclusive teaching. These include:

Students: For both of us, students have been key to our learning. In some cases these have been children and students in school classrooms. Mishael has taught children and Michael has visited her class and the classes of many other teachers. They've helped us understand how to make learning fun, to leave our comfort zones, to encourage them to think and grow, to give of ourselves, and to always keep their best interests in mind. They have touched our hearts, and the lessons we have learned from them grace this book in many ways. We particularly note Kareem Allen, Katie Basford, Micah Fialka-Feldman, Sydney Jones, Katie Loviska, Cassy McKay, Erin McKenzie, Shawnacy Parham, Christina Robinson, and Kyle Smith.

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Michael Peterson and Mishael Hittie with her Grades 3 to 5 multiage inclusive class.

Educators from around the world: Many educators from around the world have including provided leadership toward inclusive teaching, Naadia Momberg, Egypt; Sigamoney Naicker, South Africa; Umesh Sharma, Australia; and Jen Snape, Australia.

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