

MAINSTREAMING

A Practical Approach for Teachers

SECOND EDITION



JUDY W. WOOD

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Preface

Mainstreaming. Yesterday a dream. Today a reality. Educators, general and special, are striving toward the goal of jointly providing the most appropriate educational setting possible for all students. Working toward this goal has been a result of the creation of laws, the efforts of parents, and the realization that all children have needs which are special. When educators, special and general, merge their skills and work cooperatively, the way is paved for providing an education appropriate for all.

The focus of the second edition of *Mainstreaming: A Practical Approach for Teachers* is to continue to assist and support all educators in providing appropriate services for students served within mainstreamed environments. With the current emphasis on serving all children within general education settings, the text presents practical ideas for educators to assist with this process.

Chapter 1 provides the reader with an overview of mainstreaming and recent legislation regarding students and adults with disabilities; Chapter 2 describes the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the multidisciplinary team; and Chapter 3 identifies the various characteristics of students with disabilities. The unique characteristics of the student who is culturally diverse are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 emphasizes the ecological elements of the mainstreamed environment and provides suggestions for making it appropriate for all students. Chapter 6 approaches in depth the instructional process and ideas for enhancing that process. Chapters 7–10 offer recommended teaching strategies for individualizing language arts, arithmetic, science and social studies, and vocational/career education, respectively.

Special features include chapter objectives for gaining reader interest and for developing a framework of information to be learned, and vignettes, setting the stage for the chapter. Each chapter includes numerous illustrations and tables that expand on text discussion as well as discussion questions which help students reflect on the understanding of the material presented. Some chapters include a case study and conclude with a resources section that enable interested readers to pursue topics

further. Finally, at the end of the book, is an appendix of relevant organizations and associations.

As with the first edition, the ultimate goal of *Mainstreaming* is to assist readers who will be teaching students with disabilities in general education settings by providing useful and practical information. The author welcomes any and all suggestions for improvement to be reflected in the third edition.

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Appreciation is extended to the talented, patient, and dedicated educators whose contributions to this book are immeasurable: Jerry Aldridge, University of Alabama at Birmingham; Deborah Bott Slaton, University of Kentucky; Ann Box, Samford University; John Kregel, Virginia Commonwealth University; Andrea Lazzari, Virginia Commonwealth University; James R. Patton, Pro-Ed, Austin, Texas; Daisy Reed, Virginia Commonwealth University; and Carolyn K. Reeves-Kazelskis, University of Southern Mississippi.

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A special acknowledgment goes to an outstanding educator, Don Hughes, who has devoted his life to children and to making this world a better place. The wonderful state of Utah is a better place because of Don's love and patience. His life has touched so many.

As always, I thank my family for their love and support—my sister, Sandra Foutz, my mother, Ercyle Walker, and my brother, Ford Walker.

This text is lovingly dedicated to my sons, Eddie, Scott, and Jason. You are my blessings, my support, and my strength. You continuously show me what life's light is truly about. You are living examples of young adults who succeed against great odds. Thank you for being in my life . . . for being my sons.

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1

Mainstreaming: An Overview

Judy W. Wood, Andrea M. Lazzari, and Carolyn K. Reeves



CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading chapter 1, the student will be able to

- ☐ Define mainstreaming
- ☐ Identify those students who are likely to succeed in a mainstream setting
- ☐ Summarize existing legislation supporting individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Provide suggestions for setting the stage for mainstreaming in regular classes
- ☐ Discuss the importance of positive attitudes as they relate to mainstreaming

VIGNETTE

Joan Hill, a fourth grade teacher, is looking forward to beginning her third year of teaching. Her first year was difficult, but by the end of her second year she felt competent and secure in her role.

Now, on the first teacher workday before the school year begins, Ms. Hill sits down with her class roll to become familiar with her new students' names. As she scans the roll, a name jumps out at her—Stevie Preston. "Surely this isn't the same Stevie Preston from the primary special education class down the hall. This must be an error. Or maybe a new student with the same name has moved in. What a coincidence—two students in the same school with identical names!"

Ms. Hill's thoughts are interrupted by Mr. Torres, teacher of the primary noncategorical special education class. "Oh Joan, I'm glad you're here. I brought you a copy of Stevie's IEP. I thought you might need it as you develop your lesson plans for the first week."

Ms. Hill stares at Mr. Torres for a minute before taking the IEP from him. "Why is this child in a regular fourth grade class? Nobody asked me about teaching a special student. Stevie's a nice child, but I don't know anything about teaching students with disabilities. I never even had to take a special education course in college. I've got 24 other students on my roll. I'm going to talk to the principal right now about having Stevie moved to another class . . ."

At another school across town, Mr. Minor, sixth grade teacher, and Ms. Calhoun, special education resource teacher, can be found hard at work. They are developing lesson plan adaptations for the two students with disabilities who will be in Mr. Minor's class this year. Since he was part of the team that wrote both students' IEPs, Mr. Minor is aware of their disabilities, strengths, and needs. His participation last year in school-based in-service sessions on mainstreaming and adapting the learning environment has helped him feel positive about his ability to meet the needs of these two special students. The principal's willingness to provide time in Ms. Calhoun's schedule for her to coteach in Mr. Minor's classroom also has helped ease Mr. Minor's concerns. Both students' parents realize that a period of adjustment to the new environment will be necessary, and they are prepared to provide support to their children and the school staff as needed.

A brief look at these two situations reveals the vast differences in mainstreaming practices that are in place in our schools. Ms. Hill is unprepared to welcome a child with disabilities into her classroom. She was not part of the planning and decision-making process, and she feels unprepared to modify and adapt methods, materials, and programs to meet the needs of a student with disabilities. Unaware of available resources to help integrate Stevie successfully into her class, Ms. Hill feels that he has been "dumped" on her and follows her first instinct to have him removed from her class. Unless support is provided to Ms. Hill in the form of technical assistance and training, curricular resources, and encouragement, it is unlikely that Stevie's needs will be met in the regular classroom or that this will be a good year for Stevie or Ms. Hill.

In contrast, Mr. Minor feels confident due to prior training, the availability of a resource person, and the support of the principal and the students' parents. Mr. Minor

was a member of the team that placed the students with disabilities in his class, and he has made a commitment to do what it takes to integrate them fully. These factors will lead to successful integration for his two new students.

Mainstreaming is the process of teaching students with disabilities in regular classrooms with students without disabilities, using supplementary aids and services to maximize their educational potential. Mainstreaming is an educational standard that ensures delivery of educational services in the least restrictive environment. It requires the cooperation of regular and special education personnel and depends on their abilities to adapt to new roles and responsibilities. Sharing resources, skills, and time are now commonplace within regular and special education. Chapter 1 presents mainstreaming definitions, descriptions of students with disabilities served in the mainstream, the history of providing services in the least restrictive environment, a model for delivering services, and strategies for setting the stage for successful mainstreaming.

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS IN NEED

Students may not succeed in the regular classroom environment for a variety of reasons. The student's development or maturational level, the match of the student's learning style to the teacher's instructional style, disruption in the home environment, demands of extracurricular activities, and physical illness or emotional problems all can contribute to a student's lack of achievement or success in the classroom. For many students, their difficulty in school will be temporary. Changes in the environment or extra support provided by teachers and parents will enable them to achieve success once again in the regular classroom. For some students, difficulties will persist and it will become evident to teachers, parents, and often the students themselves that they are not functioning successfully in the regular classroom environment. Steps should be taken to find the underlying causes of their difficulties and identify strategies to meet their needs.

Many students whose needs cannot be fully met in the regular classroom will be found eligible for special education and related services. Every student who receives special education and related services must have an individualized education program (IEP) that outlines the special education and related services (SEARS) that will be provided to meet their special learning needs. One component of the IEP is a statement of the extent of the student's participation in regular educational programs.

MAINSTREAMING DEFINED

Most definitions of mainstreaming express similar goals for the education of students with disabilities. Some common elements of the definitions include (a) the involvement of students with disabilities as part of the regular education program, and (b) an