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Building Inclusive Schools

Tools and Strategies for Success



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Ann T. Halvorsen Thomas Neary

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Building Inclusive Schools

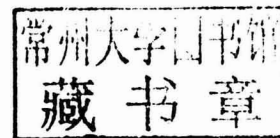
Tools and Strategies for Success

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PEARSON

Upper Saddle River, New Jersey
Columbus, Ohio

*This book is dedicated to our families with gratitude and love:
Jeannie, Jim, Conor, Devin, and Susan,
as well as to all the trailblazing and pioneering students, parents,
and educators in today's inclusive schools, with special appreciation to:
Anna, Tim, and Bonnie, and to Linda Lee and Phyllis Conley.*

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a b o u t t h e a u t h o r s

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The English novelist John Galsworthy said, “Beginnings are always messy.” *Inclusive education* is still relatively new, an unwieldy innovation to some, merely a blip on the education radar screen to others. For families of students with disabilities, for the students themselves, for their committed educators and the diverse communities of learners in inclusive schools, it is a way of life. It *can* be messy. It can also mark the beginnings of a real integration of the *systems* of general and special education for the first time in the decades since the field of special education emerged as a separate discipline and, eventually, a separate place. We are no longer the invisible folks in the parallel universe of special centers, or down the hall in that mysterious room with the paper covering the window in the door. We are your students, friends, children, and colleagues.

As you will learn from this second edition of *Building Inclusive Schools*, inclusive education is not a fad to be replaced by yet another new idea, nor a mere swing of the pendulum that ultimately will swing back to special schools. Inclusive education embodies the spirit and the intent of the IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and is the culmination of nearly four decades of research, practice, advocacy, and civil rights litigation. These efforts ensured that the diverse population of students served by special education enjoys the same access to a free, appropriate public education as their general education peers across the nation.

As the title indicates, *Building Inclusive Schools: Tools and Strategies for Success* is designed to assist you in the development and implementation of classrooms and schools that work for all students. Chapter 1 provides a definition for the elusive I-word, *inclusive education*, a term that simply brings to life the IDEA’s requirement for education in the least restrictive environment—the general education classroom—with supplementary supports, aids, and services appropriate to the individual’s needs. In the first chapter we provide and discuss eighteen expanded evidence-based indicators of inclusive education and the specific rationale and key characteristics of each, gleaned from the literature and from decades of work with urban, rural, and suburban schools and districts. Chapter 1, What Is Inclusion?, thus provides an overview of each area to be addressed in the following seven chapters.

Chapter 2, Effective Instruction for All Students, focuses on research-based instructional strategies for diverse classrooms, acknowledging the reality that all teachers encounter daily: that is, *every* class is composed of individuals from varying backgrounds, with varying educational and life experiences that inform their present capabilities. Therefore, effective teachers employ *differentiated instruction*, using a variety of methods informed by an ever-growing understanding of how the brain works, how we learn, how we “construct” knowledge. This new focus on differentiation is complemented by the overview of research-based instructional strategies and translates these into standards-based lessons within elementary, middle, and high school classrooms, while newly defining and applying concepts such as curricular adaptation and universal design, as well as the practice of student-led IEPs. In this chapter you will also meet four important characters: Amanda, Joey, Melissa, and Raymond, four focus students whose educational experiences will serve to illustrate the concepts and applications presented in this book. In Chapter 2 we visit each of their schools and are introduced as well to their teachers and classmates.

Chapter 3, Planning for Individual Student Needs in the Inclusive Classroom, takes the reader through detailed processes for each focus student, from initial parent *and student*

interviewing, observations, and assessments that inform the IEP to the ongoing teamwork of all the key players in the students' lives, as they engage in critical functional assessment, curricular development, and adaptation activities.

Chapter 4, *Systematic Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms*, further extends the process with its focus on *systematic instruction*. Here we provide the reader with both the rationale for and the methodology of direct instruction within the context of general education core curriculum. The chapter is designed to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the components of systematic instruction and positive behavioral interventions, supported by focus-student examples in action. There are, of course, many complete texts devoted to the topic of systematic instruction. Our purpose here is to demonstrate the transfer of this body of knowledge to the inclusive classroom, and to counter critics of inclusive education who may claim that systematic instruction and inclusion are incompatible. We have expanded this edition's focus on implementation to include schoolwide positive behavioral supports and planning.

Chapter 5, *Peer Relationships and Support*, begins with a framework for creating a positive school and classroom climate, articulating how this informs and sets the stage for sustained peer relationships among students with and without disabilities. Specific strategies are presented in context for Amanda, Joey, Melissa, and Raymond, with the emphasis on facilitation of natural supports and on individualization of the structured as well as informal approaches used. Service learning and character education discussions fill out the picture of individualized peer support within a general education context.

Peer collaboration is followed with Chapter 6, *Collaborative Inclusive Service Delivery*, where you will explore the important skill sets that educators and parents need to develop or strengthen, as well as the ways that these skills are employed in proactive team planning and collaborative instruction, two essentials for today's inclusive schools. Roles are clarified, and again, the reader will see the application of those practices with the focus students, in co-taught classrooms as well as team planning meetings.

Evaluation is the topic of Chapter 7. You will learn about school-level accountability as well as evaluation of student-level outcomes in the context of No Child Left Behind and IDEA requirements. Examples of specific methods and tools for program review are provided, including empowerment evaluation and cost analysis of inclusive education. Student-level outcomes are discussed in terms of statewide assessments with accommodations and alternative measures, as well as ongoing assessment strategies that are both functional and performance based. These examples are illustrated through the focus students.

Chapter 8, *Inclusion in the Context of Whole School Reform*, closes the book with beginnings. And as we said above, they are messy. We acknowledge that the reality for too many educators and parents is that inclusive schools and services do not exist in their school districts, and inclusive options may be few and far between. This chapter provides you with resources and tools to get started—to develop action plans from the grassroots to the districtwide level. The chapter familiarizes the reader with the literature on change processes and with suggested personnel development activities to support schools through change. It is only through acknowledgement of the legitimacy of others' concerns, and with support for those who are changing, that we will succeed in sustained, systemic change that results in inclusive school reform.

Each chapter outlines specific *objectives* for the reader, and closes with *questions and/or activities* to facilitate further understanding. Relevant *web-based resources* are provided as well. The Appendixes contain resource information, sample tools, and blank forms for the reader's use in applying the individualized strategies outlined in several chapters.

Building Inclusive Schools is a book of and for school people. We hope that this edition will be even more useful at the K-12 and university levels. It is a book for prospective and practicing teachers, for administrators, for parents, and for school and district teams. As such, it was informed by the wonderful individuals, schools, and districts with whom it's been our pleasure to work over many years. Acknowledging everyone is tricky, since like an award winner at the Oscars, we are bound to leave someone out. So let us simply say that we

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especially acknowledge and appreciate the students, their families, and the educational teams from inclusive schools in the California districts of Davis, San Francisco, Berkeley, Petaluma, Oakland, Ravenswood, Ukiah, and Whittier. We are grateful for your commitment, enthusiasm, and hard work, and this book is better because of you.

Finally, we want to express our sincere appreciation to our editor Virginia Lanigan, who has shepherded us through the first and second editions with skill and grace, and to Matthew Buchholz and the editorial staff of Allyn and Bacon as well as the reviewers of the manuscript for their support and guidance through the development of this second edition of *Building Inclusive Schools*: John Cicinato, Chapman University College; Nancy Franklin, Los Angeles Unified School District; Bob Loux, San Joaquin County Office of Education; and Carol A. Quirk, Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education.

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What Is Inclusion?

Objectives

Upon completion of this chapter, you will be able to:

1. State a rationale for and a clear definition of “inclusive education.”
2. Identify research-based practices for inclusive education.
3. Describe several strategies for initiating and supporting best practices in inclusive schools.

For the past decade, particularly since the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 1997 (IDEA 97), there has been a rapidly growing movement to include students with disabilities in regular classrooms and schools. This increasing interest in *inclusive education* has also brought with it a corresponding increase in controversy and conflict, as parents and school staff attempt to reform service delivery approaches to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed. Debates among educators and advocacy groups regarding the efficacy of and legal basis for inclusion, as well as about student “readiness” to receive education in the general education classroom, and notions about the cost of providing support for inclusion are clouded by varying definitions of inclusive education. Some define it as simply attending the same school site as typical peers; others speak of students being “included for first period”; still others contend it means that students have exactly the same schedule and activities as their nondisabled peers for 100 percent of the school day. Definitions of classroom support for included students range from “sink or swim” to one-to-one, staff-intensive approaches. A common definition of inclusion is needed to facilitate dialogue about critical issues such as curriculum and support, and to continue meaningful research and evaluation efforts regarding best practices for, as well as outcomes of, inclusive education.

Inclusive education, in its most basic definition, means that students with disabilities are supported members of chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools, receiving the specialized instruction delineated by their IEPs, within the context of the core curriculum and general class activities. Inclusive education is distinguished from mainstreaming in that students are members of the general education class and do not belong to any other separate, specialized environment based on characteristics of their disability. The “full” in the often-used term “full inclusion” refers to the question of *membership* in the general education classroom community, not to time spent within general education. Mainstreaming, in contrast, confers a sort of “dual citizenship” on students; they move between both general and special education settings and have been traditionally excluded from general education academic classes, if they were unable to achieve near grade level without significant support (cf. Gee, 2002).

In this first chapter we identify indicators of inclusive education based both on the growing literature of inclusion (cf. Hunt & McDonnell, 2007; Sailor, 2002; Villa & Thousand, 2000) and on our work with schools, with teachers, students, parents, support personnel, and administrators, over many years. It is *their* voices that have defined for us the true nature of inclusive schools.

Eighteen specific indicators of inclusive, supported education are discussed in this chapter, within five broad categories: Inclusive Schooling—Differences from Mainstreaming, Service Delivery, Planning and Curriculum Development, Research-Based Instructional Practices, and Information Sharing and Personnel Development. Each of these topics contributes as well to the framework of the subsequent chapters of *Building Inclusive Schools*.

They told me if I wanted my son to be included, he really should be able to do academic work and socialize pretty independently. But since he can't be independent right now with his disability, I argued for support for him, and now there is a full-time paraprofessional that goes everywhere with him. But that's not what I thought being included would mean! The classroom teacher hardly ever speaks to him! The kids seem to be afraid to approach him. And he rarely sees a special education teacher. Is this fixable? (mother of student)

There are many actions taken in the name of inclusive education, and this vignette illustrates a situation that occurs far too often nationwide. Because inclusion is so often misunderstood, it is also mistrusted and confused with putting students with special needs into general education classrooms with no support or only paraprofessional support, with mainstreaming students who are “ready” for part of the day, or with creating situations in which special education teachers can be only consultants because of the number of students and schools they serve. These versions of inclusive education are destined to fail because the necessary supports and planning are not formalized or even addressed.

Our history of services for students with disabilities, especially those who experience severe disabilities, reflects separation and segregation from other students without disabilities. As Turnbull and Turnbull (1998) noted, “no requirement of the right to education movement ... was likely to generate such controversy as the requirement that students with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE)” (p. 193). LRE is one of the six major principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) both in its original form as PL 94–142 and in its 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations. LRE is the principle that provides the legal basis for inclusive education. Although the words *inclusive education* or *inclusion* do not appear in the IDEA, we can think of this term as one that *operationalizes* general education class placement, or the least restrictive alternative among a continuum of locations where education may be provided to students with disabilities. When PL 94–142 was first enacted in 1975, most students with moderate-severe disabilities, if they were educated at all, were provided their instruction in separate buildings on separate special education campuses. Few districts offered the least restrictive aspect of the continuum to any student with moderate to severe disabilities. Many still argue today that a separate class or center *is* the least restrictive environment for students with certain categorical labels. This flies in the face of state and federal laws that provide for each decision to be made on an individual basis, and for no child to be removed from the general education class unless it can be shown to be ineffective despite the provision of appropriate supplementary aids and services.

When Congress reviewed IDEA in the 1990s, and reauthorized the Act in 1997, they collected and examined data, or “findings of fact,” that inform the law. As Turnbull and Turnbull (1998) noted, the 1997 findings of fact extend well beyond those of 1975 in underlining the LRE presumption that students be educated in general education classes and schools (p. 196). These findings of fact included the following:

Special education no longer should be a place to which students are sent, but instead, should be a service for the students, one requiring coordination of educational and other sources. [20 U.S.C. § 1401(c)(5)(C)]

Special education, related services and other (supplementary) aids and services should be provided to students in the general education classroom, whenever appropriate. [20 U.S.C. § 1401(c)(5)(D)]

In recent years, through the advocacy of parents and educators, and the successes of students who have been included in general education and community settings, increasing numbers of students with IEPs are members of general education classes. This change is not without difficulty, and the primary challenge is changing attitudes. Many educators and parents inside and outside special education have some difficulty understanding why including students is beneficial, and how students' individual needs will be met. It is incumbent upon those of us supporting this shift to inclusive education to demonstrate to families and staff that not only can students of diverse abilities learn together, but that specific student needs will be met. In doing so we will ensure that the powerful instructional strategies developed over time in special education are utilized in inclusive general education classes. This merger of powerful special education practices with best practices in general education defines *inclusive education*.

Table 1.1 presents guidelines for inclusive education, developed through the authors' work with schools and districts throughout the nation. An overview to these guidelines is provided in this chapter, with reference to subsequent chapters where the practices are delineated in more detail.

Inclusive Schooling: Differences from Mainstreaming

Staying in the Local School

Students are members of chronologically age-appropriate general education classrooms in their normal schools of attendance, in charter schools, or in other schools of choice when these options exist for students without disabilities. The single most identifiable characteristic of inclusive education is membership. Students who happen to have disabilities are seen first as kids who are a natural part of the school site and the age-appropriate general education classroom they attend. This is quite different from the more typical practice of mainstreaming in which students are members of a special classroom and periodically visit the general education classroom for instruction. The distinction is critical and presented in quite a compelling manner in Schnorr's 1990 study of first graders' perspectives on a part-time "mainstream student." Students speaking about belonging referred to the student being mainstreamed as not being in their class: "Sometimes he's in this class and the other time he goes down to his room—his class in room 10" (p. 235). Similarly, general education teachers receiving a mainstreamed student commonly see this student as belonging to another class and, too often, as the responsibility of another teacher. The transitions expected of students with special needs in terms of coming in and out of the general education classrooms are taxing. In the U.S. Court of Appeals case *Sacramento City USD v. Holland* (1994), the district proposed a plan in which the student would transition six times a day, in early primary grades!

"Home schools" are not always the neighborhood school down the street. When a district offers choices, such as charter or alternative schools that provide a focus such as the arts or the sciences, those options must be available to students with disabilities. Such schools are often more likely to provide differentiated instruction that employs active, thematic approaches, and for many students with disabilities, these practices are the best approach.

When students are members of age-appropriate general education classrooms in their normal schools of attendance, we avoid the inappropriate placement of too many students who have IEPs at a particular school and instead mirror the natural proportion of students with disabilities in our communities. Inclusive schools make and implement plans to serve their own students, rather than send them "someplace else."

TABLE 1.1 *Inclusive Education Guidelines*

Inclusive Education

The following characteristics are research-based practices for inclusive schooling. These guidelines are useful in planning for inclusion and also as a means for maintaining the integrity of the term *inclusive education*.

Inclusion: It's Not Mainstreaming

1. Students are members of chronologically age-appropriate general education classrooms in their normal schools of attendance, or in charter schools or other district schools of choice when these options exist for students without disabilities.
2. Students move with peers to subsequent grades in school, as indicated by their IEPs.
3. No special class exists except as a place for enrichment or supplemental instructional activities for all students.
4. Disability type or severity of disability does not preclude involvement in inclusive education.

Service Delivery

5. The staff-to-student ratios for special education teachers and paraprofessionals are based on student needs and are at least equivalent to the ratios in special classes or other segregated arrangements.
6. Special educators are based at single school sites full time, in order to enable effective in-class instructional support, co-teaching arrangements, and increased collaboration.
7. There are always certificated employees (special and general education teachers), assigned to supervise and assist any classified staff (e.g., paraprofessionals) working with specific students in general education classrooms.
8. Special education students are considered a part of the total general education class count for class-size purposes. In other words, they are not "extra" students above the contractual class size.
9. Inclusive education efforts are coordinated with school reforms at the site and district level, and a clear commitment to inclusion is articulated by the board of education and superintendent.

Planning and Curriculum Development

10. The special education and general education teachers collaborate to ensure
 - a. students' natural participation as regular members of any class;

- b. differentiation and adaptation of core curriculum and materials to facilitate all students' participation and learning of standards-referenced goals and objectives as well as other critical skills (e.g., social, communicative);
- c. systematic instruction of the students' IEP objectives within inclusive contexts; and
- d. development and implementation of positive behavioral interventions to support students with challenging behaviors.

11. Supplemental instructional services (e.g., for communication, mobility skills, adapted PE) are provided to students in classrooms and community settings through a transdisciplinary team approach.
12. Regularly scheduled collaborative planning meetings are held with general education staff, special education staff, parents and related-service staff in attendance as indicated, in order to support initial and ongoing program development and monitoring.
13. Plans are developed for the transition of students to subsequent grades and schools of attendance.

Research-Based Practices in Education

14. Effective instructional strategies (e.g., differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, teaching to multiple intelligences, employing universal design principles, infusing technology) are supported and fostered in the general education classroom.
15. Classrooms promote student responsibility for learning and self-determination through strategies such as student-led conferences, classroom meetings, student involvement in IEPs, and planning meetings.
16. Ability awareness education is provided to staff, students, and parents at the school site through formal or informal means. This is most effective when ability awareness is incorporated within core curriculum or within a diversity focus, such as character education.
17. Natural peer supports are facilitated among students, as are instructional arrangements that decrease reliance on paraprofessionals as any students' primary instructors.
18. Ongoing personnel development needs for all members of the school community are identified and addressed.

Continuity in Curriculum and Relationships

The best environments for learning are those in which students are motivated, learning is active, and information is presented in a manner that recognizes student diversity. The standards expected for students at each grade level related to achievement of the core curriculum *may* not be achievable for all included students, particularly those whose learning difficulties result from cognitive, motor, sensory, and/or communication disabilities. Many of these students will not maintain pace with their peers without disabilities, particularly in the academic areas. However, their need for modifications and/or inability to achieve grade level standards cannot be used as a rationale for exclusion (IDEA, 2004). This is a significant difference from mainstreaming practices, where one's "readiness" to work at grade level has been utilized for gatekeeping (Gee, 2002). If schools use only the achievement of grade level standards as the measure for movement to the next grade, many students, especially those with more severe disabilities, could be stuck working at particular material and concepts for many years, while their same-age peers move on. In contrast, students with severe cognitive disabilities attending inclusive schools are not held back for failing to meet grade level standards. Rather, they progress according to their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and its objectives. Their progress is measured both through their IEP and through statewide measures or alternate assessments, as discussed in Chapter 7 on Evaluation. Both research and demonstrations in educational programs for students with moderate-severe disabilities have indicated that involvement in chronologically age-appropriate environments and activities with typical-age peers is critical to motivation and the learning of both social and academic skills (Eshilian et al., 2000; Gee, 2002; Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Hunt & McDonnell, 2007; McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998; Sailor, Gee, & Karasoff, 2000). As Gee (2002) noted, in mainstreaming situations the special educator is typically not involved in students' general education classes and cannot therefore facilitate relationships among students with and without disabilities. Furthermore, she is likely to be less aware of the curriculum and day-to-day instructional routine of those classes. In inclusive schools, educators work together to accomplish effective inclusion, and the student's individual program (IEP) is addressed within the *context* of the curriculum through a matricing process, discussed in Chapter 3. In this way, the student's IEP is used to guide adaptations as well as direct instruction that will be supported in the general education class. Students benefit from the role models their peers provide (cf. Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Hunt & McDonnell, 2007; McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998). These appropriate role models not only provide the opportunity to learn how to behave in situations, but also allow for an increasing number of shared, real-life experiences with others the same age. For example, when students who are reading about *Romeo and Juliet* in literature class discuss the story at lunch or make references to it, the student with disabilities will gain an understanding of the context of the conversation and of the play being about teenage romance and relationships. As a student assigned to a special class who joins these peers only for lunch, she would have no such common experience or shared understanding. These experiences are critical steps in the development of those skills that lead to full participation in the community as a valued member, and without them, students fall farther and farther behind their peers. Strategies to facilitate peer relationships are provided in Chapter 5.

Friendships and social connections typically have their basis in shared history (Staub, 1998). Students who have had the same experiences have something to converse about. Their involvement in the same activities allows for a common bond. As students move from grade to grade or from school to school, having friends who move with them is one way to make the transition more comfortable. For students with disabilities, who may have a number of challenges already, having a social network to support them is extremely important to their success. This support network brings background and insight to the people in the next setting, assisting them in getting to know this person so that there are fewer misunderstandings and more success. In other words, these relationships provide natural supports to the included student (cf. Caustland-Theoharis, & Malmgren, 2005; Cushing & Kennedy, 2003;

Hughes & Carter, 2006; Nisbet & Hagner, 2000; Snell & Janney, 2000) and result in less reliance on paid support, which is more likely to be both more transient and intrusive.

Inclusive Learning Environments

Membership's importance cannot be overestimated. Successful inclusive education is difficult if a student is already seen as a member of a special education class. In many school situations, students who receive special education services are seen and referred to as "special education students," and when students qualify for special education services they are "sent to special education" as if it were a place. The problem with the special classroom is not in regard to students needing individualized instruction in a quieter or more structured setting; it is in the belief that they need to go somewhere else to receive it. In addition, it is in the belief and practice that *only* those students who qualify for special education need this type of instruction. We need to remind ourselves that, even though the federal government has limited the funding for identified students receiving special education services to 13.5 percent of the student population (Part B, State Grants, IDEA 2004), this doesn't mean that only 13.5 percent of the students in a given school need or would benefit from more support. When special educators are an ongoing presence in our general education classrooms, more of this support can be provided for all students (Ferguson, Ralph, & Sampson, 2002; Sailor, 2002; York-Barr & Kronberg, 2002).

A second concern with the special classroom is with the fact that, if it is available, it will be used. When a student is having difficulty with the curriculum or in behaving appropriately in class, the most likely solution will be to send the student to the special classroom. In almost every case, this is not the best solution. Rather than address the reasons the student might be failing in the lesson, which might be in terms of how it is presented, the material itself, or specific requirements of the lesson, and modify in these areas, teaching staff often reach for the first strategy that comes to mind: Send him to the special class until he is "ready." The effective strategies utilized in special classrooms are not appreciably different from research-based teaching strategies utilized in effective general education classrooms (Tomlinson, 2001). A case might be made that the strategies can be more focused in a smaller setting, but this is an issue of how support is provided rather than where it occurs. In inclusive schools, educators use their creativity and collaborative skills to find or develop solutions within the general education context, as you will see in upcoming chapters.

Involving All Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Schooling

Many times, school districts that are working to include students with disabilities take the approach that, in order to be successful, it makes sense to start with those who are "most capable" or those who are "most like" the typical general education student. Educators seek to ease fears about inclusion by starting with those students whom we think will make the smoothest transition and will not be "noticed as much." In our view, this is a mistake, because it delays the issue and avoids the real basis for inclusive schools: a belief in the capacity for *all* students to learn and contribute. There are many illustrative examples of the problems with the former approach. In the 1980s, as special schools began to move students back to general education school sites, many started with the students with the most skills. This did not lessen the fears or concerns in most cases and, in fact, made each subsequent move of students (who happened to have fewer skills) more difficult. Each transition meant starting over. Those programs that have most successfully included students have taken a *zero rejection* approach (Baumgart et al., 1982). If the school believes in inclusive education, it believes in including all students, not just those who are considered "ready." This is another critical difference between mainstreaming and inclusive education. Mainstreaming has typically meant that students had to be able to perform in the general education class with little or no additional support. Inclusion means providing the student with the support necessary to participate and to learn.

The categorical approach fostered by special education has also created a number of problems. There are separate classes for students with autism, physical disabilities, vision and hearing challenges, cognitive disabilities, and social-emotional problems, classes that by their homogeneous nature serve to support the view of individual students as part of a group that requires a certain approach in learning. The strategies that have been found to be of value in supporting learning for a particular student can be useful to many students (Eshilian et al., 2000; Ferguson et al., 2002). Rather than place students based upon their label or the severity of their disability, inclusive schools serve all students regardless of the label or severity of disability by ensuring that the expertise and support they need is placed with them. For example, in elementary, middle, and high schools we know, students with disabilities are supported in their general education classes by special education teachers and part-time paraprofessionals. The support teachers' caseloads are noncategorical, and the special education staff presence in these classes has led to decreased special education referrals and to co-teaching opportunities, with the result of added resources for general education students in several of these schools. While some states' funding formulas for special education had provided disincentives to such innovation in the past, states have reformed their funding systems for placement neutrality, as required by IDEA 97, and non- or cross-categorical approaches are one facet of several of these (Parrish, 1994, 2002). More information on innovative, inclusive service delivery is detailed in Chapter 6.

Service Delivery

Ensuring Appropriate Instructional and Support Staff

One of the common concerns regarding inclusive education is that there will be insufficient support for students with disabilities in the general education classroom. General education teachers will be required to spend an inordinate amount of time with students who have special needs. This perception has led to negative reactions from teachers' bargaining units such as American Federation of Teachers, which called for a moratorium on inclusion until we "know how to do it right" (Shanker, 1993a, 1993b).

It is important to consider the typical level of support currently provided in special classrooms. In many areas, a special class provides one credentialed special education teacher and one instructional assistant for an average of ten students with moderate to severe disabilities. School districts often increase the support to two instructional assistants per special class when the class involves students with severe disabilities. Of course, the IEPs may require additional support for individual students. When students are mainstreamed, the special education teacher must carefully manage a small pool of support resources across those mainstream classes while continuing to operate the special classroom. Within the special classroom, it is also important to acknowledge that all students do not work on the same level or even on the same objectives. Staff typically work either individually or with small groups in the classroom. This is important information in terms of the belief that when students are sent to the special classroom they receive more intensive services. Every student with an IEP does not receive one-to-one instruction, and that level of support may not be available or desirable when they are included (Caustland-Theoharis & Malmgren, 2005; Giangreco, Halvorsen, Doyle, & Broer, 2004; Giangreco, Yuan, McKenzie, Cameron, & Fialka, 2005). Moreover, recent research has highlighted concerns related to the over-reliance on paraprofessionals to provide instruction in inclusive settings (Brown, Farrington, Ziegler, Knight, & Ross, 1999; Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, & McFarland, 1997; Halvorsen, 2004). Paraprofessionals are not trained or qualified as teachers and must not be utilized to substitute for their expertise. Frequently, the costs associated with multiple one-to-one paraprofessional assignments match or outweigh the costs incurred by employing additional special education teachers. Chapter 6 presents more information on effective site-based approaches.

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A benefit of inclusive education in regard to in-class support is that staff do not need to maintain a special class while supporting students in their general education classrooms. The limited support available can be focused on actual in-class support. The challenge for staff is to ensure that the limited support is used to the best advantage. One strategy teachers have used is to meet as a group, involving the special educator with all cooperating general education teachers or all at each grade level, to determine how the available support will be allocated. Specific times when staff assistance is required are identified, and the whole group works collaboratively to set the support schedule. This approach avoids a situation common in many schools in which the special education teacher is expected to allocate support, usually to no one's satisfaction. In an era when competition for resources in education is high, the use of instructional assistants must be carefully considered. Involving those general educators and administrators directly impacted in the allocation of these resources creates an environment more conducive to understanding the demands on both general and special education.

It is critical to acknowledge that inclusive education does not mean placing students in general education classrooms without support. Student assignment with identified necessary instructional supports is an IEP team decision. It is also important to emphasize that it does not mean that every student is attended by a "personal aide." At least the same level of support provided to students in special education classrooms should be provided in inclusive settings.

Ensuring Qualified Staff

Many school districts that take a piecemeal approach to inclusion are either placing students in general education classrooms without support or hiring an instructional assistant to work with the student solely under the supervision of the classroom teacher (cf. Pugach, 1995). Students who qualify for special education services, particularly those with severe disabilities, require staff trained in their instructional needs. In our estimation, there are very definite skills required of educators serving students with special needs, and it is a grave mistake to ignore this. We know that special educators are trained in working with families, selecting goals and objectives, understanding the legal requirements of IEPs, as well as the implications of particular disabilities, and providing the instruction necessary to support students in learning specific academic, communication, motor, social, and cognitive skills. Successful inclusive schools ensure that there is always a qualified, credentialed special education teacher who supervises the paraprofessional staff in collaboration with the general education teacher. This special education/inclusion support teacher is responsible for overseeing IEP implementation and the training of paraprofessional staff to ensure that instructional programs are implemented correctly. As noted above, many schools are reorganizing their inclusive services and moving to a noncategorical service approach. This approach may mean that teachers credentialed in the area of learning disabilities may also be responsible for serving students with severe disabilities. When special education teachers begin operating outside the area for which they have been specifically trained (e.g., in a noncategorical approach), it is incumbent on administrators to ensure that they receive the specific ongoing training they require to serve students under their instruction. What is important to note is that students deserve qualified teachers, and inclusive education continues that right. Some districts have provided support for cross-categorical training by supporting teachers in completing additional credential work, releasing teachers from their duties in order to provide hands-on training to another teacher, or selecting inclusion mentor teachers with expertise in particular areas and releasing them for a designated number of days per year according to a carefully designed plan, so that they can then coach and support their peers. A noncategorical approach can ensure that students are served in their home schools by avoiding the clustering of students with a particular label, and special education teachers are able to provide support and instruction in *one* school. This approach is discussed further across the book, particularly in Chapters 6 and 8.