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# Preface

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Residential settings, separate schools, self-contained classes, mainstreamed into the *regular* class, integration, pull-out, push-in, replacement classes, in-class support services, co-teaching models, consultation, and inclusion. These name some types and combinations of services students with special needs have encountered over the past few decades. When I first began my teaching career, *those kids*—the ones who looked, acted, or learned differently—were either not in the same school as the students who lived on their block, or were in a classroom that was far removed in location and curriculum from their grade-level peers. Inclusion was not an option at that time. As the years marched on, so did society's view of disabilities and inclusive education.

Today, both public and private sectors have changed and become inviting for students with differences, not disabilities. The educational pendulum continually swings back and forth, but now 21st-century learners with special needs are increasingly learning side-by-side with their age- and grade-level peers. Thankfully, inclusion extends beyond classroom stages and enters all aspects of society, from airports and supermarkets to gainful employment. Inclusion of students with different abilities has given birth to a generation that invites and embraces differences.

Drumroll . . . and the winner is . . . EVERYONE! This winning scenario occurs because more and more schools are now setting up inclusion programs that welcome and accept students with disabilities as integral learners who are worthy of receiving high quality educations. Administrators and educators are the inclusion protagonists who collaborate with students and families with award winning standards-based lessons to make inclusion successes everyday realities. Legislators, administrators, educators, and families have high expectations for all learners. Inclusion classrooms, in turn, offer opportunities for increased academic and social participation and an array of successful postsecondary outcomes. Inclusion is more than an educational concept; it's a way of thinking that says students of all abilities belong in the general education setting when the

appropriate structures, services, strategies, scaffolding and supports are in place. Today's classrooms are educating students to achieve the knowledge and skills that they need to be effective contributors in a global community. Each and every student's inclusion and contribution is valued.

Since high expectations are no longer optional, inclusion implementation in schools today requires that evidence-based strategies ensure that students are not only afforded the opportunity to be educated in the least restrictive environment of the general education classroom, but the opportunity to achieve curriculum successes there as well. Educators are most often willing to include students, but they are now hungry for additional resources and supports to accomplish that task. Achieving social, emotional, behavioral, communication, and academic acumens require that there is intensive classroom planning; direct skill instruction; whole-class, small-group, and individualized tiered interventions; and consistent monitoring to ensure meaningful inclusion applications and outcomes across school, home, and community settings. Beyond access are the inclusion roadmaps, or strategies, which allow educators to view the general education classroom as a viable path to achieve these goals.

This compilation from a selection of Corwin inclusion-focused books offers the best of the best inclusion strategies and practices, housed in one resource. It is a conduit that seamlessly transfers the research practices into pragmatic classroom applications for general and special education staff. It includes ideas from the primary to secondary grades and across the disciplines that highlight and capitalize upon the strengths and abilities of the collaborative inclusion partners in schools and homes. Inclusion is more than a possibility when professionals possess the inclusion knowledge and skills, positive attitudes, and ongoing professional resources and planning opportunities.

Chapter 1 begins with the foundation of inclusion by examining the legislation, research, and attitudes about inclusion. As the book progresses, we respectively are invited to change the world, write effective individualized education programs (IEPs), and unlock the inclusion doors with good teaching practices for K–12 learners who possess a spectrum of social, behavioral, emotional, intellectual, learning, physical, communication, sensory, and perceptual levels. This book offers expert advice about organizing the inclusion classroom, applying the curriculum strategies and interventions, writing and implementing IEPs, raising academic core curriculum achievements, valuing the integrity and application of inclusion strategies, sharing classrooms as co-teachers, reaching students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities within the general education setting, achieving valid assessments without enabling accommodations, and establishing effective and crucial school-home partnerships.

Although there are no inclusion solutions, templates, or definitive answers that fit the mold for every student, this inviting book offers a worthy read that whets inclusion appetites to view inclusion as not only a

doable, but also a palatable way to capitalize upon the strengths and skills of staff, students, and families. Examine its content to create, evaluate, analyze, apply, and understand, and remember the good teaching practices, reasons for inclusion, and lessons on establishing and determining effective inclusion programs, resources, and services from the planning to instruction and assessments.

The best part of this compilation is its proactive and collaborative nature. These separate chapters have joined together to inform readers of the major inclusion dynamics. The educational experience of each of these contributing experts averages more than 25 years and spans over 50 countries. It is boggling to fathom that these seasoned authors have a combined total years of experience that yields a sum of approximately 400 years! Their inclusion knowledge is an eternal flame that brightens and enlightens. Instead of saying out of the *mouths of babes*, in this case, it is out of the *mouths of the sages*. View these citations from each chapter to gain insightful snapshots of the rich and inviting content that follows:

*Chapter 1:* “Legislation and research support inclusion, but educators are the ones who must support the child by turning the rhetoric into successful classroom practice.”

*Chapter 2:* “Courage, inclusion, integrity, cooperation, and safety are all essential components of a healthy classroom community in which all students and their teachers can grow in an atmosphere of support and mutual help.”

*Chapter 3:* “With this new emphasis on results, every teacher needs to fully understand what it means to provide access to the general education curriculum in a way that leads to increasing levels of achievement and ultimately better school outcomes.”

*Chapter 4:* “Learning problem locks make life and learning difficult for students with exceptional learning needs. Reading about them could discourage us. But that is counterproductive. What we must do is learn how to use keys to help our students open the locks.”

*Chapter 5:* “Next, here’s a huge benefit of inclusion. Instead of singling out students within the room for specialized instruction, drill, redrill, or just about any needs governed by the *paper IEP* or the *commonsense IEP* (it’s educationally prudent), why not teach the skill or strategy to the whole class?”

*Chapter 6:* “Partners must establish trust, develop and work on communication, share the chores, celebrate, work together creatively to overcome the inevitable challenges and problems, and anticipate conflict and handle it in a constructive way.”

*Chapter 7:* “Careful thought and planning are needed to ensure that the adapted lesson clearly reflects what the class in general is learning and the link to the required standards for that class and grade level is strong.”

*Chapter 8:* “In terms of your students, it is important to make sure that testing accommodations are fair and do not adversely affect your students who receive them or their classmates.”

*Chapter 9:* “A belief in sharing the responsibility for educating children is a characteristic of home-school partnerships, which emphasize collaborative problem solving and shared decision-making strategies to provide students with consistent, congruent messages about learning and behavior.”

Overall, this book offers tangible ways to exemplify that inclusion is not just a service or setting, but it is a way of life. Its content honors and demonstrates how the integral inclusion principles reap infinitesimal benefits for students, educators, administrators, and families. Inclusion stagnation is never an option, but a continuum of collective knowledge is destined to yield excellent inclusion outcomes for many generations to come. Advocate for inclusion as the first option of service. Enjoy the read and then, of course, the implementation.