

Teachers' Guides  
to Inclusive Practices  
**Modifying Schoolwork**  
Third Edition

by

**Rachel Janney, Ph.D.**

and

**Martha E. Snell, Ph.D.**

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Baltimore • London • Sydney

Excerpted from Teachers' Guides to Inclusive Practices: Modifying Schoolwork, Third Edition

by Rachel Janney, Ph.D., & Martha E. Snell, Ph.D.

Brookes Publishing | [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com) | 1-800-638-3775

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## About the Authors

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**Rachel Janney, Ph.D.**, is an independent scholar and consultant who has worked with and on behalf of children and adults with disabilities in a number of capacities, including special education teacher, educational and behavioral consultant, technical assistance provider, teacher educator, researcher, and author. For a number of years, she was a professor in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Radford University in Virginia, where she taught courses and supervised student teachers in the special education program, specializing in the inclusion of students with extensive learning and behavioral support needs. Dr. Janney received her master's degree from Syracuse University and her doctorate from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

**Martha E. Snell, Ph.D.**, is Professor Emeritus in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, where she has taught since 1973 and directed the graduate program in severe disabilities. Dr. Snell's focus has been the preparation of teachers with a particular emphasis on those working with students who have intellectual disabilities and severe disabilities. She has been an active member of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, TASH, and the National Joint Committee on the Communication Needs of Persons with Severe Disabilities.

Dr. Snell and Dr. Janney have conducted several research projects in inclusive schools and classrooms. These projects have studied the ways that special and general educators work together to design and implement modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Both authors have been frequent presenters at conferences and workshops on topics related to successful inclusive education.

# 1

# Inclusive Education

## The Big Picture

### FOCUSING QUESTIONS

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- What are the defining characteristics of inclusive education? What philosophical, organizational, and instructional practices provide the foundation for inclusive education?
  - How do inclusive practices fit within schoolwide systems for student support and other current educational improvement efforts?
  - What are some steps educators can take to improve their school's systems for supporting all students, including those with disabilities?
- 

This book is designed to be a practical, hands-on resource for use by teams of general and special educators, support staff, and parents who share the goal of successfully educating students with a range of strengths and needs in typical schools and classrooms. The primary purpose of this book is to describe and illustrate a coordinated, flexible approach whereby educational teams can 1) plan and deliver instruction that is effective for students with diverse abilities and 2) create more specialized supports and interventions for students who need them—without

undermining those students' sense of belonging or status as class members. It is, of course, extremely important for administrators to be knowledgeable about the content of this book. Families of children with disabilities also may find it beneficial; however, the book's primary intended audience is the members of school teams who actually design and deliver instruction on a day-to-day basis.

We consider elementary, middle, and high school classes that include students with a variety of special education classifications, although students with extensive

support needs, whose individualized education programs (IEPs) require some curriculum modifications and the provision of multiple special education services and supports, receive particular attention. These students (who sometimes are described as having severe or multiple intellectual, physical, and communication disabilities and moderate to severe autism) typically have IEP accommodations and modifications that address support needs related to the instructional program as well as other support needs related to accessing and benefiting from educational opportunities. These latter supports include those associated with physical management and self-care; behavioral supports and interventions; and related services for motor, communication, or sensory needs. This book focuses on the accommodations and modifications specifically related to the instructional program. Although this book gives suggestions for determining IEP goals and the services and supports needed to accomplish them, it does not provide a comprehensive process for conducting multidisciplinary assessments or developing IEPs for students in inclusive settings. (See other sources for more comprehensive information about IEP development and other aspects of educating students with severe and multiple disabilities, e.g., Downing, 2008; Giangreco, Cloninger, & Iverson, 2011; Ryndak & Alper, 2003; Snell & Brown, 2011a. *Behavioral Support* [Janney & Snell, 2008], another title in the Teachers' Guides to Inclusive Practices series, provides detailed guidance for the development of a range of positive behavioral interventions and supports.)

It takes great effort—on the part of many people across many years—to prepare a school system and its schools to provide effective education in inclusive contexts. The primary focus of this book is on classroom strategies rather than on the process of making school systems more inclusive. We do not extensively

address the systemic change efforts that go into developing inclusive schools. However, we do provide some helpful resources (see Appendix B) and, in the final section of this chapter, suggest some general principles and specific strategies for moving forward with school improvement or systems change efforts.

This book focuses on the process of designing instruction that 1) is as universally effective as possible and 2) incorporates supports and adaptations for particular students in order to meet their individual educational needs while maintaining their class membership. We assume that these students are starting the school year in inclusive classrooms with classroom teachers who 1) consider all students to be full members of the class and 2) collaborate directly and indirectly with other teachers and support personnel as determined by the needs of the students. We also assume that general education and special education teachers are jointly responsible for students through collaborative teaming—but not necessarily through full time co-teaching.

This chapter provides an overview of some foundational principles and broad school and classroom practices that set the stage for effectively educating students in inclusive classes. Chapter 2 surveys a selection of curricular approaches and teaching methods that have been demonstrated to be generally effective in enhancing student achievement and facilitating the inclusion of students with diverse learning needs. Chapters 3 and 4 describe steps and strategies that can be used to develop individualized adaptations and supports when necessary. Also in Chapter 3, we describe a model or framework for making team decisions about the adaptations and supports needed by individual students with extensive needs. Chapter 4 further illustrates the steps for implementing and evaluating instruction for students with extensive support needs, including ways to adapt ongoing

instruction and more specialized methods that may be needed to ensure students' achievement. Chapter 5 provides guidelines and suggestions for inclusive instruction and assessment in the core academic areas of literacy, mathematics, and the social and natural sciences.

Although resources such as this one can help by providing guidelines and ideas for educating students in inclusive ways, the many differences among children, communities, and classrooms require that teams view their work as an ongoing process of figuring out what succeeds for particular students in particular schools and particular classroom situations. We cannot emphasize too strongly that inclusive schooling is an evolutionary process demanding that teams take a problem-solving orientation. The question to ask is "How can we make it work in this school for these students?" This book is intended to guide the collaborative problem-solving and decision-making processes involved in answering that question.

The processes of planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction require teaching teams to select and combine ideas that not only are consistent with current knowledge but also are practical and efficient. The soundness of the teaching practices described in this book is based on research or reasonable evidence; in addition, these teaching practices either have been validated in mixed-ability settings or hold promise as inclusive practices due to their flexibility and responsiveness to individual learner differences (Odom, Horner, Snell, & Blacker, 2007; Snell & Brown, 2011a).

Our thinking, and some of the strategies described in this book have, of course, been influenced by the work of other educators and scholars. Many of the conceptual issues, as well as some of the planning and communication tools, have been adapted from the work of other experts whose research and writing have long guided the practice of inclusive

education (e.g., Downing, 2008; Giangreco, Cloninger, et al., 2011; Rogan & Davern, 1992; Udvari-Solner, Causton-Theoharis, & York-Barr, 2004). The first author (Janney) and teachers we know designed most of the student-specific planning tools and examples of adaptation strategies illustrated in this book. These teachers are master teachers with years of experience teaching students with diverse needs and abilities who have received relatively intense support from their school and school district administrators. Nonetheless, these teachers confront many of the same challenges facing their colleagues around the country in less inclusive school systems. These challenges include the demands for curriculum coverage and academic achievement that are so pressing for educators in today's era of high-stakes testing and public accountability systems. In addition, these contributing teachers work in schools where a high proportion of students meet federal definitions for low income and other demographic factors that identify students as being at risk for difficulty in school. Therefore, although some of the specific practical strategies offered in this book are presented as ideal types, readers should rest assured that these strategies come from real teachers in real classrooms—where every school day brings challenges as well as rewards.

Throughout this book, each planning tool or strategy is illustrated using case examples drawn from classrooms and students we have known. (Blank copies of some of these forms are provided in Appendix A and are available online at <http://www.brookespublishing.com/janney>.) These case examples are composites that have been generated to illustrate the range of learning and support needs found in inclusive school systems in which all students have the opportunity to attend their neighborhood schools and are assigned to age-appropriate classes in natural proportions. The students range

in age from 6 to 18 years and have a range of learning and support needs.

- Abby, a 6-year-old first-grade student, has a diagnosis of multiple disabilities, including an intellectual disability and mild cerebral palsy. She participates actively in many classroom activities with a variety of supports and adaptations. Abby uses a walker but is a bit unsteady and needs assistance to sit and stand. She communicates mainly through nonsymbolic communication but is learning to use picture symbols and a few words to make choices and requests. She sometimes communicates with problem behavior.
- Chase, who is 10 years old and in fourth grade, loves anything mechanical or electronic. He qualifies for special education under the classification of intellectual disability. Chase requires limited to extensive supports in all academic areas but only requires limited support in functional, daily living skills. He has significant behavioral support needs, which are addressed through a comprehensive plan for positive behavioral intervention and support (PBIS). Chase has a foundation of basic reading and math skills and a good store of general knowledge. He is very active and curious and has a strong will; it can be difficult to engage him in any task not of his own choosing for more than 5–10 minutes.
- Vanessa, a sixth-grade student with a learning disability, has excellent skills in mathematics, problem solving, and higher-order thinking but experiences challenges with reading (decoding and fluency), writing processes, and organization. She has become self-conscious about her learning difficulties and needs supports to develop self-esteem as well as self-control.

- Aaron, a 17-year-old, has an intellectual disability and cerebral palsy. He will graduate from 12th grade this school year and is actively involved in the transition from high school to postsecondary education. Next year, he plans to attend a post-high school program, which is based at a nearby community college. Because he has cerebral palsy, he uses a wheelchair for much of the day and uses a variety of means to communicate: sounds; facial expressions; gestures; yes or no responses; and a computerized, portable voice-output communication device. There has been a history of multiple efforts to ensure that Aaron has a reliable communication system to use at all times; these efforts are ongoing.

## DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusion is far more complex than just the provision of supports and services. . . . Inclusion is really about school renewal and change to improve the education system for all students. Effective inclusion practices require changes in the curriculum, in how teachers teach, in how students learn, and in how students with and without disabilities as well as their teachers interact with one another. . . . Effective schooling practices and inclusive models of education are synonymous and interdependent. (Grenot-Scheyer, Fisher, & Staub, 2001, pp. 3–4)

The material in this book is based on several assumptions and beliefs about what is meant by inclusive education and what it takes to do it successfully. In our view, inclusive education is a systemwide and schoolwide proposition and not a type of schooling that can be provided for certain students or certain schools (e.g., “the inclusion student” or “the inclusion school”) or on an intermittent basis (e.g., “They’re included for specialties and lunch,” “She’s included for center time on Wednesdays and Fridays”).



The list of seven critical characteristics of inclusive schools provided in Table 1.1 makes clear that inclusion is far more than a place and far more than an effort to change special education services and strategies. Indeed, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 (PL 108-446) defines special education as “specially designed instruction. . .to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability” (20 U.S.C. § 1400; IDEA, § 602[29]), a definition that makes no reference to the place where such instruction occurs. Federal regulations define specially designed instruction as “adapting. . .content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to meet the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and to ensure access of the child to the general education curriculum” (34 C.F.E. 300.39 [3]).

Inclusive education is part of a comprehensive effort to transform schools—to make them more flexible, prevention oriented, and persevering and more responsive to children and their family context (Schnorr, 1997). As Munk and Dempsey (2010) noted, “Implementing and sustaining effective inclusion practices requires a schoolwide commitment and the establishment of structures and

practices that are integrated into the overall mission of the school” (p. 2). At its best, inclusive education is part of the continuous growth that occurs in a thriving learning community.

The success of inclusive practices as a way to provide educational services depends on many variables in addition to teachers’ knowledge and use of the most effective curricula and teaching methods. The ways that students, teachers, and support personnel are assigned to classrooms and the ways staff time and other resources are distributed all have a significant impact on what happens among the teachers and students in classrooms and on the quality of educational experiences available. An inclusive service delivery model incorporates staffing arrangements (i.e., ways of assigning students to teachers and teachers to classrooms) and service delivery methods (e.g., instruction, support, consultation) that enable students to receive special education services and supports without removing them from the schools and classes attended by their typically developing peers. Students with disabilities need to be placed in age-appropriate classes in natural proportions, not clustered into certain classes to make staffing easier. Special education

**Table 1.1.** Characteristics of inclusive schools

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All students are welcome to attend the schools in their attendance zone, where they and their families are valued members of the school community.
The school culture reflects shared values of equality, democracy, high expectations, diversity, collaboration, and the belief that all students are capable of learning and contributing.
Students are full members of age-appropriate classes where the number of students with and without disabilities is proportional to the local population ( <i>natural proportions</i> ).
School teams use flexible decision making to determine students’ individualized education programs (including their special services and supports, accommodations, and modifications) that are not based on disability categories.
A coherent service delivery model allows general education and special education teachers and other personnel to collaboratively incorporate any special services and supports into age-appropriate school contexts and to coordinate special services with ongoing instruction.
Students with varied needs and abilities take part in shared learning experiences while working toward individualized learning outcomes with necessary supports and adaptations.
Administrators motivate and support school staff toward the achievement of a shared mission and establish shared leadership in a professional community.

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teachers need to be placed so that they can be members of teaching and planning teams that serve “our” students, not sequestered in resource rooms or spread across so many classrooms that they are challenged when learning the names of the classmates without disabilities (see Figure 1.1).

Inclusive schools use a variety of different staffing arrangements, depending on such factors as the level of the school and the size of the school’s student population. Staffing arrangements may change from year to year depending on the number of students in each grade level and the number of students identified to receive special education. The commonality these schools share is that administrators and teachers have devised some way to unify special and general education teachers and support staff into integrated educational teams. It is important to assign special education teachers

to students located in a narrower band of grades and in one or a few school settings. In elementary schools, special educators often are members of grade-level teams or teams organized by clusters of grade levels. In middle schools, special educators may be members of interdepartmental teams, houses, pods, or families. In high schools, special educators may be assigned to grade-level plus subject-area(s) teams.

Educators, administrators, parents, and others who seek to promote greater inclusion of students with disabilities will want to learn more about the research base for inclusive education and strategies for facilitating educational change (see Appendix B). For example, research has shown that when embarking on school change efforts, participants in the change process want the following questions answered first: Why are we doing this? and What are the benefits? For some teachers,



### What the Research Says

In some schools, special education teachers can only be found in special education resource rooms or self-contained classes. In other schools, special education teachers spend part of their day in resource rooms and part of their day in one or more general education classes. In still other schools, special education teachers spend small parts of their day in numerous general education classes at different grade levels. Each of these approaches to special education teacher utilization can result in frustration for teachers and inferior services for students. Having the special education teacher move back and forth between the resource room and the general education class, or among numerous general education classes, means that the special education teacher

- Does not know what is happening in the general education class and cannot provide support that is relevant and suited to the context
- Does not have a feel for how students generalize their skills from the resource room into the general education classroom
- Is not familiar with students’ behavior in the general education classroom
- Cannot provide instruction or support for students in the general education classroom
- Cannot monitor support given by paraprofessionals

Solutions for these problems lie in having an inclusive program model in the school so no teacher or student is self-contained and all special education teachers have schedules that allow daily and predictable movement into general education classrooms containing students on their caseloads.

**Figure 1.1.** Where the special education teacher is. (Sources: Causton-Theoharis, Theoharis, Bull, Cosier, & Dempt-Adrich, 2011; Snell, 2002; Snell & Macfarland, 2001.)

the most compelling benefits of inclusive education are found in the positive effects that team-generated teaching practices and individualized supports have on their students' social and academic outcomes (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995). Figure 1.2 provides a brief summary of the research foundations for inclusive education, including the benefits for students with and without disabilities.

For some stakeholders, an ample rationale for inclusion is found in the IDEA's least restrictive environment (LRE)

principle. The LRE principle stipulates that students should be removed from regular classes “only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily” (20 U.S.C. 1412[a][5]). The IDEA regulations further state that “a child is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum” (34 C.F.R 300.116).



### What the Research Says

Key findings from the research on inclusive education include the following:

- Given the right supports, students with disabilities can demonstrate high levels of social interaction in inclusive settings; however, physical presence alone does not guarantee positive social outcomes (Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, & Al-Khabbaz, 2008; Katz, Mirenda, & Auerbach, 2002; Kennedy, Shukla, & Fryxell, 1997).
- Interactive, small-group contexts facilitate skill acquisition and social acceptance (Hunt, Staub, Alwell, & Goetz, 1994; McDonnell, Mathot-Buckner, Thorson, & Fister, 2001).
- Friendships do develop between students with disabilities and typically developing peers; teachers play an important role in facilitating the development of friendships (Matheson, Olsen, & Weisner, 2007; Meyer, Park, Grenot-Scheyer, Schwartz, & Harry, 1998).
- Although many teachers are initially reluctant about inclusive education, support and experience make them more confident in their abilities (Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993).
- Achievement of students without disabilities is not compromised by the inclusion of students with disabilities (Dugan et al., 1995; Hunt, Staub, et al., 1994; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007; McDonnell et al., 2003; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994; Staub & Peck, 1994–1995) and sometimes is improved (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Cushing & Kennedy, 1997).
- Students without disabilities—particularly those who have been involved in formal peer support efforts—learn to accept and value individual differences and experience enhanced personal growth and other social-emotional benefits (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994–1995; Carter & Kennedy, 2006; Dugan et al., 1995; Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995; Helmstetter, Peck, & Giangreco, 1994; Kennedy, Shukla, et al., 1997; Peck, Carlson, & Helmstetter, 1992; Staub & Peck, 1994–1995; Vaughn, Elbaum, Schumm, & Hughes, 1998).
- Students with disabilities experience enhanced acquisition of social and academic skills in inclusive contexts (Baker et al., 1994–1995; Cole et al., 2004; Fisher & Meyer, 2002; Hunt, Ferron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, & Goetz, 1994; Hunt, Soto, Maier, & Doering, 2003; Hunt et al., 1994; Lipsky & Gartner, 1995; McDonnell et al., 2003; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002).
- Special education and general education teachers experience professional growth and personal satisfaction in seeing students' social and academic growth (Copeland et al., 2002; Copeland et al., 2004).

**Figure 1.2.** Research foundations for inclusive education.

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