Pearson New International Edition

Exceptional Children
An Introduction to Special Education

William L. Heward

Tenth Edition

ALWAYS LEARNING

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strategy for adding and subtracting fractions: *L*ook at the denominator and sign; *A*sk yourself if the denominators will divide evenly; and *P*ick a fraction type. A well-researched strategy for writing is POW-TREE (*P*ick my idea, *O*rganize my thoughts/notes, *W*rite and say more–*T*opic sentence (tell what you believe), *R*easons (3 or more), *E*nding (wrap it up), *E*xamine (have I included all the parts?) (Sandmel et al., 2009).

Educational Placement Alternatives

General Education Classroom

Placement alternatives

Content Standards for Beginning Teachers of Students with LD: Demands of learning environments (ICC5K1).

IDEA requires that students with disabilities be educated with students without disabilities, have access to the core curriculum to the maximum extent possible, and that they be removed from the general education classroom only to the extent that their disability necessitates. During the 2008–09 school year, 62% of students with learning disabilities were educated in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Research on the academic achievement of students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms is mixed. Some studies have reported better learning outcomes for students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms than in pull-out programs (e.g., Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1995; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Other studies of students with learning disabilities in the general education classroom have reported disappointing achievement results (e.g., Schumm, Moody, & Vaughn, 2000), concerns about inadequate instruction (e.g., Chard & Kame'enui, 2000), teachers' limited understanding of learning needs of students with LD (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006), and poor acceptance by teachers and/or peers (e.g., Cook, 2001; Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000).

Many studies have compared the social functioning and self-concepts of students with learning disabilities in different educational placements. The contention of advocates of full inclusion for students with learning disabilities is that pull-out services such as resource room and special class placement stigmatize students, thus damaging self-concept and limiting opportunities to develop relationships with typical peers. For example, Wiener and Tardif (2004) studied 117 children with learning disabilities in different educational placements and found a "slight superiority of the more inclusive programs" (p. 30) with respect to peer acceptance, number of friends, self-perceptions of mathematics competence, and behavior problems. The authors noted, however, that the differences between groups were not large and were "especially small" when compared to the differences between children with and without learning disabilities." Wiener and Tardif warned, "It would be inappropriate to conclude that the major variable influencing the social and emotional adjustment of children with LD is the special education placement" (p. 30).

Elbaum (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 36 studies examining the self-concept of students with learning disabilities in different placements and concluded that, "contrary to the stigmatization perspective, students with LD placed in general education classrooms did not, overall, have higher self-concepts than students placed in either part-time or full-time special education classrooms" (p. 222). But Elbaum properly noted that, while no one placement is preferable in terms of self-concept for all students with learning disabilities, individual students may be "profoundly affected by a placement that jeopardized their self-esteem" and that, when making placement decisions for a child, individualized education program (IEP) teams "should guard against a priori assumptions about the benefit or detriment of specific placements to students' self-concept. Each student's social and emotional needs, as well as the student's own preference with regard to placement options, ought to be taken into account" (pp. 222–223).

All of the methods described in the previous section for enhancing the general education curriculum help promote the success of students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms. Special educators can facilitate the success of these students in inclusive classrooms by teaching them behaviors that are valued by general education teachers. For example, when asked to rate which of 30 different social skills

were critical for success in the classroom, the majority of 366 teachers in grades K–12 rated self-control (controlling temper in conflict situations) and cooperation (complying with teacher's directions) as the most essential (Lane, Givner, & Pierson, 2004). In another study, 89 general education high school teachers identified following directions in class, coming to class prepared with materials, and treating teachers and peers with courtesy among the most important skills for success in the general education classroom (Ellet, 1993).

Consultant Teacher

A consultant teacher provides support to general education classroom teachers and other staff members who work directly with students with learning disabilities. The consultant teacher helps the general education teacher select assessment devices, curriculum materials, and instructional activities. The consultant may even demonstrate teaching methods or behavior management strategies. A major advantage of this model is that the consultant teacher can work with several teachers and thus indirectly serve many children. A major drawback is that most consultant teachers have little direct contact with students.

Heron and Harris (2001) describe how consultant teachers can increase their effectiveness in supporting children in general education classrooms, and Learned, Dowd, and Jenkins (2009) offer tips for instructional conferences with included students.

Resource Room

A resource room is a specially staffed and equipped classroom where students with learning disabilities come for one or several periods during the school day to receive individualized instruction. A resource room teacher serves an average of 20 students with disabilities. During the 2008–09 school year, 28% of students with learning disabilities were served in resource rooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

The resource teacher is a certified special educator whose primary role is to teach needed academic skills, social skills, and learning strategies to the students who are referred to the resource room. Students typically attend their general education classrooms for most of the school day and come to the resource room for one or more periods of specialized instruction in the academic and/or social skill areas in which they need the most help. In addition to teaching students with learning disabilities, the resource teacher also works closely with each student's general education teacher(s) to suggest and help plan each student's program in the general education classroom.

Some advantages of the resource room model are that (a) students do not lose their identity with their general education class peer group; (b) students can receive the intensive, individualized instruction they need every day, which may not be possible in the general education classroom; and (c) flexible scheduling allows the resource room to serve a fairly large number of students. Some disadvantages of resource rooms are that they (a) require students to spend time traveling between classrooms, (b) may result in inconsistent instructional approaches between settings, and (c) can make it difficult to determine whether and how students should be held accountable for what they missed while out of the general education classroom.

In a resource room, students with learning disabilities can receive intensive, specialized instruction on the academic and social skills in which they need the most help.

Separate Classroom

During the 2008–09 school year, 8% of students with learning disabilities were served in separate classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In a separate classroom, a special education teacher is responsible for all educational programming for 8 to 12 students with learning disabilities. The academic achievement deficiencies of some children with learning disabilities are so severe that they need full-time placement in a setting with a specially trained teacher. In addition, poor

work habits and inappropriate social behaviors make some students with learning disabilities candidates for the separate classroom, where distractions can be minimized and individual attention stressed. Generally, IEP teams are not to view a student's placement in a separate classroom (or any other educational setting) as permanent. A student should be placed in a separate classroom only after legitimate and supported attempts to serve her effectively in less restrictive environments have proven unsuccessful.

Should All Students with Learning Disabilities Be Educated in the General Education Classroom?

Perspectives on full inclusion

Content Standards for Beginning Teachers of Students with LD: Philosophies, theories, models, and issues related to individuals with LD (LD1K2) (also ICC5K1).

For many students with learning disabilities, the least restrictive environment for all or most of the school day is the general education classroom attended by their same-age peers. The movement toward full inclusion of all students with disabilities in general education classrooms, however, has many leading researchers and advocates for students with learning disabilities worried. They think that although the full-inclusion movement is based on strong beliefs and has the best intentions at heart, little research supports it (D. Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, 2009; Kauffman & Hallahan, 2005; McLeskey & Waldron, 2011; Mock & Kauffman, 2005; Zigmond, Kloo, & Volonino, 2009). They fear that the special education services for students with learning disabilities guaranteed by IDEA—particularly the meaningful development and implementation of IEPs and the identification of the least restrictive environment for each student along a continuum of placement options—will be lost if full inclusion becomes reality. They wonder, for example, how a high school student with disabilities who reads at the fourth-grade level and spends the entire school day in general education subject-matter classes will receive the individualized, intensive reading instruction that she needs. They note, for example, that 40% of students with learning disabilities have general education teachers who have received no information about their instructional needs and that only 11% of general education teachers make substantial modification to curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder, 2003).

All of the major professional and advocacy associations concerned with the education of children with learning disabilities have published position papers against full inclusion. Each group supports the placement of students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible, given that the instructional and related services required to meet each student's individualized educational needs are provided; but they strongly oppose any policy that mandates the same placement and instruction for all students with learning disabilities. Each group believes that special education for students with learning disabilities requires a continuum of placement options that includes the possibility of some or even all instruction taking place outside the general education classroom.

For some students with learning disabilities, the general education classroom may actually be more restrictive than a resource room or special class placement when the instructional needs of the student are considered—and remember that academic deficit is the primary characteristic and remedial need of students with learning disabilities. However, placing a student with learning disabilities in a resource room or special class does not guarantee that he will receive the intensive, specialized instruction he needs. For example, Moody, Vaughn, Hughes, and Fischer (2000) found that only three of the six resource room teachers they observed provided differentiated reading materials and instruction to match the individual needs of their students. Similarly, Swanson (2008) found that students spent most of their time in resource rooms in nonreading activities and undifferentiated seat work.

The collective message of research on outcomes for students with learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms and other settings is consistent with the findings for students with other disabilities: where a student is taught is not as important as the quality of instruction that student receives.

▼ TIPS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS

Becoming an Exceptional Teacher

BY ANGELA PRESTON

ORGANIZATION: THE PAPERWORK SIDE

My mentor once told me, "Special education is like having two full-time jobs. The first is teaching; the second is paperwork." When you begin teaching, there are times you may feel overwhelmed. Following these tips will help keep you feeling organized and confident.

- **Write due dates for all IEPs and reevaluations in your planner/calendar.** Once you know which students are on your caseload, write all of their IEP and reevaluation due dates in your calendar or planner. Back up 10 more days and write "send IEP invitation for student" in your calendar. This reminder will keep you from missing any IEP due dates.
- **Make lists and use a notebook.** Keep a notebook for yourself. Bring the notebook to staff meetings, staff development, special education team meetings, or other meetings. Use the notebook to keep all your information in one place. Make lists of what you need to do, and continually cross them off and update the lists. Don't worry if your list never seems to end. There will always be more things to do; the lists just help you stay organized. I sometimes write down a few things I have already completed that day and cross them off. This way I feel as if I've already accomplished a few things on my ever-growing list.
- **Document everything.** Someone once told me, "If you didn't write it down, it didn't happen." Document all parent phone calls; attempts at calling doctors, parents, teachers, other schools, etc; observations; important e-mails; and dates students transfer to or from your school. Keep samples of student work that addresses IEP goals. It is better to have too much information than not enough.

ORGANIZATION: THE TEACHING SIDE

As a resource teacher, I have many groups of students flowing in and out of my door each day. The best way to keep from feeling like a train wreck is to keep your room organized. Follow the same schedule each day, and make sure your students understand the procedures and expectations. Once you've established your routine, your day will run like a well-oiled machine.

- **Organize your classroom setup.** I prefer using plastic bins/drawers for each of my classes. I have the drawers labeled by time and subject. All the materials for that class are in the drawer (workbooks, textbooks, notebooks, teacher books, etc.). I also have baskets with pencils so we don't waste time trying to find pencils at the beginning of class. Other types of setups include giving a specific space for each student to keep their books on shelves. This also helps older elementary students by getting them ready for lockers in middle school.
- **Manage your time.** Time management is essential. If students show up early for class, let them finish work they missed or read a book. Use warmups to review previously learned information. Have extra review work for students to complete if they finish the lesson before the rest of the class. Don't waste a moment of their time because they are already behind and need the most instruction during the day.
- **Reserve time for yourself.** It is easy to become overambitious when you start teaching, wanting to re-create everything new, spending hours working before, during, and after school. Set limits for what you can accomplish in a day. Prioritize things and keep a list of what you want to create over the summer (see the tip on making lists and keeping a notebook). Pick one day a week that you will put manipulatives together for the following week. Pick another day a week that you will leave "on time" or at least within an hour. Keep a hobby, work out, and spend time with friends each week so as not to become another new-teacher burnout statistic.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

With parent support, your job as a teacher becomes reassuring and brings much satisfaction. Teaching as a collaborative effort between parents and school provides the most success for students.

- **Meet face-to-face.** The first time you meet a parents, plan to meet in person. This allows you to establish an immediate connection and express your care and support for their child. Remember, parents know their child better than anyone. Be ready to listen to their concerns and address them at meetings. Most parents ask what they can do to help at home. Have lists of simple activities they can do in the car, in the kitchen, or around the house to help their child. Also, don't forget to have a translator present at all meetings with parents who are not fluent in English.
- **Start on a positive note.** Begin each phone call, e-mail, meeting, or conversation with a positive comment. Parents understand their child has a disability, and it can be easy to always talk about his difficulties at school. Before you know it, the parent begins to dread receiving phone calls from school. Starting off each conversation with a positive comment—"Your son helped another student find a pencil today," or "She has many friends and is very social in class"—before addressing the concern you have. If you can't think of anything positive, don't call the parents yet.
- **Address the acronym abyss.** It seems as if education has a tendency to make words as small as possible. We hear these acronyms on a daily basis and use them without hesitation. Explain what the acronyms mean to parents, and use language they understand. Write down the acronyms they need to know, and give the list to the parents at meetings to help them understand sentences like: "At this IEP meeting your son's EC and GE teachers, LEA rep, along with yourself, will discuss his DD re-eval results and determine if he is eligible for EC services under LD, OHI, or ED with OT as a related service."

STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Building student relationships can be rewarding for both the teacher and the student. Students work harder for teachers they respect, and teachers work harder for students who respect them.

- **Make each student believe he or she is your favorite.** I firmly believe the more a student feels cared for, the harder they will work, the more they will behave appropriately, and the quicker they will respond to their teacher. Finding similarities to talk about, making up secret handshakes, greeting students as they come in/leave class, or making positive comments all help foster strong relationships. Once a positive relationship has been established, students will work hard and begin believing in themselves because their teacher believes in them, too.
- **Talk about why they come to your class.** This works best for older students, and I would not mention anything about a disability or special education without parent permission. Talk to the students about why they are in your class. I usually start with strengths we all have and weaknesses I have. Then I'll ask who has a hard time reading. After a few seconds everyone will raise their hand. Then I'll discuss why it is important to know how to read and that we are all here to work on being better readers. I usually end by making them a promise that I will give 100% effort into teaching reading, but that they must devote 100% effort in learning how to read. Giving students a chance to understand why they are pulled out and setting personal goals result in higher achievement for students.
- **Balance procedures, instruction, and relationships.** When you first start off, make sure the students understand your procedures, and have procedures for everything. Practice your procedures daily. Keep your expectations consistent to help students understand what to expect. It is possible to find a balance between maintaining strong systematic instruction with building strong student relationships. Use procedures to help students define your role as a teacher, but use small moments for encouragement during instruction. Once the balance has been made, you are on your way to being an exceptional teacher with a rewarding career.

▼ KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

alphabetic principle
comorbidity
criterion-referenced tests
curriculum-based measurement (CBM)
dual discrepancy criterion
dyslexia
formative evaluation
guided notes
learning strategy
phonemic awareness
phonological awareness
precision teaching
response to intervention (RTI)
specific learning disability
summative evaluation

▼ SUMMARY

Definition

- The federal definition of *specific learning disability* is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations and is not due to a sensory, motor, or intellectual disability, to emotional disturbance, or to environmental or economic disadvantage.
- There is no universally agreed-on definition of learning disabilities. Most states require that three criteria be met: (a) a severe discrepancy between potential or ability and actual achievement, (b) learning problems that cannot be attributed to other disabilities, and (c) special educational services needed to succeed in school.

Characteristics

- Difficulty reading is the most common characteristic of students with learning disabilities. It is estimated that 80% of all children identified as learning disabled are referred for special education services because of reading problems.
- Many students with learning disabilities show one or more of the following characteristics: deficits in written language, underachievement in math, poor social skills, attention deficits and hyperactivity, behavior problems, and low self-esteem/self-efficacy.
- The fundamental, defining characteristic of students with learning disabilities is specific and significant achievement deficits in the presence of adequate overall intelligence.
- In addition to their academic and social-skills deficits, students with learning disabilities possess positive attributes and interests that teachers should identify and try to strengthen.

Prevalence

- Learning disabilities make up the largest category in special education. Students with learning disabilities

represent almost one half of all students receiving special education.
- About three times as many boys as girls are identified as learning disabled.
- Some educators believe that the high prevalence of learning disabilities is the result of overidentification and misdiagnosis of low-achieving students.

Causes

- Although the actual cause of a specific learning disability is seldom known, four suspected causal factors are brain damage, heredity, biochemical imbalance, and environmental factors.
- Specific regions of the brains of some individuals with reading and language disabilities show abnormal activation patterns during phonological processing tasks.
- Genetics may account for at least some family links with dyslexia. Research has located possible chromosomal loci for the genetic transmission of phonological deficits that may predispose a child for reading problems later.
- Biochemical imbalance due to artificial colorings and flavorings in a child's diet or vitamin deficiencies have been suggested as causes of learning disabilities. Most professionals today give little credence to these causes.
- Environmental factors—particularly impoverished living conditions early in a child's life and poor instruction—are likely contributors to the achievement deficits of many children with learning disabilities.

Identification and Assessment

- Five forms of assessment are frequently used with students with learning disabilities:
  - Norm-referenced tests compare a child's score with the scores of age mates who have taken the same test.
  - Criterion-referenced tests, which compare a child's score with a predetermined mastery level, are useful in identifying specific skills the child has learned as well as skills that require instruction.
  - Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) is a formative evaluation method that measures a student's progress in the actual curriculum in which she is participating. CBM is the primary means of assessment in RTI models.
  - Direct and daily measurement involves assessing a student's performance on a specific skill each time it is taught.
  - Response to intervention (RTI), a promising approach to the prevention and early identification of learning disabilities, uses curriculum-based measurement of at-risk children's progress during one or two 10- to 12-week trials of intensive individual or small-group instruction with scientifically validated instruction. Failure to respond to this treatment suggests a learning disability.

Educational Approaches

- Contemporary best practice in educating students with learning disabilities is characterized by explicit instruction, the use of content enhancements, and teaching students to be strategic learners.
- Explicit instruction is unambiguous, clear, direct teaching of targeted knowledge or skills: Students are shown what to do and given frequent opportunities to practice with teacher feedback and later to apply what they have learned.
- Content enhancements such as graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, and mnemonics help make curriculum content more accessible to students with learning disabilities.
- Learning strategies help students guide themselves successfully through specific tasks or general problems.

Educational Placement Alternatives

- About 65% of students with learning disabilities are educated in general education classrooms.
- In some schools, a consultant teacher helps regular classroom teachers work with children with learning disabilities.
- In the resource room, a special educator provides specialized instruction to students for one or more periods in the academic and/or social skill areas in which they need the most help.
- Approximately 1 in 10 students with learning disabilities is educated in separate classrooms.
- Many researchers and advocates for students with learning disabilities do not support full inclusion, which would eliminate the continuum of service delivery options.
- Where a student is taught is not as important as the quality of instruction that student receives.

MyEducationLab™

Go to Topic 9, Learning Disabilities, in the MyEducationLab (www.myeducationlab.com) for *Exceptional Children*, where you can

- Find learning outcomes for learning disabilities along with the national standards that connect to these outcomes.
- Complete Assignments and Activities that can help you more deeply understand the chapter content.
- Apply and practice your understanding of the core teaching skills identified in the chapter with the Building Teaching Skills and Dispositions learning units (optional).
- Examine challenging situations and cases presented in the IRIS Center Resources.
- Access video clips of CCSSO National Teachers of the Year award winners responding to the question "Why do I teach?" in the Teacher Talk section.
- Check your comprehension of the content covered in the chapter with the Study Plan. Here you will be able to take a chapter quiz, receive feedback on your answers, and then access Review, Practice, and Enrichment activities to enhance your understanding of chapter content.
- Use the Online Lesson Plan Builder to practice lesson planning and integrating national and state standards into your planning.