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Historical Background of *Disabilities*

Chapter Highlights: This chapter highlights the historical background of disabilities along with past and current legislation about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and individualized education programs (IEPs). Disability statistics and vocabulary are outlined along with an introduction to response to intervention (RTI) and universal design.

Classroom Connections: Hypothetical scenarios and analogies in this chapter outline the many learning, behavioral, and social concerns that currently exist in inclusive classrooms, communities, homes, and other environments.

Ways to Differentiate Attitudes: Perspectives are given about both visible and unseen disabilities. This chapter addresses how barriers can be removed by focusing on strategies that match and maximize individual students' strengths and needs.

THEN AND NOW

Sometimes we need to know where we have been to figure out where we are now, and what the future may hold. The following historical perspectives and quotes shed light on past, present, and future perspectives about disabilities.

The hard reality is this. Society in every nation is still infected by the ancient assumption that people with disabilities are less than fully human and therefore, are not fully eligible for the opportunities which

are available to other people as a matter of right. (Justin Dart, disability rights activist, 1992, quoted in DEMOS, 2002)

Throughout history, people with disabilities have been treated differently from those who conform to or *fit* societal *norms*. The following bulleted list outlines some of those unfair treatments that were acceptable by different societies in given time periods.

- Killed or abandoned in the woods in ancient Greece
- Kept as jesters for nobility in the Roman Empire courts
- Experienced acts of infanticide during the Renaissance
- Drowned and burned during the Spanish Inquisition
- In 1601, Queen Elizabeth's government divided the poor into three groups. The disabled poor were placed in the group labeled "helpless poor."
- Kept in cellars in correctional institutions in early colonial America if family support was not available; people then paid admission to *gawk at the oddities*.
- Dehumanization in orphanages and asylums in nineteenth-century Europe
- Primary care given by the family at home in the early history of the United States instead of children being allowed out in public, e.g., home-schooled and excluded from community activities
- "Institution for Idiots" founded in Massachusetts in 1848
- Shackled to their beds in U.S. institutions because there was an insufficient number of staff members to care for residents
- Involuntary sterilization of people with developmental disabilities in the United States, beginning in 1907, to prevent the passing on of *inferior* traits
- Considered by eugenicists as defective and an interference with the process of "natural selection"
- Gassed, drugged, blood let, and euthanized in Nazi Germany
- Institutionalized regardless of needs, e.g., person with cerebral palsy was considered mentally retarded
- Housed in separate institutions throughout the world
- Not allowed to attend neighborhood schools
- Aversion techniques used
- Seclusion policies applied
- Restraint applied
- Abuse prevalent (physical, mental, sexual, financial)
- Victimized with inhumane treatments
- Lives devalued
- Stigmatized as criminals
- Viewed as *sickly*
- Inaccurately tested
- Inappropriate labels and services rendered

During World War II, when many jobs were left vacant in the United States, adults with disabilities joined the workforce, showing their competencies, until returning soldiers replaced them in the years following the war. Thankfully, during the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights movement began and created an even more favorable climate for people with disabilities to continue to enter and succeed in the workforce and beyond. When the inhumane treatment of people with disabilities in institutions in the United States was exposed, this laid down a supportive stage for improving conditions inside and outside of schools for people with disabilities. Eventually, more civil rights and educational laws were passed that consequently

changed and expanded services for students and adults with disabilities. This led to the deinstitutionalization of people with disabilities and altered the way society viewed disabilities in general. Group homes became the norm rather than the exception, and more community integration came to be afforded to people with disabilities, with settings that promote independent living. Appropriate education was advocated by U.S. presidents such as Harry Truman, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. The table on the next page gives some of these directives, implications, and the beneficial results for people with disabilities in the United States.

Legislation today is continually replacing skewed views with ones that allow students of all ages and abilities to maximize their potential. Limitations may exist for those with disabilities, but many of the additional *imposed anchors* have been removed and replaced with not only *life preservers to stay afloat*, but also the opportunity for *smooth and pleasurable sailing*.

Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975) introduced a piece of legislation that drastically improved the way students with disabilities were treated in school settings. Consequently, through the decades that followed, peoples' attitudes toward children and adults with disabilities have become more accepting. The earlier subhuman institutions were replaced with mindsets that advocated community integration. Each decade that followed P.L. 94-142 has added more provisions and continues to recognize future possibilities by not only leaving the *educational door ajar*, but also placing a *welcome mat* outside every classroom!

Services now include recognizing students and those of all ages as individuals who have the same basic needs and desires. Equal treatment in schools, private and government facilities, and community activities eventually translates to students with disabilities succeeding in life. With positive educational and social experiences, people with differing cognitive, physical, and social abilities and levels are primed to become happy and productive citizens and adults.

So why can't we see students' difficulties as human variation rather than pathology? (Reid & Valle, 2004)

Maybe one day we will!

OUT AND ABOUT

Increased visibility of persons with *disabilities* came about as the logical extension of the independent living, normalization, and self-advocacy movements of recent decades. (Ward, 1996)

Unfortunately, this visibility did not automatically translate into acceptance by school personnel, community, and other students. The way someone views another person is dependent upon factors such as his or her comfort level; prior background and experiences, be they positive or negative; cognitive levels; social skills; and feelings of self-esteem. This complicates issues about how a student with a difference is viewed.

Quite often, students try to "overcome" or hide their disability and don't even ask for help because they are afraid of being seen as more disabled. In addition, relationships and viewpoints of others at times influence individual successes and failures of students with disabilities in school settings, communities, and in their adult lives.

Table 1.1 Legislative Accomplishments and Disability Directives

<i>Legislative Accomplishments and Disability Directives</i>	<i>Implications and Results</i>
In 1947, the President's Committee on National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week was established by President Truman.	Today that week is now expanded to a month in October, <i>National Disability Employment Awareness Month</i> , to increase public awareness and job opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
In the 1950s, Vocational Rehabilitative Amendments along with U.S. Civil Service Commission directives were passed. In 1954, <i>Brown v. Topeka Board of Education</i> had a major impact upon integration and other civil rights movements in education and beyond.	More people with disabilities were given opportunities to become gainfully employed to maximize their independence. Two court cases, <i>PARC v. Pennsylvania</i> (1972) and <i>Mills v. D.C. Board of Education</i> (1972), used the precedent of <i>Brown v. Topeka</i> to argue that students with disabilities also deserve protective equal educational rights. Later on, this opened the door for EHA, ESEA, and IDEA.
In 1962, Executive Order 10994 by President John F. Kennedy removed the word "physically" from the President's Committee's name.	This recognized that there were other disabilities besides physical ones that would be addressed in legislation and beyond. This now expanded society's need to include and protect people with developmental, psychiatric, and intellectual disabilities in the workforce and more, leading to increased acceptance and fewer stigmas.
In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This federal education law applied to funding K–12 grades for professional development, instruction, educational resources, and parental participation.	In 1967, Congress added Title VI to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, creating a Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH). Then, in 1983, this bureau was replaced by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). ESEA was influential in the development of IDEA, the Bilingual Education Act, and Goals 2000: Educate America Act. In the years 2001–2002, President George W. Bush renamed ESEA the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).
The 1973 Rehabilitation Act prohibited businesses with federal contracts to discriminate in employment or services on the basis of disability, allowing for affirmative action programs for hiring people with disabilities. Section 504 referred to qualified <i>handicapped individuals</i> not being excluded from participation in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance, e.g., school district, state education agency.	Through the following decades, this law was extended and applied to school settings to include those students with a "record" of a disability or "regarded as" having a disability. Eligibility pertains to children who currently suffer from an impairment substantially limiting learning or another major life activity, allowing them to receive referral, evaluation, and educational services. It stops discrimination and prejudicial treatments against students in academic and extracurricular activities.
P.L. 93-380, The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.	Allows parents of students under the age of 18, and students age 18 and over, the right to examine records kept in the student's personal file.

(Continued)

Table 1.1 (Continued)

<i>Legislative Accomplishments and Disability Directives</i>	<i>Implications and Results</i>
<p>In 1974, EHA was enacted. In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) mandated that all children with disabilities be granted a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment possible.</p>	<p>Signed by President Gerald Ford in 1975 and went into effect in October of 1977 when the regulations were finalized. Expanded to include preschool special education programs, early intervention, and transition programs in 1983. In 1986, age of eligibility was lowered to age 3 and early intervention services (birth–3) were made available. In 1990, it was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA (P.L. 101-476). Services were made available to students with autism or traumatic brain injury as well as those needing transition services, social services, and more. Changed again to IDEIA in 2004. EHA is considered to be the grandparent of IDEA.</p>
<p>P.L. 98-524, The Vocational Education Act of 1984.</p>	<p>Required that vocational education be provided for students with disabilities.</p> <p>In 1988, President Ronald Reagan established by executive order the current name of the President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities. In 1990 and 1991, Congress passed P.L. 101-392 and P.L. 102-103, respectively. The name was changed to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act and its goal was to improve academic and occupational skill competencies and programs.</p>
<p>Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).</p>	<p>President George H. W. Bush signed this civil rights law that guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodation, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications.</p>
<p>In 2002, NCLB was signed and renamed from ESEA, by President George W. Bush. It included increased accountability for students and teachers and more effective teaching methods.</p>	<p>Includes additional parental options to send their children to an alternate school, have state-administered standardized testing, flexibility with school budget (allocation of funds to various NCLB programs), and professional development (e.g., reading programs). Its goal is to allow all students access to promising futures with educational improvements across socioeconomic levels.</p>
<p>IDEIA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.</p>	<p>Functional or nonacademic goals now included, meaning those regarding getting along in the real world. This includes a statement of academic achievement and functional performance. Other highlights include more parental participation in the IEP, periodic or quarterly progress reports of goals, and using the response to scientifically based instructional practices instead of only the discrepancy model as criteria for identification of students with learning needs (RTI). Advocates more preparation, knowledge, and skills for teachers. Students with disabilities are now receiving many more school opportunities with focus on outcomes rather than compliance.</p>

Whose Perspective?

A student with a disability is viewed differently by

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Other students in the class | 8. Administration |
| 2. The community | 9. Bus drivers |
| 3. Families/caregivers | 10. Cafeteria workers |
| 4. Siblings | 11. Specialists: art, gym, or music teachers; speech pathologists |
| 5. General education teachers | 12. Other students with disabilities |
| 6. Special education teachers | |
| 7. Parents of other students in the class | |

The following excerpt tries to examine the complexities of including a hypothetical student with a disability, Sam, in a school setting. Being with the general education population, interacting with the “regular” kids, is sometimes tough! Although educational legislation has now guaranteed students with disabilities the right to a physical space in the classroom, not all student and adult attitudes are accepting ones. Other people are still sometimes frustrated or confused by differences. Thank goodness many educators, school personnel, peers, and families are coming to be on the same academic, social, and behavioral learning page—one that allows students with differences and disabilities to maximize their assets.

“Presenting Sam” is a hypothetical classroom situation that delineates possible reactions, perspectives, and complex attitudes and sentiments various stakeholders may possess when students with disabilities are educated in school settings. The two scenarios depict different attitudes, which then result in different outcomes. Although these statements are hypothetical ones, some of them may be recognizable to you.

Presenting Sam

From Sam (the student)

1st Scenario: I want to be normal, but how? Those special classes are the worst. I hate the short lines and those stares. Everyone is looking at us. Yuck! *Why?* we wonder. When will our wishes win? Where are the welcoming words? Why do they think we are weirdos?

2nd Scenario: I’m so glad that I’m in the same class as the kids I go on the school bus with! I don’t always understand the lesson the first time, but since there are two teachers in the room, I can always go to one of them for extra help. Everybody else does, too, even the kids who aren’t supposed to! Wow! Wisdom’s wonderful!

From Sam's mom:

1st Scenario: Well, he's my son and no one is going to tell me that he's not like the other kids. What do they know? It's the teacher's fault. She never liked my son and she wants him out of the class. She shuns. She shoos. She stigmatizes Sam.

2nd Scenario: I realize that Sam learns differently and needs some extra help. It's no big deal if he receives his reading instruction and study skills support in the resource room. At least he'll be getting the direct skill instruction he needs there. Then, maybe he'll be able to be in his classroom full time, once progress has been achieved. I think that the teachers know what they're doing here. Sam smiles. Sam sees some support. Sam shines!

From Sam's dad:

1st Scenario: Sam is my boy, my own flesh and blood. He has my genes and they're strong ones. No one in my family ever had Sam's problems. He'll outgrow it and get smarter. I'm going to tell the teacher to try teaching to take away Sam's troubles.

2nd Scenario: Okay, so what if Sam needs some extra help! No one is to blame; everybody needs help sometimes. I remember I never really loved school, but now Sam is able to reach out and be taught in a way that helps him to understand more. They use pictures to help Sam understand the words, and sometimes the class even sings songs about what they are learning! Tell the terrific teacher, thanks! Time to try tolerance!

From Sam's sibling:

1st Scenario: Sam, this, Sam, that! What about me? What about my feelings? Don't I count, too? Please, parents. I hate my pouts. Plus, I have no more prayers and even less patience. Please end this pandemonium!

2nd Scenario: Sam, Sam, my sweet brother! How can I help you? I don't think that this is a time to say who is more important. We all count and can lean on each other! Progress prevails!

From Sam's peer:

1st Scenario: Can't believe that Sam is in the same school as I am! He travels on the bus with me and he's even in my gym class! Sam acts strangely and is always jumping out of his seat. He can't even sit still long enough to listen. Definitely a dork! He's different, and distracting!

2nd Scenario: Sam sure is different, but I like him! He has a unique way of seeing the world. Wish I sometimes was a little more like Sam. Defend differences!

From a parent of a student in the general education class who is not receiving services:

1st Scenario: Just what do they think they are doing by placing a kid like Sam in the same class as my daughter, Angel! Angel is much brighter than Sam and shouldn't be held back while those two teachers are slowing down the pace for the other kids. Besides, Sam does weird flapping things with his hands. Sometimes the teachers ask my Angel to help him! It's insulting! I'm incensed!

2nd Scenario: Angel acts differently this year. She seems more mature and has become even nicer now that she has become friends with Sam. Sam needs a little extra help, and my Angel sometimes tutors him. It's a great lesson in character education. During classroom visitation week, I saw those two teachers in action. It's amazing how they set up the class to reach all of the students through those cooperative projects. My Angel even gets to complete some independent research assignments as the teachers drift around the classroom, helping all. I'm immensely impressed! Individualized instruction is interesting!

From Sam's General Education teacher:

1st Scenario: How can I reach Sam? How can I teach him? How can I...? Am I prepared to work with Sam? He needs nurturing. No nonsense. Necessary knowledge, now!

2nd Scenario: I'll figure out a way to reach Sam. I have all this literature that can help. I think that I'll attend a workshop on my professional development day that will help me apply some appropriate strategies to address Sam's IEP goals. I won't blame other teachers or the administration for placing Sam in my class. I'll be more prepared and try to differentiate my instruction to meet Sam's academic, behavioral, emotional, and social needs. So much has to do with my attitude and the attitudes of the students in the class. I'll maximize Sam's assets! No need for negativism!

From Sam's Special Education teacher:

1st Scenario: How can I get the other teachers to accept Sam in their class and have high expectations for him, too? When will the teachers realize that Sam does belong here? How will I make accommodations, without the other kids wondering why they aren't getting the same special treatment? When will I have planning time to collaborate with all of Sam's other teachers? Big burdens. Bury the blame. Believing in the best outcome is the basic building block for inclusive successes.

2nd Scenario: Wow! I thought that this would be harder than it really is! Coteaching is awesome! I get to help Sam and no one even realizes that's why I'm here. My views are less skewed since I am able to align Sam's strides to the curriculum and see how his progress compares to some of the work produced by the other students. I even help everyone pay attention! The GE teacher is terrific! He lets me offer strategies and we trade off teaching the lesson. I'm glad that I took my math praxis and brushed up on my calculus skills! Sam definitely needs two strong teachers! Big bonds built between both!

From the administrator at Sam's school:

1st Scenario: The teachers need to raise Sam's test grades. Where's the yearly progress? Everyone should follow the school's program and rules. It's about answers! Accommodate and appropriately approach all as adults.

2nd Scenario: Sam will be placed where he belongs. We'll monitor his progress and definitely not teach to the test, but teach to Sam's needs within his classroom. I'll support my teachers and offer them my resources and assistance in their efforts to reach and teach everyone the skills they need. Answers await as all allow alternate avenues. Achieving awesome advances!

Read more about ways to address Sam's concerns as expressed in each of the first scenarios above:

Helping and Supporting Sam, His Family, Teachers, Peers, and Others

For Sam (the student): Depending upon his age and cognitive, behavioral, and social levels, Sam needs to be taught the *hidden curriculum*. This means that he has to learn how to fit in with the school culture. If he does, then the unwanted stares, negative comments, and exclusion from other students will diminish. The hidden curriculum is also about learning how to learn. That sometimes includes what the teacher is not directly teaching, but what the students need to know about the teacher, other students, or even the way the school is organized. This will help Sam to make generalizations and apply the learning. Sam also has to learn that *it's okay to be different* and that everyone has varying strengths and weaknesses. If Sam needs extra help, he has to understand that it's not something to hide or be ashamed of. Allowing his needs to be known will make him stronger. Younger students can read picture books about characters who overcome obstacles. Older students can read about protagonists who have disabilities in fiction genres. Another option is to learn about and from real people with disabilities who turned things around by maximizing their potential and maintaining positive attitudes. The goal is to increase self-advocacy, self-image, and self-determination to succeed. When Sam is aware of his own levels and needs, he will then realize that asking for help is an avenue to continually explore.

For Sam's mom: Sam's mom needs to know that no one is to blame for Sam's difficulties. If she thinks that Sam's teacher does not treat Sam fairly, then she can schedule a meeting to open up the dialogue and include other staff members who know Sam, e.g., case managers, prior teachers, and Sam, if he is of the appropriate age and possesses the maturity to attend.

For Sam's dad: Sam's father needs a realistic view of his son, understanding that Sam will not outgrow his disability, but rather will learn strategies to maximize his strengths. It's possible that Sam's dad could benefit from joining a parent support group to discuss his emotions about Sam and hear thoughts from other families. It might be a group that his son, his wife, and their other children could attend together as a family.

For Sam's sibling: Sam's sibling desperately needs attention, too! Raising a child with a disability can be taxing on the whole family, creating undue tensions for all members. Maybe Sam's dad and mom can schedule quality time individually or together with Sam's sibling, letting him or her know that they have enough love for Sam and his brother and/or sister, too! The family also needs to spend time together as a unit to bond, rather than letting jealousies brew and fester. Just reading a book, going for a walk, or watching a movie or television show together might be all that's needed to reassure Sam's sibling that he or she is loved, too!

For Sam's peers: If possible, educators, families, guest speakers, or students with disabilities can conduct disability sensitivity activities that outline specific characteristics students with differing abilities might display in the classroom. In addition, guided character-building lessons can raise peers' self-esteem, so they will not need to *pick on* other students they perceive to be inferior to feel better about themselves.

For Sam's General Education teacher: Available and frequent training sessions and workshops with agendas that teach about disabilities and appropriate instructional strategies will help teachers implement lessons, adapt strategies, and assess Sam's varying needs while delivering the curriculum. In addition, allotting planning time for meeting with Sam's coteachers, other colleagues, parents, and guardians to gain more insights, open up communication, and review Sam's assessments and progress gives everyone a chance to collaborate. Information regarding Sam's past needs and performance must be available to bridge the knowledge and share effective strategies implemented by former teachers. Transitional conferences to discuss the transition between grades can be scheduled on staff development workshop days at the beginning of the year.

For Sam's Special Education teacher: Again, allot common planning time in teachers' schedules to meet and discuss Sam's ongoing needs and progress. Respect from the administration for teachers' efforts with Sam is the encouraging pat on the back some educators need. It is important for principals and other administrators to acknowledge Sam's partial achievements. Include Sam's special education teacher in general education curriculum meetings, too.

For the administrator at Sam's school: Realize and honor everyone's efforts in helping Sam work toward his individual educational goals. Listen to teachers' feedback regarding workshops needed to obtain more strategies to maximize Sam's strengths. Honor and respect the people who know Sam. Be Sam's administrator and his advocate, too!

These two quotes relate to Sam and many other students who are the recipients of special services in school settings:

When you start to understand how he sees the world, you will learn that seeing things differently from others is not such a bad thing. (Hoopman, 2001, p. 69)

I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that special education saved my life. (Abeel, 2003, p. 100)

BEYOND THE TERMINOLOGY

So What Exactly Is a Disability?

Most instructors and students do not have 100% of their faculties working at 100% capacity for 100% of the time; disability is pretty much a relative term. (Miller, 2004)

People with disabilities should not be viewed as being in the "sick" role. . . . [It is] not a health issue. . . . not a medical question. . . . A person with a disability is not "sick" because of a disability. (Pfeiffer, 1996)

It's easier for visitors to *The Land of Disability* to pass a multiple-choice test about disabilities than it is for them to be comfortable with an authentic, genuine, disabled person. (Brightman, 2006)

I don't see disability as a tragedy. People have various forms of disabilities and some of those are acquired through age, and some are acquired because of poverty, and some are the result of being young—car crashes and wars and things of that nature. I see disability as a normal part of

life. I look at it like, *What do people need in order to be able to live their life like anybody else?* (Judith Heumann, quoted in Montes, 2007)



Each child has his or her own set of fingerprints. Children have their own likes and dislikes. A child with a disability must be seen as a child first. (Karten, 2005)

Society sometimes determines the extent of someone's disability by its reaction to and treatment of that person. For example, a person in a wheelchair or someone who is blind may receive more attention for being disabled than a person who has a learning difference, hearing loss, or emotional issues. Some disabilities are structural, while others are internal, not as apparent or visible as others. An analogous classroom situation would be when teachers try to instruct students with concrete facts vs. abstract learning. Many students understand things that are spelled out and visible, while the connections that are required to understand what is not seen or the abstract may be more difficult. Both the concrete and abstract must be comprehended, however. The same holds true about disabilities: both the visible and the *unseen* need to be understood and *accepted* by all, *no exceptions!*



Visible Versus Unseen Disabilities

(How would you categorize these?)

- Dyslexia
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Language disorder
- Hearing impairment
- Cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Speech impediment
- Asperger syndrome
- Autism

He Won't Always Be Retarded!

While off to present a workshop entitled *Celebrating the Challenges!* I met a wonderful mom who raised a son with *developmental issues*. While conversing with me as she was traveling on a plane with her 44-year-old son to visit relatives, she shared a very poignant viewpoint. She mentioned that when her son was younger, she was told that he wouldn't always be retarded. She then explained how a woman told her that the term *retarded* would not always be politically correct. Sure enough, she remarked, when he was a teenager, she attended a meeting and was told that her son was now *developmentally disabled*. "Wow, now isn't that a mouthful!" she said.

The term mental retardation is still in use in federal statutes as a diagnostic term in determining eligibility for public benefit programs ("How should the disabled be described?" 2006). The nonprofit organization called the Arc, though its acronym stands for the Association for Retarded Citizens, no longer uses the term *mental retardation*, but in its mission statement says that it works to include children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities in every community. The term *mental retardation* was offensive to many people, so the Arc decided to keep the acronym, but changed their language, though certainly not their commitment to the people they serve (www.thearc.org).

However, many labels today still stigmatize students before they even set foot in a classroom. Regardless of the name or diagnosis, whether it is mental

retardation, intellectual disability, cognitive challenge, or a developmental disability, the needs of these students remain the same. The utmost necessity is for students with disabilities to be treated with respect by adults, students, and peers in school, community, and home settings. Relating learning to students' lives is important for those whose measured aptitudes may seem limited or deficient, but are in fact capable of achieving strides in different ways. If the goal is to have students lead productive, independent lives, then all role models must *treat the student, not the label!*

This includes training for not only the teachers and families, but also the bus drivers, instructional assistants, lunchroom aides, and more! In addition, when the music, art, physical education, world language, speech, and other staff know what topics and concepts are being taught, they can plan and incorporate appropriate lessons that mirror the classroom's concept, e.g., singing ballads from the Civil War, or learning about art from the Renaissance period. More strides are reached when social, cognitive, communication, and self-help skills are directly modeled, taught, reinforced, and broken down into their components in all settings.

The following tables include how to monitor and escalate *inclusion* across settings.

Table 1.2 Monitoring Students' Behaviors in All Settings

<i>Feedback from a bus driver, lunchroom aide, special subject teacher, or instructional assistant</i>	<i>Yes or No</i>	<i>Additional observations, comments, or concerns about behavior or performance</i>
1. Student behaves appropriately on the bus, in the lunchroom, in the classroom, or other setting.		
2. Other students or families are displeased with this student's actions.		
3. This student needs extra attention on the bus, in the lunchroom, or in the classroom.		
4. Other students are eager to sit near this student and help.		
5. Student listens and follows directions.		
6. Student exhibits self-control with improvements noted.		
7. Additional monitoring is needed.		
8. Glad to have this student included!		
Report by: _____ Student: _____ Class/Room/Bus: _____ Date: _____		

Table 1.3 Collaboration and Communication With All Teachers and Staff

Collaboration and Communication With All Teachers and Staff to Promote Academics in Other Settings		
From: _____	To: _____	
	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Concept</i>
This Week's Lessons		
Next Week's Lessons		
Projects We're Doing		
Future Lessons		

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The following similes and metaphors relate disabilities to the curriculum in a positive way. Unintentionally, people's perspectives and descriptions of disabilities can at times be the unnecessary stumbling blocks in *unfair obstacle courses!* Life has enough everyday challenges without superimposed prejudicial attitudes blocking goals for students. Labels are intended to reveal the contents, yet somehow they never do justice to the real flavor!

Disability–Curriculum Analogies

Read these similes and metaphors, and then try to write your own subjective, yet objective ones.

Table 1.4

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Metaphor</i>	<i>Simile</i>
Math	A disability is a decimal that is sometimes regarded by others as less worthy than a whole number.	A disability is like a decimal, seeking the same <i>points</i> in life.
Science	A disability is a telescope trying to grasp shining stars.	A disability is sometimes like a microscopic slide that has its traits magnified for others to view.
Social Studies	A disability is often a map without a legend.	A disability is like a map that represents more than what is seen.
Reading	A disability is a book that reveals itself, page by page.	A disability is as varied as the genres in a library.
Writing	A disability is an epic poem.	A disability is like a novel, revealing its plot.
Languages	A disability is a story that sometimes requires subtitles for others to understand.	A disability is as beautiful as a romance language.
Art/Music	A disability is a picture with elements in the foreground and background.	A disability is as joyous and as talent-filled as a Broadway musical!

Educational Stops



Special education (SE) was always the *first stop* along the *educational train* if students were not achieving classroom strides. Students who did not respond to the learning in the same way and had diverse abilities were sometimes unnecessarily *tracked* under the SE label for the rest of their schooling. This exclusion from their age-appropriate peers denied many students the opportunities to maximize their abilities.

Academic and social interactions with peers were limited. Quite often, the curriculum delivered in self-contained classes deleted and diluted many concepts. Aside from limited academics, not being with the general education population did not afford students with and without disabilities the opportunity to develop friendships with each other.

SE labels are complex. Unnecessary labeling can be injurious, but at the same time it directs school personnel to the need to provide appropriate resources and supports. Labels may offer common characteristics of some disabilities, but they do not define students since diversities exist within each disability category. It's the student who should be seen first, not the label. Basically, schools should be more about outcomes and delivering services, rather than assigning labels or *tracking* students.

The train is gaining momentum for students with disabilities, now in the classroom, who are on board for the *curriculum stops* and hopefully a

Table 1.5

<i>Positive Traits</i>	<i>Strengths</i>
interests	likes
capabilities	competencies
strategies	interventions
appropriate	fitting
collaboration	coplanning
goals	objectives
success	achievements
response	progress
confidence	optimism
choices	options

life filled with diverse possibilities. This is evidenced in higher graduation rates, lower dropout rates, more inclusion with assessments and accountabilities, and RTI. Improved postsecondary outcomes, which are not limited to college attendance, are now more possible for students with disabilities. Apprenticeship opportunities and vocational/career education programs exist, but still more are needed to better allow students to maximize their strengths and interests to become contributing members of society. Schools that offer a combination of programs, not strictly academic ones, allow all students, not just those with disabilities, to have options concerning postsecondary programs. The best approach is to give students the opportunity to master the curriculum and honor their positive traits and strengths. Education is the ticket that will allow students to make choices with strategies and concepts learned in school that will hopefully be productively transferred and transitioned into adulthood. Education for students with and without disabilities needs to concentrate on their strengths as shown in the table with synonyms about abilities and possibilities. As Samuels (2007) poignantly states, "It's not a special ed issue, it's an every ed issue."

WHO IS CONSIDERED TO BE A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY?

These collective quotes offer some insights about students with special needs. Some of the following statistics by themselves can be misleading since many factors influence the numbers. Equally important are socioeconomic factors, and how children's schooling, work ethic, and progress are influenced by where they live; who's home to support them; what resources are in the home; and, if they are a member of a minority, how that minority group is viewed by others. How much money is earned in the home can influence a family's views on education. Students living in poverty unfortunately sometimes have impoverished educations, if steps are not taken to circumvent monetary factors and abysmal outlooks. A student with a disability who is born into a family with more money and resources may have more chances to excel than a student whose family is also worried about where the next plate of food is coming from. Our awareness—including acceptance of differences, diagnostic tools, and medical acumen—has increased, while much of the shunning and stigmas have decreased. There are a multitude of factors underlying these statistics across geographic regions of our country, as well.

Some statistics:

Approximately 6.5 million children ages 3 to 21 have been diagnosed with special needs, up nearly 40% in eight years. (Gutner, 2004, quoting statistics from the U.S. Department of Education)

In 1976–77, about 3.7 million youth were receiving special education services, which was about 8% of the total enrollment in public schools. Then in 2005–2006, about 6.7 million students were receiving services under IDEA, which was about 14% of the public school enrollment. (U.S. Department of Education, 2007)

More than 10% of U.S. households have offspring (adult children included) with special needs. (Gutner, 2004, quoted from www.pacer.org)

Among school age youth (ages 6–21), specific learning disabilities were the most prevalent disability and had the largest increase in service receipt from 1976–2001. It increased threefold—from 2% to 6%. (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006)

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the number of children who received special education for autism and related disorders increased from 22,664 in 1994 to 141,022 in 2003. (Unger, 2006)

Autism is the fastest growing disability in the U.S., more prevalent than childhood cancer and juvenile diabetes. More boys than girls are affected with a ratio of 4:1. (Rivera, 2007)

In April 2007, researchers from the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Interdisciplinary Council on Developmental and Learning Disorders presented a report that said about 17% of U.S. children have a developmental disability such as autism, mental retardation and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorders, but that fewer than half are diagnosed before starting school. (Tanner, 2007)

Black students with disabilities were more likely than students of any other race or ethnicity to spend less than 40% of their day in a regular classroom and were the most likely to be placed outside of a regular school. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005)

Lynda Price, an associate professor of special education at Temple University, estimates that as many as one in 10 adults may have a learning disability and that the vast majority conceal it from workplace supervisors. (Zimmerman, 2006)

After evaluating data submitted from states, the U.S. Department of Education released evaluations in June 2007 of each state's efforts to teach children with disabilities from infants to secondary school students. Most states received grades of *needs assistance* or *needs intervention*, with only nine making the highest grade, *meets the requirements*, for students aged 3 to 21. For services for infants through 2-year-olds, 15 states met requirements while the others ranked as needing assistance or needs intervention. None of the states received the lowest category since 2007 was the baseline year for the data. In addition, states

now need to submit state performance plans (SPP) which tell of their intended improvement plans for the next six years. (Samuels, 2007)

The accountability bar is now raised, with states paying attention to the data. Each state also must submit an APR, which is its Annual Performance Report of progress toward the SPP. So it seems that IEPs under IDEA and LEAs have led to SPPs with APRs! (Translation: Individualized Education Programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Local Education Agencies have led to State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports!) The following table outlines some statistics about the approximately 54 million people in the United States with disabilities compared to those without disabilities.

Table 1.6 Disability Comparisons Across Genders, Ages, Populations, and Locations

Gender	8% of boys	4% of girls	Aged 5–15
Gender	12% of men	11% of women	Aged 16–64
Gender	38% of men	42% of women	Aged 65 or older
Employed	42% of men (4 million)	34% of women (3.5 million)	Aged 21–64
Sensory disability involving sight or hearing	4.1% of noninstitutionalized civilian population	10.8 million people	Aged 5 or older
Conditions that limit basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying	9% of noninstitutionalized civilian population	23.6 million people	Aged 5 or older
Physical, mental, or emotional condition causing difficulties in learning. Can include remembering and concentrating	5.1% of noninstitutionalized civilian population	13.5 million people	Aged 5 or older
Physical, mental, or emotional condition causing difficulties in home settings. Can include difficulty in dressing, bathing, or moving inside the home	2.7% of noninstitutionalized civilian population	7 million people	Aged 5 or older
Difficulty going outside the home such as visiting a doctor or shopping	4.9% of noninstitutionalized civilian population	10.7 million people	Aged 16 or older
Condition that affects ability to work at a job or business	11.8 million people		Aged 16–64

Difference Is Not a Deficiency!

Teachers today have increased education and awareness about disabilities. Increased visibility has also led to more acceptance. Today's changing attitudes try to dissolve stereotypes to treat all students with dignity. However, at times the labels or names themselves can be the obstacles. Racism, ageism, sexism, and *disabilitism* still exist, even though much legislation has attempted to prevent these negative prejudicial practices and mindsets. Civil rights and educational laws prohibit discrimination based on different abilities, yet the laws do not always translate into positive everyday practices in schools and beyond.

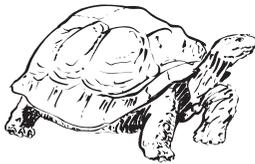
Working collectively, some members of society still need to realize that a difference does not translate to a deficiency. There is no social ladder of competencies, with disabilities placed on lower rungs. It would be naive to say that all individuals are as capable and intelligent, because all individuals are not the same. Some students with more severe disabilities will consistently require help with daily activities such as mobility, toileting, feeding, and more. Even if students with more severe developmental needs are given the same opportunities, the results will differ. However, it is not naive to say that all students can achieve their highest potentials with *different types of ladders*. This begins in a school setting with peer education and self-advocacy for all. When challenges are presented to students, it means that teachers possess high expectations for all, wanting students to maximize their assets. Challenges are not intended to frustrate students, but to recognize that each student is capable of achieving individualized cognitive advances. This should never be translated into a classroom setting with teachers assuming negative results and automatically diluting objectives from a lesson's content. If students are not introduced to the curriculum content because the assumption is that they *won't get it*, then students are set up for future failures. Since the curriculum spirals, the *knowledge foundation* will then weaken. Increased placements in general education classrooms are affording students with disabilities more opportunities and matching strategies to help them understand curriculum concepts. In addition, improved attitudes toward students with disabilities through positive peer interactions eventually become societal gains with experiences stored, translated, and applied to adult environments.

Complications occur when moral, medical, social, political, and cultural issues interfere with the learning. Students should not be expected to conform to and match standards set by outsiders, without ascertaining whether or not the learners have the prerequisite skills, knowledge, and experiences. Many families with differing cultural values from those of the school system often do not understand these standards. Also true is that some families have expectations that differ from those set at school levels. Some families have higher expectations and some families have lower ones. Other families have realistic viewpoints and expectations for daily and future achievements that are sometimes not recognized by the school. Compromise, communication, and cooperation correct mismatched and misguided expectations and replace them with realistic goals.

It is a challenge for all if stereotypical attitudes are shown by peers, teachers, administrators, legislators, and other adults in the community toward those with differences. Fortunately today, fair treatments overrule those archaic prejudicial attitudes. Politicians are lobbied to change laws and acknowledge inequities. Attempts to end discrimination with educational laws try to diminish

the disparity among scores across disability categories, socioeconomic levels, and races. The next section outlines some of these legislative issues in schools and communities.

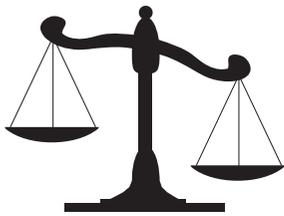
LEGISLATION SAYS... AND THE CLASSROOM DOES



Like tortoises who have hard shells to protect themselves from predators in their environments, people with disabilities must be protected from predators with *disabilitiphobia* and their sometimes unfriendly, unwelcoming, unproductive environments. It's unfortunate that society needs courts to mandate fair treatments to people with disabilities. Why can't everyone just be on automatic pilot to *do the right thing*? How fortunate that many people of all abilities and ages do not need legislation to spell out the right way to act toward those with disabilities.

Even with legislation, however, disability discrimination still occurs, with people testing the laws' limits and limiting a student's potential. Ultimately, this results in further disabling the potential of a person with a disability. However, when schools foster accepting attitudes, then the peers who will become the future neighbors, coworkers, employers, or employees of a student with a disability will not need a law to tell them just what constitutes appropriate behavior and fairness!

ADA—Americans with Disabilities Act



(Hopefully, one day to be *A Dream Actualized*.)

The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1990 in the United States, but it has been continually interpreted, translated, expanded, and somewhat modified through individual court cases since that date. It's a civil rights law that guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in employment, public accommodation, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. Even though the law itself remains intact, it has been amended and tested in the courts. This is partly because of its wording and what ADA states and sometimes what it does not specify.

ADA says that an individual with a disability

1. has a physical or mental disability that limits one or more major life activities,
2. has a record of such impairment, or
3. is regarded as having such an impairment.

The following table outlines and compares what is and what is not considered to be a disability under ADA. Sometimes there is a fine line that specifies what is and what is not protected. For example, sometimes being careless, disorganized, irresponsible, or stubborn may be considered as negative personality traits, yet can be part of a disability, as well. Students with oppositional defiant disorder or AD/HD may display such traits. ADA affects school settings in various circumstances. An example would be that when students

with disabilities are gainfully employed in the community, they cannot be discriminated against or denied opportunities if they are competent for the job, based upon their disability. If a student with a disability was denied physical access to his or her classrooms or extracurricular activities due to structural barriers, that would be an ADA concern. If a student had a dog companion and was denied school or community access, that would also be an ADA matter. If a Board of Education meeting was held on the second floor of a building without an elevator and a student or parent in a wheelchair could not attend, that would also be an ADA concern. Not providing a sign language interpreter during a parent-teacher conference or an IEP meeting, if interpretive needs were known in advance, would also be an ADA concern in a school setting. It addresses the following areas with deliverable results that are at times placed on a courtroom's agenda.

Table 1.7 ADA Domains: To ADA or Not to ADA

<i>ADA Domains</i>	<i>Specifics such as</i>
Public accommodations	Bringing a wheelchair on a beach or to a sports event Going to a restroom Enjoying a park
Commercial facilities	Shopping at malls Dining at restaurants Obtaining hotel accommodations Riding a rollercoaster
Employment	Securing a job (if qualified) without a disability interfering with being hired and keeping that job Being treated fairly at that job or employment
Transportation	Having access to a bus, train station, taxi cab, plane, and beyond
State and Local Governments	Attending and participating in a local Board of Education meeting Running for public office Voting
Telecommunications	Talking on a telephone Having computer access

REMOVING BARRIERS

Barriers have been erased by removing inaccessible facilities and replacing them with appropriate environments and conditions. Students using wheelchairs for mobility now have appropriately designed ramps, elevators, and physical spaces. The student using a wheelchair is not to be discriminated against in the school and the work environment when compared to a student or coworker

Table 1.8 Table of Considered Disabilities

<i>Considered a Disability</i>	<i>Not Considered a Disability</i>
<p>Physiological disorder or condition, including effects to neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory, cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, endocrine, hemic, lymphatic, and genitourinary systems</p> <p>Mental impairments can include mental retardation—known in some states as intellectual disability or organic brain syndrome—and also emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities</p>	<p>Disadvantages stemming from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental • Cultural • Economic factors 
Permanent disabilities that people are born with and ones that will not change or significantly improve over time	Some temporary disabilities that vary in symptoms are sketchy issues, such as ascertaining just what length of time a person has to hold a disability in order for it to be considered as interfering with a major life activity
Emotional impairments, e.g., bipolar disorder, passive-aggressive personality disorder	Personality traits such as being careless, disorganized, or irresponsible
Person who cannot read because he or she has dyslexia or perceptual disorders	A person who cannot read because he or she dropped out of school
Person with a psychiatric diagnosis of stress disorder	Someone under <i>situational</i> stress
Person who is blind or has considerable visual impairments	Someone with 20/60 vision
A person who cannot walk or has limited mobility	A person who cannot run fast in a marathon
Someone with a disabling permanent back injury	Someone who complains of back pain, and then plays a game of football or works in another job that requires physical labor
Someone who had cancer or had a mental illness at one time (having a record of the disability)	Someone with a broken leg or who is going through a mentally upsetting time, such as a loss, death, or divorce

Source: National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research: Core Curriculum (Adaptive Environments), <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html>, and Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State (2005).

who is able to walk. A child who is blind can no longer be denied access to job opportunities if he or she is qualified. A girl who is deaf can show her ability to complete the same job as someone with better hearing. A student who initially had difficulties learning now has increased opportunities to become a productive adult. He or she is now allowed access to the same opportunities as everyone else in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, and telecommunications. The *idea* was for ADA to be translated to *A Dream Actualized!*

Even though ADA has allowed people with disabilities to participate in many more aspects of society, the law is still not perfect. Some establishments that initially waited to be challenged before complying with the law discovered that ADA was here to stay, and other establishments and employers are still challenging the law. At the time of publication, ADA is being discussed on the hearing floor of the Senate. The ADA Restoration Act of 2007 is designed to amend ADA by not allowing employers to say a person is too disabled to do the job, but not disabled enough to be protected under ADA. Specific disabilities caught in this grey area of the law include, but are not limited to, individuals with epilepsy, physical impairments, hearing loss, and mental illness who are able to regulate their disabilities with medication, prosthetics, or hearing aids. The ADA Restoration Act of 2007 is a bill that proposes to amend ADA to require courts to focus on whether a person has experienced discrimination *on the basis of disability*, rather than first requiring individuals with disabilities to demonstrate that they are substantially limited in some major life activity as the language now states. This way, more protection would be restored to the individual with the disability, rather than protecting the employer, which was not ADA's original intent. This restoration act is trying to alter the definition of a disability to allow a high quality of opportunity and participation for people with disabilities and thereby end all types of discrimination. However, the best part about ADA and other legislative laws is that they are not stagnant, but rather are consistently revisited and improved to remove barriers presented by unfair societal practices in schools and communities.

Universal Design

The following quotes and principles about *universal design* emphasize the need for appropriate pre-service and in-service teacher education about how to *universally* reach students in prepared classrooms.

Universal design focuses attention on the one standard that matters most, providing the education that each student needs. Just as electronic devices and public buildings can be designed to be used equally well by all individuals, schools can be redesigned to allow equal and easy access to appropriate learning for all students. (Rycik, 2005)

The idea of teachers considering all students and their individual needs before designing instruction and assessment practices has been a long time coming. What a difference this approach makes to teachers who no longer have to adjust and adapt their lessons and assessments to accommodate the students because the needed flexibility is already built in. (McNary, Glasgow, & Hicks, 2005)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates that schools provide accessible materials to students with exceptionalities at the same time as their peers without disabilities. This, combined with advances in universally designed instructional materials, will give students with disabilities better access to the general education curriculum and promote their educational achievement. (Hopkins, 2006)

Universal design was originally an architectural term geared toward making buildings accessible, yet it's now an even more *universal* term. The main

focus is to have products and services available without having to redesign structures for each person's needs. Examples include having Braille numbers written in hotels on room doors and in elevators to indicate floors without a person who is blind first having to request it. Someone who is blind can *see* that the supports are all in place. Curb cuts for people who use wheelchairs have also helped those with wheeled suitcases or shopping carts, those on bicycles or roller skates, or even someone pushing a baby stroller. Universal design branches out to people beyond its originally intended audience. Another example is how closed captioning, originally intended to help those who have hearing differences, now helps people with cultural and language differences understand and associate oral conversation with the written word. Captions also accommodate students who have auditory processing difficulties or dyslexia by encouraging them to read along with the spoken words.

Teachers can incorporate this philosophy into their classrooms, making educational designs and basic principles of instruction accessible. This can go above and beyond *universally friendly* environmental designs, to include *universal strategies* that benefit learners with and without disabilities. Universal design increases all students' access to the general education curriculum and sets up students with and without disabilities for *inclusionary classroom successes*. UDI (universally designed instruction) tries to include all learners' possible needs by having available supports and frameworks already built into lessons, taking a proactive, rather than a reactive, *What do I do now?* approach. Later on, this is translated into creating universal lifelong learners.

Universal design does not mean that students are all simultaneously learning or mastering identical concepts at the same level of understanding. It translates to a classroom with tools and strategies already in place for children to achieve greater school successes. Now when students and teachers travel down that classroom road, they are equipped with materials and strategies already anticipated to implement and receive instruction. The following table gives specific classroom applications that apply the principles of universal design to help students work toward the achievement of higher learning, behavioral, and social outcomes.

IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(My definition: **It Delivers Educational Access!**)

First it was P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), back in 1975, guaranteeing a FAPE (free, appropriate public education) to children with disabilities in the United States. This law changed and improved the way students with disabilities were identified, educated, and evaluated with trios of initials such as *IEPs*, *LREs*, and *LEAs* (spelled out as individualized education programs, least restrictive environments, and local education agencies). P.L. 94-142 also provided due process protections for children and their families. Children with disabilities no longer faced educational exclusion, but were given equal access to learning opportunities, and consequently a better future.

In 1983, the law expanded to include preschool special education programs, early intervention, and transition programs. Then amendments to EHA (P.L. 99-457), in 1986, mandated services to children starting at birth. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers were all included through early intervention

Table 1.9 Classroom Application of Universal Design Principles With Access for All

<i>Descriptions</i>	<i>Objectives</i>
Content-related visual dictionaries	To help students better understand vocabulary by offering semiabstract connections to written texts
Thematic clip art	To increase conceptual understandings, helping students to visualize the learning
Textbooks and literature on tape	Easier to follow comprehension of stories and information
Cut up tennis balls on the bottoms of chairs	To lower extra noises and distractions and assist students with attention issues
Increased technology, e.g., Smartboards, word prediction programs	Help with note taking and focusing, especially beneficial for students with fine motor issues, such as dysgraphia and students with attention issues
Lesson plans that consider individual students' needs, likes, and dislikes, e.g., more strategies built into lessons to help students with learning, such as outlines, graphic organizers, color coding, or using interest inventories	Motivate and connect students to learning on their instructional level rather than their frustrational levels Allows not only students with perceptual issues to understand concepts, but also gives better organizational skills to all students
Treating all students with dignity	Higher student self-esteem, which translates to taking ownership of learning and attempting even more difficult tasks
Computer technology	Help all students gain access to information, allowing for individual sensory, physical, and cognitive levels, e.g., talking Web sites, math and reading software, worksheets and graphic organizers, curriculum-connected visuals, animated graphics, along with PowerPoint slide presentations
Portable handheld speaking electronic dictionaries	To allow all learners to hear the information to reinforce the written word, aside from helping those students who are blind and dyslexic to increase understandings of vocabulary, literature, and concepts
Modeling lessons with increased praise	To reinforce academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs and levels of students

programs that insured future successes, laying down the groundwork to build a solid foundation for a child with a disability to achieve a successful future. Crucial early beginnings were addressed! More changes came in 1990 with P.L. 101-476, when the EHA became IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This was a major change, since it was the beginning of people-first language, meaning it was not the disability that came first, but the individual! Services were made available to students with autism, traumatic brain

injury, students in educational transition, those needing social services, and more. The 1997 amendments (P.L. 105-17) then specified that students would receive transition planning, beginning at age 14. Concern shifted to a child receiving his or her education in the LRE and having that linked to the home environment, with schools and families as partners.

Like ADA, the best part about IDEA is the lack of stagnation. IDEA keeps improving in name and meritorious content. IDEA was again reauthorized and improved in 2004 (P.L. 108-446) to IDEIA 2004 (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act). A statement of academic achievement and functional performance or nonacademic goals is now included, with emphasis on students knowing how to get along in the real world. Other highlights include more home input and participation in the IEP, periodic or quarterly progress reports of goals, and not just using a discrepancy model for identifying students with learning disabilities. In addition, teachers need to be highly qualified with more preparation, knowledge, and skills. However, it still remains that schools are not required to provide the best or optimal conditions, but *appropriate ones* that are commensurate with the education and opportunities provided to students without disabilities. More specific details follow.

Districts are now allowed to use other identification processes besides the IQ-discrepancy model to identify students with learning disabilities in tiered models. This involves students' responses to scientifically based instructional practices or research-based interventions (or response to intervention [RTI]). It allows educators to develop criteria for learning disability determination by gathering a variety of data, rather than relying on just one criterion to determine eligibility. Responsiveness to intervention is concerned with monitoring students' levels to prevent academic failures. Research on RTI is still in its infancy, but it holds many promises for students with learning needs in classrooms and schools. Screening, interventions, and monitoring on three different tiers involve implementing comprehensive programs with increased accountability. The ultimate objective is to ensure higher outcomes for students with disabilities. In addition, IDEIA calls for early intervening services (EIS) to be available to students who may not be identified under the special education umbrella, but who may be in general education settings and may also need academic interventions. This includes students in all grades, with a greater emphasis on providing services for students in younger grades before they experience repeated academic and related behavioral frustrations and failures. This IDEA 2004 commitment includes providing professional development to try to circumvent the overidentification of students needing special education services.

Individualized education programs (IEPs) do not have to include benchmarks, unless there are severe cognitive impairments. Measurable academic and functional goal statements still state the student's present level of academic achievement, his or her functional classroom performance, and how the disability impacts upon the programs. Another significant change involves the transition age, which is now set at age 16 or younger if necessary, while the prior IDEA mandated transition services at age 14. Measurable postsecondary goals must take into account a student's age-appropriate interests, even if the student chooses not to attend the IEP meeting. These goals include appropriate training, education, employment, and independent living skills.

IDEA 2004, from NCLB (No Child Left Behind) influences, now requires SE teachers to be highly qualified in the core subjects that they teach. Each state may have its own HOUSSE (High, Objective Uniform State Standard of

Evaluation) for the determination of special education teacher subject competency. The purpose is to allow students the same access to information, regardless of their disability. That includes receiving information in a timely fashion from competent personnel.

IDEA 2004 discipline rules apply to a case-by-case determination of a disability, placement issues, and manifestation determination. The law provides for an *interim alternative education setting* (IAES), which includes allowing the IEP team to consider services when the placement change will last for more than 10 consecutive days and if drugs, weapons, or serious bodily injury are involved. Parents or guardians must be notified of a placement change. The manifestation determination must state whether the conduct was related to the disability or whether it was the result of a district's failure to implement the IEP. Other considerations include the school's knowledge of a disability even if the student is not classified. This gives children certain IDEA protections in circumstances such as prior concern expressed by families and school personnel. It would exclude evaluations that determined no disability or in cases where the parents or guardians refused services or an evaluation.

Overall, students with special needs now are within the realm of achieving a high-quality education in literacy, numeracy, language, communication, and social and behavioral skills in natural settings with their peers. This includes timely interventions with families' involvement enhanced to maximize students' potential. These continual reauthorizations of the law show that complacency concerning students with disabilities is not an option, and now the law is offering increased protections!

Services and supports also spill over to nonacademic settings to allow students with disabilities more participation beyond the classrooms. Examples of potential extracurricular activities include allowing a student with dyslexia to perform in a school play with extra help to read his or her lines, or providing a student in a wheelchair with access and accommodations to play on a volleyball or basketball court with his or her peers who do not have disabilities. Increased interactions with peers outside the confines of the classroom walls will be a win-win for all!

Current laws and inclusion policies also result in more students with disabilities attending college. It is not a requirement, but students now have more options! This not only includes those with learning disabilities or attendance at *special* colleges, but it also includes students with autism, Down syndrome, and other emotional, intellectual and developmental disabilities attending the same campuses as their age-appropriate peers. The Education Life section of the *New York Times* (Kaufman, 2006) stated that although many of these students will not be taking Shakespeare or physics courses, they are now being prepared to enter the workforce beyond just having entry-level jobs. Social skills gains are attainable due to modeling, peer mentoring, adult guidance, and family assistance. Legislation has positively impacted postsecondary school opportunities for young adults. This translates into both personal and societal gains.

How is this all possible? It goes back to everyone's positive and encouraging attitudes. This includes school personnel, families, communities, peers, and the students themselves. Differentiation applies not only to instruction, but also to encouraging positive attitudes that spurred and continue to spur legislative protection for students with disabilities! The ultimate goal, for students with disabilities to lead independent and productive adult lives, is now a priority in school settings from the early ages onward!

An Analogous IEP: Learning Road Map



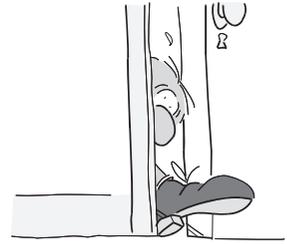
Writing measurable IEP goals with reasonable accommodations that align to academic standards does not have to be an arduous task. Aside from being required by the law, an IEP (*It's Educationally Prudent*) is a practical tool that says, "Let's figure out a *learning road map* for this student."

Table 1.10 Table of School Mapping

<i>Mapping Your Destination</i>	<i>School Map</i>
What's your starting point?	State the child's present level of academic achievement and functional performance.
Measure the distance traveled over a certain time.	How will child's progress toward meeting the goals outlined be measured? (Progress can be reported concurrently with report cards or sent home at set time intervals.)
Research the best route.	To the greatest extent possible, base IEP recommendations on peer-reviewed research. Gather input from all personnel.
When should the journey begin?	Age 3 and Child Find, which is Part C of IDEA, providing for early interventions and services for students with disabilities, from birth to age 21. This early location and identification appropriately targets and addresses developmental, physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of students with disabilities with appropriate services.
Will your trip be timed?	Benchmarks and short-term objectives are only needed for children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards (those with more severe cognitive impairments). IEPs still have annual goals, accommodations, and modifications listed. Some states also require benchmarks for students in replacement programs.
Who is going on the journey?	Depends upon LEA (local education agency) and parental agreement in writing. A staff member can be excused from a meeting if that member's area of expertise is not being modified or discussed. Even if a member is excused from attending, written input may be required. Most important, if age, maturity, and cognitive level are appropriate, the student should be a meaningful participant and attend IEP meeting, prepared to give input with perceptions, personal concerns, needs, and goals.
What if I travel to a different state?	Aha, here's where the plot thickens: Some states have different rules, regulations, interpretations, and alignments with federal laws. However, IDEA is a federally mandated law and must be implemented in all 50 states.
What driving regulations are expected or enforced?	High expectations that are <i>driven by results</i> , not driven by process, litigation, and regulation
What additional forms do I need for my journey?	More focus on learning outcomes and teaching, rather than meetings and excessive paperwork

Beyond the Foot in the Door and Into the Strategies

Inclusion is not merely about students with intellectual, physical, or sensory differences physically attending the same “regular” classes as those students with higher cognitive abilities or those born with *perfect* scores on the Apgar scale. Without the proper preparation, scaffolding, and mindsets, the *foot in the door* can become an embarrassing and frustrating experience for students with disabilities. Teachers, students, families, and peers must be sensitized in effective ways that mirror the real world, with learning kept at an optimum level in natural settings.



The following are some classroom issues that go *beyond the door*:

Table 1.11 Table of “Beyond the Door” Situations

Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up classroom to offer maximum mobility and access for students with physical and visual impairments. • Seat students with attention issues and visual impairments away from windows (e.g., glare and other distractions). Minimize chair noises by placing cut-up tennis balls on the bottom of chair legs to eliminate extra sounds. • Allow students to use headphones to listen to soothing music, work on computer Web sites, or follow specific tailored directions. • Circulate about the classroom, talking at the front, back, and sides of the room, with necessary proximity to focus students’ attentions.
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow individual and differentiated objectives, grading, and/or assessments that consider students’ efforts, with realistic and constructive feedback. • Pace lessons, with step-by-step explanations. • Allow for appropriate amount of practice, application, and acceleration. • Consistently and frequently, formally and informally, reevaluate and monitor student progress to determine effectiveness of instructional interventions.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have other students in the class act as peer coaches. • Encourage more student reflection and self-advocacy. • Vary cooperative grouping and assignments that allow students to demonstrate their strengths and interests. • Give students opportunities to <i>play with the academics</i>, enjoying the facts! • Establish an atmosphere that treats students as contributing, valued, and productive members, e.g., give students realistic classroom responsibilities.
Behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post student/teacher-created rules. • Assure students that you dislike their behavior displayed, not them! • Watch for signs of behavioral effects on other students. • Notice and record the antecedents for inappropriate behavior. • <i>Catch</i> students being good, and increase the praise. • Talk to families for their input, and offer ideas on how to implement feasible home behavioral charts to establish consistency with school strategies.
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor students’ cultures by including activities and literature from a variety of cultures, global locations, ages, and genres. • Provide supplemental materials in student’s primary language to increase background knowledge and familiarity with vocabulary words and concepts. • Watch out for signs of cultural anomie (feelings of not belonging). • Include the student’s level of proficiency. • Encourage students to share their differing thoughts and perceptions.

(Continued)

Table 1.11 (Continued)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up and model a classroom environment that says, <i>Being different is okay!</i> • Use resources from educational organizations such as www.teachingtolerance.org and www.adl.org
Perceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to paraphrase what they heard to check auditory processing. • Be certain that worksheets are uncluttered and contain graphic organizers that outline the main ideas, concepts, and connecting or supporting details (see www.inspiration.com, www.kidspiration.com). • Use fun art activities to improve visual discrimination, e.g., puzzles, sketching, cut-up jigsaw-like curriculum photographs (Google-images, www.pics4learning.com, www.puzzlemaker.com). • Incorporate more informal listening activities that test the students' focusing, e.g., stating the sequence, main idea, or relevant details of what they heard. • Use highlighting tape (www.crystalspringsbooks.com) or colored transparencies.
Sensory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face students who may be lip reading, but do not exaggerate words. • Be aware of the social isolation students with hearing and visual issues face. • Have appropriate manipulatives, e.g., talking calculators, magnification pages, books on tape, more visuals, clutter-free worksheets, visual dictionaries, or selections of thematic clip art, Braille library, or sign language books, if needed. • Address over- and undersensory stimulation, e.g., announcements, tactile triggers, and gradually sensitize or introduce sounds to students. • Increase <i>disability</i> awareness for peers. • Be sensitive to individual needs, not the label!
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have differing implements for students to manipulate, e.g., pencil grips; larger sized crayons; turkey baster instead of eyedropper in science experiments; larger-sized scissors for cutting, scissors with springs to leave them in an open position; letter, number, and picture stencils; computer access, e.g., different mouse, larger magnification screen, word prediction programs, use of individualized macros. • Speak eye level to students in wheelchairs to avoid neck strain for them. • Lessen physical requirements and replace assignment with appropriate content-related task, e.g., if students are playing volleyball, one student who could not physically participate can check the heart rate by measuring pulses, keep score, or monitor correct rotation.

The following picture passage, *A Rebus of the Many Hats Teachers Wear*, delivers a message about disability attitudes through the combination of words and visuals. Very often, students do not comprehend what they are reading and can be confused by vocabulary words that may be too difficult to pronounce. Even if students can pronounce the words, the words may not be within their bank of prior knowledge or understood within the context of the sentence or passage. For example, while reading *The Wish Giver*, by Bill Brittain, some students had difficulty answering a written comprehension question on whether one of the characters, Adam, should have been content, now that the water was plentiful. They knew the gist of the story but were not sure what the words *content* or *plentiful* meant. There are reading and software programs that circumvent this issue through picture-assisted literacy and content-related graphics to help struggling readers improve their fluency, decoding, comprehension, vocabulary,

and organizational skills. Stories and topics can range from Jackie Robinson to penguins to outlining concepts such as “the triumphs and tragedies of the Roman Empire.” The following rebus story delineates the possibilities available for educators to honor the learner with more visual-spatial skills to improve his or her literacy levels. On-target strategies sometimes involve changing the appearance of the reading landscape!

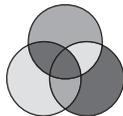
A Rebus of the Many Hats Teachers Wear



It's most important for educators to keep their strategies on target, even when dealing with some students, colleagues, parents, and the administration



may be like walking on eggshells. At all costs, tug-of-war situations should be avoided! The lines between



general education and special education are no longer clearly drawn. Services overlap, with the classroom viewed as the first place to

deliver interventions. There are sometimes no warning signs or clear-cut paths to follow. However, do not



let anyone fool you into thinking that students with disabilities are not capable of achieving great successes. As an educator, you just need to pitch your



best strategy and catch the results, being the coach along the way,



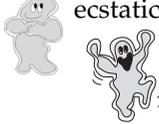
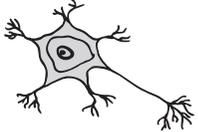
helping students to fend off negative attitudes.



Review and compare two items in Appendix B. Both are entitled, *Valuable and Applicable Things to Do in All Classrooms on a Daily Basis*, with 18 delineated points. One is written with pictures while the other has the words only. Which one's message is more strongly received or will be better remembered? The point is to honor learners who often appreciate accompanying visuals to reinforce abstract concepts. Teachers and students can construct their own *visual learning*

books to accompany or preteach more difficult reading passages and unfamiliar or abstract content and vocabulary. This chart depicts visuals with messages that better explain difficult vocabulary and concepts across the curriculum and grades.

Table 1.12 Content-Related Visuals for Grades K–12

Visuals Across Grades and Subjects	Science/Health	Social Studies/History/Economics	Math	Reading/Vocabulary
K–2	magnetism 	Kwanzaa 	9:00 	flour vs. flower 
3–5	eclipse 	fossil 	equations 	happy ecstatic 
6–8		 peasant vs. nobility	 pentagonal prism	multitasking 
9–12	neuron 	balancing the budget 	perpendicular 	capitalize on strengths 

Online Sites and Other Sources to Investigate for Visual Learners

- Eyewitness Books: <http://us.dk.com>
- Mayer-Johnson: <http://www.mayer-johnson.com>. Has Boardmaker software programs, cards, and many other products for symbol-based communication and learning for students.
- Online videos and teaching resources with district subscription: <http://www.unitedstreaming.com>
- Pics4Learning: <http://www.pics4learning.com>. A copyright-friendly image library for teachers and students with a wide range of content-related pictures.
- Picture-Assisted Reading and Writing Slater Software: www.slatersoftware.com
- Usborne Books: <http://www.usborneonline.com>
- Webs and outlines with related pictures: www.kidspiration.com, www.inspiration.com