

Preface

Inclusion Poem

Some don't know
The way inclusion will go
One thing is for sure
We definitely need some more
Better classroom ideas
And less teacher fears
More planned strategies
Focusing on abilities
Yes, more inclusion
And less confusion
More parents amicably involved
All conflicts mutually resolved
Less opposition
More transition
To the community
That's the reality
So forget the label
Remember all are able
In different ways to succeed
To count, laugh, smile, and read
Let's give all a turn
To understand and learn
So don't be rude
Figure out a way to include

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X MORE INCLUSION STRATEGIES THAT WORK!

How can students succeed in today’s standards-based classrooms? How can teachers instruct so that students are successful on high-stakes tests? What does an inclusion classroom look like? Why are some classrooms more successful than others? How do you instruct a student who can barely read, and get him or her to understand about plate tectonics, algebraic expressions, graphing inequalities, global economies, or how to use Excel? Or, do some students even need this knowledge to be included in their world? Well, the basic belief here is that there’s a world of knowledge that can be successfully delivered to students. Classroom successes are not limited to those with the most or least skills; rather, the educational goal is to advance the individual levels of all students.

The first thing required by all is a positive attitude. If you believe in all of the philosophical reasons for inclusion, you will find a way to make it work within your own teaching environment. Yes, there are many obstacles that might thwart your march forward, but the bottom line is simply this: Inclusion can and does work! Teachers with accepting attitudes can and do make a difference, when a game plan is followed. Just like a football coach would not allow the players to run onto the field without a strategy in play, teachers must also properly equip their students to successfully tackle each and every lesson.

This book approaches learning objectives from a different viewpoint. It begins with the philosophy of inclusion and standards, and then applies best practices to students’ strengths with specific curriculum examples. Research is meant to engage the reader to think beyond the rhetoric and apply the quotes to students, instructional strategies, and the curriculum. Individual subjects each have their own table, broken into grade divisions as shown here in Figure P-1. Standards-based objectives and skills are given for each subject/content area, listing a general fund of knowledge desired for grade divisions. These are shown near each other, allowing teachers across the grades to visually compare prior baseline knowledge in content areas for grades that precede and

Figure P-1

<i>Grades</i>	<i>Content Area/Skills:</i>
K-2	
3-5	
6-8	
9-12	

follow. Regardless of their grade level, individual students might need more, or in some cases less, instruction on some topics.

Vertical and horizontal alignments present current objectives, prior ones, and future goals on the same topic. Hence, students within the same classroom can be learning about one topic, with different objectives. Some students review objectives not achieved from prior grade levels, some work on grade-level objectives, while others are challenged with introductions to higher grade-level objectives. This type of setup combines topic-based learning with student-centered needs. Approaching teaching and learning this way concentrates more on increasing student knowledge, rather than covering individual subjects. Infusion of objectives across subjects and grades is thus an achievable result for teachers instructing and assessing students with different baseline knowledge levels within the same classroom.

Now that those objectives are known, what about moving forward with lessons that promote knowledge and skills with the best types of instructional strategies? All students have varying social, academic, behavioral, perceptual, and cognitive levels. As a matter of fact, all people around the world have these same varying needs and levels. One commonality does exist though, and that is the desire to be included in an accepting world. If teachers can not only deliver subject matter, but also make connections to life with palatable lessons that include spiraling, standards-based objectives that concentrate on students' strengths, everyone will move forward. Learning should not be a chore, but rather an entitlement enjoyed by all. *Joie de learning* is an intrinsic objective for educators to model and instill in their students. Most subjects, although they have specific standards, can also be taught in an interdisciplinary way that prepares students not only for the assessments, but also for lifelong learning.

Researchers support effective teaching practices across subject areas (Colwell, 2005; Downing, 2005; Franklin, 2005; Nunley, 2003; Odom et al., 2005; Ravitch, 2006; Scarpati, 2000; U.S. Dept of Education, 2005b; Wolfe, 2001), while educators have the arduous task of implementing those strategies. The plot thickens, as administrators can tangle or disentangle the accomplishment of these standards-based objectives, translating the learning into classroom realities or bureaucratic nightmares. Ultimately, students embrace or retreat from the instruction, depending upon the meaningful deliveries employed. My, what tangled educational webs we weave! Oh, but Charlotte was a wonderful little spider that managed to weave her web and help others. Inclusion is just as tenacious, with collaborative, masterfully prepared weavers who can capture inclusionary insights for all!