Seen, Heard, and Valued
To my children, Spencer and Maisie, for lending your personal stories and thoughts on inclusive practices as contributions to this work. The lessons learned from you have taught and inspired me more than has any academic pursuit.
Seen, Heard, and Valued
Universal Design for Learning and Beyond

Lee Ann Jung
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Foreword

Inclusion and belonging are topics near to my heart. In fact, the first book I ever wrote was for the PEAK parent information center and it focused on inclusive practices for students with disabilities. The field of inclusive schooling practices has come a long way since then and I’m pleased to see universal design for learning taking center stage. Early on, advocates for inclusive schooling practices focused on creating accommodations and modifications for students with disabilities such that they could access the regular classroom. Today, we realize that classrooms must change to ensure that all students are successful.

I very much appreciate the central message of this book, namely “what’s necessary for some is good for all.” That motto is more than a platitude; it serves as the guiding philosophy of the book. The examples throughout the book allow educators to create changes such that a wide range of students benefit and the educational enterprise is improved.

There are a few things that make this book unique. First, Lee Ann mobilizes the Visible Learning database, providing effect sizes and information about the various influences that are used to provide evidence for each of the recommendations. In doing so, the suggestions are grounded in research and are harder to dismiss by individuals who are stuck in an outdated mental model of schooling.

Second, Lee Ann provides concrete examples of how to implement universal design for learning by exploring:

1. how we engage our students and sustain their interest and persistence,
2. how we represent our instruction in ways that are accessible, helps us connect with students and improves their understanding, and
3. how we give options to students for their expression of learning.

In doing so, Lee Ann uses a commonly known framework but breathes new life into it. The examples and activities help readers re-think the support they provide to all students and simultaneously ensure that the students who challenge us most are not neglected or forgotten. In fact, this is one of the great aspects of this book. Equitable and inclusive schooling requires that we
embrace the variation that exists in our schools and build systems of support for all students to learn.

Third, Lee Ann tackles the assessment and grading question that has plagued inclusive schooling practices for decades. When I first began to support students with significant disabilities in regular high school classrooms in 1992, we were not sure what to put in the gradebook. Some educators said that it wasn’t “fair” for the student to get a letter grade without some sort of mark to indicate that there were modifications provided to the curriculum. In fact, some argued that students who received a modified curriculum should not earn a high school diploma. And a few even suggested that they should not participate in graduation ceremonies because they did not demonstrate the same levels of success as other students. Having said that, none of them were arguing against students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms, as was the case in many schools at the time. We just had a roadblock with grading. But that issue is solved in this book as Lee Ann provides options for students to demonstrate their understanding and offers suggestions for determining mastery of students’ learning.

In short, this is a useful resource and one that allows us all to consider the systems of support we create. As the late Dr. Maya Angelou suggested, do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better! The time is now; we do know better.

—Douglas Fisher
Lee Ann Jung, PhD, is founder of Lead Inclusion, Clinical Professor at San Diego State University, and a consultant to schools worldwide. A former special education teacher and administrator, Lee Ann now spends her time in schools, working shoulder-to-shoulder with teams in their efforts to improve systems and practice. She has consulted with schools in more than 30 countries and throughout the United States in the areas of universal design for learning, inclusion, intervention, and mastery assessment and grading. Lee Ann is the author of 7 books to date, numerous journal articles, and book chapters on inclusion, universal design, and assessment. She serves on the advisory board for Mastery Transcript Consortium, as section editor of The Routledge Encyclopedia of Education, and on the editorial board member for several professional journals. In her community, Lee Ann is a board member for Life Adventure Center, a local nonprofit with a mission of healing for those who have experienced trauma.

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Introduction

To meet the needs of all students, we have to meet the needs of each student.

—Johnny Collett

WHY DO WE SUCCEED?

Whether you’re a classroom teacher, an administrator, or a specialist, like a counselor, ELL teacher, or special education teacher, as an educator, you’ve chosen to devote your career to serve your world by educating young people. As a dedicated, service-oriented person, you look for ways to continually reflect and improve upon your practice and achieve higher outcomes with all of your students. And right now, you are carving out a bit of your own time to read about and reflect on ways to bring equity in outcomes to your classroom and school. In all likelihood, you aren’t paid the salary you deserve, and your students probably don’t thank you for your service, but by all other measures you are a successful, independent adult and vitally important to your community. Congratulations, and thank you for what you do! But how did you get here? Why did you succeed, while some of your peers struggle as adults? What was true of your circumstances and your efforts that caused you to arrive where you are today?

I remember as a child hearing stories of a community business owner bragging that he’d pulled himself out of poverty through tireless hard work. His family lived in abject poverty, but as a 19-year-old, without a high school education, he walked confidently into a bank, took out a loan, and started his own business—one that thrived in the small town until his retirement. In some ways, it’s fortunate that this man had the confidence to believe he could succeed because without such a belief in his abilities, he would’ve never walked into the bank.

Living in poverty, this business owner wouldn’t have described himself as being privileged. But he was white and male, and the year was 1959 in which the young man took out the small business loan in the Deep South. At that time, it’s without a doubt that no Black teen would’ve been given such consideration. I’m pretty sure a Black teen wouldn’t even have been welcomed inside the bank. Was it his effort or his privilege that gave him success? Should his hard work be discounted or minimized? Absolutely not.
But should he feel so arrogant as to believe it was solely his own efforts that created success, devoid of fortune, albeit seemingly imperceptible to him? Also, no. His effort contributed and was necessary, but without the context of privilege in which this effort was situated, no amount of hard work could have gotten him there.

The concepts of “internal locus of control” and “self-efficacy” are essential to understand as we think about successful outcomes. Internal locus of control is a person’s belief that they have a great deal of control within themselves over what happens to them (Rotter, 1966). Self-efficacy is a person’s belief that they have what it takes to make positive outcomes in their lives happen (Bandura, 1994). This business owner’s internal locus of control and strong self-efficacy were instrumental in his success, but also played a role in his denying the privilege that gave him the opportunity to walk into the bank. Instead, he and others in the community harbored resentment toward others for lacking the ability to “pull themselves up by the bootstraps,” blind to the lack of privilege afforded to many others living in poverty. Without the privilege of being a white male, he may not have gained the qualities of internal locus of control and self-efficacy that were active ingredients in his effort. In other words, his privilege not only opened doors for him but is likely an enormous contributor to why he even had the gumption to try.

As educators, we serve a student population who experiences the full gamut of support, risk, privilege, protection, trauma, and resilience. We wouldn’t be in the field of education if we didn’t believe we could meaningfully and significantly mediate how these experiences impact our students. Our entire purpose, almost universally, for choosing education as a career path is to “make a difference.” To realize this purpose, we embrace our jobs as vastly broader than only teachers of content, and instead identify as mentors who guide young humans to successful adulthood. And each one of us, from preschool teacher to higher education professor, plays a role in the chain of nurturing and adding to positive and protective factors students experience. But, frankly, “making a difference” is not measured in the performance of students who were going to succeed anyway. The most substantial difference is measured in our minority subpopulations of students, including our BIPOC students, LGBTQIA+ students, those who are new to the language of instruction, students with learning differences, those experiencing poverty, students who need behavioral support, those with disabilities, students who have had poor previous instruction, and those who have endured trauma. And we make a difference when we see, name, and diligently work to minimize marginalization in our school community for all subpopulations.
In your school, are each of these subgroups of students engaging, trying, and achieving at the same level as the full student population? Do they all have a sense of inclusion and belonging in the school community? Do they have an internal locus of control and strong self-efficacy? If not, there is an opportunity and an obligation to understand where the inequities are and to devote resources as a school to grow the equity and inclusion therein.

Throughout the book, we use dials like the one here to connect to Hattie’s research (Hattie, 2016) on the influences in education on students’ outcomes, focusing on those influences that have the potential to accelerate learning, or those with an effect size (Cohen’s $d$) above .40. Cohen’s $d$ is expressed in terms that are similar to a standard deviation. So, the influence of self-efficacy has an effect size of .65, then that influence makes 65% of a standard deviation difference in the child’s learning. This difference is one that matters!

Without an actionable course, calls for a whole-child approach, equity, and inclusion have only the weight of platitudes. The purpose of this book is to take these broad and lofty terms and outline specific strategies for educators to intentionally bring equity in learning outcomes to their classrooms, schools, and systems. We are going to dig into the research on the reasons that students engage and persist and succeed and pair this research with universal practices for every classroom to connect with and reach each student and meet their needs. Through case stories and examples, you will reflect deeply on classroom and school practices and how to engage and support each student along a path to lifelong learning. We will follow Ms. Talbert as she works to increase the equity in her classroom.

**REFLECTION**

When you think back to your childhood, you can certainly identify contributing factors that led you to do well in school, to graduate, and go on to attend college. Were there certain people and events or conditions that affected your success? What were the challenges that got in your way at times? When you encountered tough times in your
life, what, or who, helped you get through that and to persist toward your goal? What are your own, innate and learned qualities that shaped you into a successful adult? Is your success something that you created mostly through hard work, or do you see chance and other outside influences as a big part of your achievement? How might your success have changed if your demographics were different?