Inclusion in Action

edited by
Iva **Strnadová**
Michael **Arthur-Kelly**
Phil **Foreman**

SIXTH EDITION

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Guide to the text

As you read this text you will find a number of features in every chapter to enhance your study of Inclusive education and help you understand how the theory is applied in the real world.

BOOK FEATURES

Professional Knowledge Standards	Chapters
1. **Know students and how they learn**	
1.1 **Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11
1.2 **Understand how students learn** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.	4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
1.3 **Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds** Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13
1.4 **Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.	8, 9, 12
1.5 **Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
1.6 **Strategies to support full participation of students with disability** Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13
2. **Know the content and how to teach it**	
2.1 **Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.	4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11,12, 13
2.2 **Content selection and organisation** Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.	4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
2.3 **Curriculum, assessment and reporting** Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.	4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
2.4 **Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians** Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait	1, 8, 12

A **Mapping grid** shows how the content of the chapters relates to the Australian Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers.

CHAPTER OPENING FEATURES

CHAPTER 2

Legislation and policies supporting inclusive practice

Michael Arthur-Kelly and Phil Foreman

This chapter aims to:
2.1 Describe the development of principles and policies related to inclusive education for students with disability
2.2 Describe the important features of legislation for students with disability in the states and territories of Australia and in New Zealand
2.3 Describe the important aspects of policy in Australia and New Zealand for students with disability
2.4 Describe the important features of international legislation and policies for students with disability
2.5 Discuss the practice of inclusion, and the effect groups can have on educational policy.

Introduction

Including diverse students with disability in the regular classroom requires some specific practices on the part of teachers and their colleagues. Later chapters in this book provide examples of ways in which teachers can support a diversity of students in the regular classroom. For example, to meaningfully include students with additional needs, teachers must develop an understanding of the strengths and support needs of the students, and must make relevant adjustments or changes to the learning environment to assist these students.

Identify the key concepts you will engage with through the **Learning objectives** at the start of each chapter.

Refer to the **Introduction** for a contextualised summary of the chapter.

FEATURES WITHIN CHAPTERS

Narratives from parents, students, teachers and other professionals link the theory to real-life situations.

NARRATIVE 9.3

Response to intervention: Tier 3, spelling

'Matthew' is currently in Year Three and has moderate bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. Through observation in classroom activities, in addition to the Oral and Written Language Scales assessment, it was noted that Matthew was below same-age peers in recognition and understanding of suffixes. Matthew tends to mishear the ends of words and finds understanding and applying verb tense challenging.

Tier 3 intervention involved Matthew being engaged in one-on-one follow-up activities to extend and consolidate skills in understanding basic suffixes. A past and present verb tense focus incorporated simple errors from Matthew's writing such as walk, walked, walking and help, helped, helping. Matthew worked with the teacher to visually and aurally identify the -ed and -ing suffixes.

Matthew and the teacher worked together using a basic, custom-designed graphic organiser (see **Figure 9.24**) to focus explicitly on the two base word and suffix combinations. This supported Matthew to hear the base words and morphemes used in context and also see them visually within written text, leading to further discussion of related word families to enable Matthew to recognise common patterns.

Given that writing is a less preferred area of study for Matthew, the session included online interactive games from Vocabulary Spelling City (Learning City, n.d.) and self-constructed word lists and associated games were used, targeting the suffixes in focus. Following this, flip books (Cecil et al., 2017) were created for further

Amanda Boelen

Suffixes: Present and Past Tense

Walk → Walking → I like walking to school.

Walk → Walked → I walked home from school.

NEW Evidence-based practice boxes contain practical examples, teaching tips, and other materials that illustrate practical approaches to teaching and that assist in good inclusive practice.
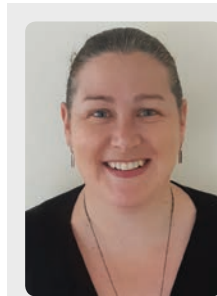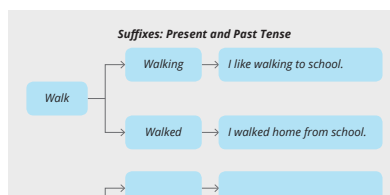
EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE 9.1

Developing vocabulary through shared book reading

NEW

1 Draw attention to words which children may not know and provide child-friendly definitions for these words as the story is being read: e.g. 'a snore is a loud sound that some people or animals make when they are sleeping'. Point to illustrations representing the words if they are available or model actions like snoring and ask children to join in.
2 Have conversations with children about new words and ask questions relating to the new word, e.g. Have you heard someone snoring?
3 Re-read books several times to provide multiple exposures to the new words and gradually build children's understanding of the new words and the story.
4 Engage children in retelling the story and discussing how the new words and concepts relate to their own experiences.
5 Integrate new words from book readings into other activities during the day.

Source: Adapted from Snell et al. (2015)

Reflect on this reminders prompt you to critically analyse important concepts and reflect on your own experiences and beliefs about the processes of learning and teaching.

💬 REFLECT ON THIS

Using AITSL Graduate Standard 4.1 (Support student participation: Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities), reflect on what activities in a classroom may increase engagement of the diversity of students in the classroom and those activities that may have the opposite effect. Come back to your reflections at the end of the chapter and see whether these have changed.

Meet real teachers in the **A teacher reflects** feature, and gain insights into how inclusive practices inform their day-to-day teaching.

A TEACHER REFLECTS

Cloe, first year secondary social sciences teacher, rural South Australia

I started teaching in a rural school that was fairly isolated, which was a shock for an urban dweller like me! I found that I had a number of students with disability in my classes and was having difficulty meeting all their additional needs at once. The learning and support teacher at the school offered to assist me in planning and preparing lessons. She didn't offer to prepare them for me, but to work alongside me to provide advice and some examples. She even offered to come into the room, if I was comfortable with that, to share a lesson or two where we would team-teach part of a topic. She also suggested some changes in assessment and reporting for one student who had high support needs. I learnt more from being supported than I would have done if she had simply taken over the planning or sent a learning support assistant into the room. I maintained responsibility and the support teacher did just that – supported me.

FEATURES WITHIN CHAPTERS

↪ Example 1

Teacher A: 'Scott had another one of his meltdowns this morning. Then the whole session went pear-shaped'.

Teacher B: 'Oh no, you poor thing – that is so frustrating. He has got some real behaviour issues going on.'

Teacher A: 'It seems every time I try to get him involved in a group activity, he just loses it. I'm sure some of it is just to get under my skin!'

Teacher B: Yeah, he's got to learn how to get on with others.'

Teacher A: I know, and I am going to make sure that he does!'

Guided example boxes help you contextualise theory by providing immediate examples alongside learning concepts.

negative reinforcement
This occurs when a behaviour allows the person to escape from something that they would otherwise find aversive and to avoid an unwanted consequence.

In behavioural terms, both are **negatively reinforced** by the teacher reactions. By the student displaying the behaviour and the subsequent teacher actions, the teacher is negatively reinforced by having peace in the room and the student out of the room. The student is negatively reinforced by getting out of the work and the room. Importantly, the student has communicated that the work is beyond her ability, and this should be noted by the teacher, particularly if the student does not have the skill to communicate frustrations in other ways.

From a social skills perspective, students who display these behaviours are considered to have interfering problem behaviours (Gresham, 2017). Gresham sees these as being in three categories:

Important **Key terms** are marked in bold in the text and **defined in the margin** when they are used for the first time.

ICONS

✓ **Fact sheet icons** in the margins indicate where additional background information is available on common forms of diversity. When you see this icon, ask your instructor for access to the fact sheet that relates to that topic.

AC **ACARA (AC) icons** indicate material from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA.

END-OF-CHAPTER FEATURES

At the end of each chapter you will find several tools to help you to review, practise and extend your knowledge of the key learning objectives.

STUDY TOOLS

Summary

This chapter has focused on the role of the regular national and jurisdictional curricula that heavily influence mainstream classroom teaching. The approach has been to examine ways in which the curriculum can be adjusted to meet the requirements of students with disability, rather than developing discrete curricula or teaching models that may exacerbate differences rather than enhance inclusion for all students in the class. Strategies that have been examined include the adjustment of individual teaching materials through adjusting their readability and through the inclusion of language and reading activities that are appropriate to the students' instructional levels. The difficulties of using text-based materials and the challenges of finding suitable alternatives have been acknowledged, considering the heavy reliance placed on them, particularly by secondary teachers. The rapid expansion of alternative materials through technological sources, such as the internet, is expanding options, but these still need adjustments in many cases for students with disability.

Review your understanding of the key chapter topics with the **Summary**.

Discussion questions

1   What topics would you include in a half-day staff development session on adjusting curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment for students with disability in your mainstream school?
2   How can you make assessment tasks relevant for all students in the class?
3   What are the types of curriculum, learning and teaching supports required for students with high support needs and how can they be provided?

Individual activities

1   Take a topic in your teaching area and identify the 'must know' content and the vocabulary that should be placed in each of the three categories. Compare your results with those of a colleague.
2   Take an existing teaching material and adjust it for use by students with an instructional level at least three grades above or below the grade level for which the teaching material was originally designed.

Test your knowledge and consolidate your learning through the **Discussion questions**, **Individual activities**, and **Group activities**.

Group activities

1   As a small group, take a curriculum topic and work through the process of identifying the critical curriculum content, adjusting the vocabulary and then developing a series of sample teaching materials for the topic that demonstrate the importance of adjusting curriculum, reduced vocabulary and appropriate presentation styles. Also prepare an adapted assessment task for the same topic. Share the outcomes with other groups in the same or different curriculum areas.
2   Have each member of the group examine a different technological approach to supporting students with disability in the classroom (e.g. digital books, iPad applications, Read and Write Gold). Discuss your findings with the group and how they could be used in the classroom.

END-OF-CHAPTER FEATURES

Discover high-quality online educational resources to support your study in education with the **Weblinks** lists.

Weblinks

ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority website – Student Diversity section (includes illustrations of practice) https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/

AFIRM (Autism Focused Intervention Resources and Modules) https://afirm.fpg.unc.edu/afirm-modules

AITSL (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership) https://www.aitsl.edu.au/research/spotlight/inclusive-education-teaching-students-with-disability

ASDAN Education for alternative UK curriculum programs http://www.asdan.org.uk/

Center for Applied Special Technology http://www.cast.org

English as an Additional Language or Dialect Teacher Resource. https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/EALD_Resource_-_EALD_Learning_Progression.pdf

IES – What Works Clearing House: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

Extend your understanding with the suggested **Recommended reading** and extensive **References** relevant to each chapter.

Recommended reading

Boyle, C., & Topping, K. (2012). *What works in inclusion?* Berkshire: Open University Press.

Carson, K., & Walker, P. (2015). The Australian Curriculum: Assessment practices for diverse learners. In H. Askell-Williams. *Transforming the future of learning with educational research* (pp. 167–187). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Hehir, T., & Katzman, L. I. (2012). *Effective inclusive schools: designing successful schoolwide programs*. Indianapolis, IN: Jossey-Bass.

Kuhl, S., Pagliano, P., & Boon, H. (2015). 'In the too hard basket': issues faced by 20 rural Australian teachers when students with disabilities are included in their secondary classes. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 19*, 697–709.

Loreman, T., Deppeler, J., & Harvey, D. (2nd edn). (2010). *Inclusive education: supporting diversity in the classroom*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.

References

Abell, M. M., Bauder, D. K., & Simmons, T. J. (2005). Access to the general curriculum: a curriculum and instructional perspective for educators. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 41*, 82–86.

ACARA (n.d.). *CASE Planning Pathway*. Retrieved from https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/planning-for-student-diversity/steps-to-personalise-learning-case/

ACARA (n.d.). *Students with disability – illustrations of personalised learning*. Retrieved from https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/resources/student-diversity/

ACARA (n.d.). *Teaching resources for students from EAL/D backgrounds* https://docs.acara.edu.au/resources/EALD_Learning_Progression_revised_February_2014.pdf

ACT Department of Education and Training (2013). *Every chance to learn: curriculum framework for ACT schools preschool to year 10*. Canberra: Author. https://portfolio.canberra.edu.au/artefact/file/download.php?file=176673&view=46411

Alchin, G. (2014). Is reasonable adjustment a deficit ideology? *Special Education Perspectives, 23*, 3–6.

Armstrong, F. (2007). Disability, education, and space. In K. N. Gulson & D. C. Symes (Eds), *Spatial theories in education: policy and geography matters* (pp. 96–100). New York, NY: Routledge.

Arthur-Kelly, M. (2017). Calibrating Professional Learning Approaches for Teachers in Inclusive Classrooms in the Context of Implementation. *Science Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Education.*

END-OF-BOOK FEATURES

At the back of the book you will find **appendices** of **common abbreviations and shortened forms**, and one comprising a **full list of fact sheets**.

Guide to the online resources

Cengage is pleased to provide you with a selection of resources that will help you to prepare your lectures and assessments, when you choose this textbook for your course.
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MindTap for Strnadová's *Inclusion in Action* is full of innovative resources to support critical thinking, and help your students move from memorisation to mastery! Includes:
- *Inclusion in Action* 6th edition eBook
- Classroom videos
- Revision quizzes
- And more

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

The **Instructor's guide** includes:
- Learning objectives
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- Suggested responses to Narrative discussion questions and Reflect on this activities
- Solutions to end-of-chapter activities
- Chapter video with questions and activities

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FOR THE STUDENT

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Preface

The focus of this book is on how schools can become inclusive communities, providing optimal learning environments for a wide diversity of students. The editors and chapter authors have a strong view that the basis for inclusive education is good teaching. For this reason, much of this book is about teaching rather than about differences or disability. If all teachers focus on the needs of the individual students in their classes, inclusive educational processes will follow. The concepts presented are about processes such as adapting *curriculum to meet individual needs*, *planning teaching strategies*, *using evidence-based practices*, *applying whole-school approaches*, *encouraging positive interactions*, *ensuring smooth transitions* and *working collaboratively*. These concepts are as applicable in regular education as they are in 'special' education, and they apply to students with a wide range of abilities (or disabilities). The book therefore focuses on the diversity of students attending regular schools, and the strategies that can be used to optimise the educational experiences of all students. As a result, the various chapters in this book include reference to Indigenous students, students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D students), gifted and talented students, and students with a range of additional education support needs.

The approach in this book does not generally attempt to link particular teaching strategies to particular forms of disability or diversity. It is wrong to assume that identification of a disability or additional need will indicate the type of teaching approach to be taken. For example, knowing that a student has Down syndrome or cerebral palsy or spina bifida or is gifted and talented does not tell us much about the teaching approach we need to take for that student. In some situations, particular approaches have proven useful. For example, there are some specific suggestions in this book about teaching students who are on the autism spectrum, but even these should not be seen as a general recipe. As with any other student, we would want to assess an individual student's current attainments, skills and strengths, and set some educational goals based on a broad-based assessment. It is also recognised that there are specialised teaching approaches for students with significant sensory disabilities (vision or hearing loss), and these are not covered specifically in this text. Teachers can access information about specific disabilities when they have a student with that disability in their class, and there are fact sheets on disability and diversity on the website. Parents are usually experts on their child's disability or additional needs. The internet is also a source of the most up-to-date information about particular aspects of diversity, and website references are provided at the end of each chapter. However, for most students, the classroom teaching approach is determined by careful assessment of their individual educational needs.
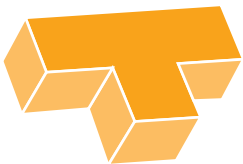
The book is divided into four parts. The first part sets the scene by providing an overview of concepts, principles, legislation and policy related to inclusion, with a focus on inclusive practices in the school. The second part examines effective teaching and learning practices, including curriculum adaptation, planning for teaching and supporting positive behaviour. The third part deals with specific difficulties in communication, literacy and numeracy, which occur in many students with a disability. The final section examines inclusive practice in three common school divisions: early childhood education, primary schooling and secondary schools transitioning into post-school options.

The book can be used as the basis for a semester-long course for undergraduate and postgraduate students. An online instructors' manual is available which assists lecturers and tutors with end-of-chapter activities and within-chapter discussion questions. There are also chapter videos and other instructor resources, and an online course website for students, provided by the publishers.

We wish all readers, whether they be teachers, administrators or prospective teachers, successful experiences in their contribution to the development of inclusive classrooms and schools.

Iva Strnadová, Michael Arthur-Kelly, and Phil Foreman, 2021

Note on terminology

We respectfully acknowledge that there are differences in the ways people talk about disability. Some people with disability prefer person-first language, which emphasises the principle of people first, disability second (e.g., a student with intellectual disability). Others prefer identity-first language (e.g., autistic student). In this book we use person-first language, which reflects the predominant usage in the Australian and international context, and aligns with the editors' philosophy. However, respectful of the voices of many autistic people who believe that autism makes them who they are, and is therefore a critical part of their identity, we use the term 'student on the autism spectrum', which has been recognised in the latest research (Bury et al., 2020) as one of the more acceptable terms for this community.

Reference:

Bury, S. M., Jellett, R., Spoor, J. R., & Hedley, D. (2020). 'It Defines Who I Am' or 'It's Something I Have': What Language Do [Autistic] Australian Adults [on the Autism Spectrum] Prefer? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04425-3
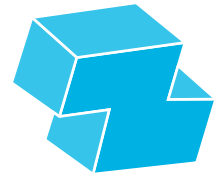
New to this edition

This new edition brings exciting changes. First of all, there is a stronger emphasis on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI), and evidence-based practices (EBPs) as themes woven throughout the book. Furthermore, we have introduced a new chapter, authored by Professor Iva Strnadová and Professor Michael Wehmeyer: Chapter 7, 'Transitions, self-determination and twenty-first-century skills'. This chapter details critical transitions between early childhood education, primary and secondary schooling and developing self-determination and self-advocacy in children.

About the authors

Dedication

ROBERT CONWAY died in early 2020 after a short period of illness. The Editors and Contributors of this edition wish to pay tribute to his huge contribution to the field of special and inclusive education, and extend their condolences to his family. Bob, as he was affectionately known, was an Emeritus Professor at Flinders University where he served as Dean of Education from 2007 to 2012. Prior to this role he was a leader in special education at The University of Newcastle, playing several roles including Director of the Special Education Centre, with a background as a teacher in both mainstream and special education. His main research centred on the area of students with behaviour problems in both mainstream and specialist settings. He worked with education systems to improve the management of students with behaviour problems, particularly in the ways in which student management, learning and teaching could be addressed concurrently. He also had a strong interest in the inclusion of students with a range of learning needs in mainstream education and the ways in which schools and education systems can become more inclusive by meeting the needs of all students. He was a member of the Australian Government's former Schools and Disability Advisory Council. Bob is greatly missed by all those who knew him, and his legacy in the field is substantial.
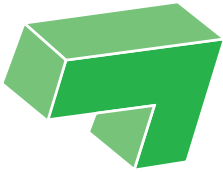
Editors

IVA STRNADOVÁ is Professor in Special Education and Disability Studies at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Her research aims to contribute to better understanding and the improvement of the life experiences of people with disabilities. Combining research with advocacy is essential in her research program, which builds on supporting the self-determination (including self-advocacy) of people with intellectual disabilities, and is grounded in an innovative inclusive research approach, in which people with intellectual disabilities are included in the role of researcher.

She has a particular research interest in the wellbeing of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families over the life span, diverse transitions in lives of people with disabilities (particularly intellectual disabilities and autism); girls and women with intellectual disabilities; parents with intellectual disabilities; inclusive research; issues relevant to people with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities; and approaches giving voice to people with intellectual disabilities (e.g., Photovoice, body mapping).

MICHAEL ARTHUR-KELLY moved into teacher education following a range of teaching experiences in special and regular schools, working first at Charles Sturt University and then at The University of Newcastle. He is currently a Conjoint Professor in the School of Education at The University of Newcastle, and enjoys a balance of teaching and professional contributions to his field and projects centred on the translation of research to leading practice. Specific areas he has worked in include instructional design, professional development for teachers in behaviour and communication support, and the identification of curricular and instructional approaches to maximise engagement in students with multiple and complex additional needs.

PHIL FOREMAN is Emeritus Professor of Education at The University of Newcastle. He was Chair of the NSW Institute of Teachers from 2007–2013, and was Professor and Dean of Education at The University of Newcastle from 2002–2008. Prior to that he was Director of the University's Special Education Centre. He was Editor of the *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability* from 1992–2002, and remains an Associate Editor. He is also an Associate Editor of the *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*. He was foundation president of Newcastle & Hunter Community Access and Disability Advocacy Service Hunter. He is a Member of the Guardianship and Administrative Divisions of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. In 2013 he was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for services to special education and to people with a disability.

Contributors

THERESE M. CUMMING is a Professor of Special Education in the School of Education and Academic Lead Education at the UNSW Disability Innovation Institute. Therese is a Scientia Education Academy Fellow and has had extensive leadership experiences in learning and teaching. Her teaching and research focus on promoting the use of evidence-based practices to support the learning and behaviour of students with disabilities and the use of technology to create inclusive, accessible, and engaging learning environments.

KERRY DALLY is a senior lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. She teaches in the postgraduate program in the areas of early childhood intervention, learning difficulties, and social-emotional learning and positive behaviour support. She is a past recipient of the Australian Resource Educators Association award for excellence in research in the field of learning difficulties and the Australian Early Childhood Doctoral Thesis award. Her current research interests encompass inclusive education, student self-efficacy and wellbeing, and whole-school approaches to creating supportive learning environments.
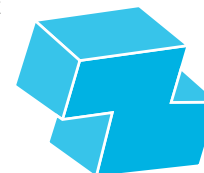
MICHAEL DAVIES (B Econ, Grad Dip Psych, M App Psych, PhD) is Associate Professor and the Program Leader in Counselling at the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors and an Adjunct Associate Professor at Griffith University in Brisbane, where he was an academic for 30 years. Prior to academia he worked for 5 years as a Counselling Psychologist with long-term unemployed adults, those undertaking rehabilitation, and students regarding their vocational choice. Seven years working with family members of people with disabilities, and training residential staff supporting people with severe intellectual disabilities followed before becoming a lecturer. Over 30 years at Griffith University he taught counselling and interpersonal psychology among many other subject areas, especially to special education teachers in training. He was also Program Leader in Special Education at Griffith University. Since February 2017 he has led the team of academics at AIPC and teaches counselling skills and ethics in undergraduate and postgraduate courses. His research includes over 70 publications across the interconnecting themes of social skills, stress and coping, and transitions from school to post-school life and this work has been presented to many academic and practitioner communities nationally and internationally.

JUDITH FOGGETT is a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle. She program coordinates and teaches the undergraduate special education programs and is the Program Convenor for the Master of Special and Inclusive Education for both primary and secondary special education. Judith's area of expertise is in the inclusion of students with learning and behaviour problems in regular and special school settings, emotional disturbance,

mental health and whole-school approaches. Judith has had extensive experience teaching in mainstream and support classes in infants, primary and secondary schools in isolated, Indigenous, rural and suburban communities. Her area of research explores links and engagement in learning through behaviour support, the professional learning of teachers and staff collaboration.

SARAH HOPKINS is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University and has many years of experience in primary and secondary teacher education. Her current research is focused on understanding and addressing students' difficulties learning mathematics and preparing teachers for inclusive classrooms. Sarah leads a collaborative project between Monash University and Wallara (a community-based organisation) called the Keep on Learning (KoL) program. The KoL program involves pre-service mainstream teachers working with young adults with intellectual disability (students) in a literacy and numeracy tutoring program. Along with her colleagues, she has investigated the benefits of the KoL program for pre-service teachers in terms of preparing them to teach in inclusive classrooms and the benefits for students in terms of their learning outcomes and wellbeing.

SALLY HOWELL has been involved in the education of students with special needs both as a teacher and special education consultant for many years. This has involved working in public, independent and Catholic schools. Sally has worked as a special education lecturer at Macquarie University Special Education Centre (MUSEC) in the areas of numeracy instruction, research methods and behaviour management. Sally is currently the Principal of MUSEC School. Sally has provided advice to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) regarding curriculum and assessment for students with a disability. She has expertise in assessment and programming for students with difficulties in learning, particularly in the areas of numeracy and reading. Sally has extensive experience working collaboratively with parents and schools to support students with special needs in both inclusive and specialist settings. Sally's research focus has been on number sense as a predictor of early mathematics achievement and on schema-based instruction applied to mathematics' problem solving.

MARTIN HOWES has been teaching in both primary and high schools over the past eleven years. After graduating with honours from the University of Newcastle with a Bachelor of Teaching (Special Education)/Bachelor of Arts degree, he started his teaching career as a learning support teacher. His varied teaching experiences have included a period of relieving as an assistant principal of a support unit, a mainstream class teacher and a wellbeing teacher in primary schools, as well as a special education teacher in a high school support unit setting. He is currently an assistant principal and learning support coordinator in a primary school. His interests are in learning support for students with additional educational needs and technology in education.

CORAL KEMP is an experienced practitioner, consultant, program director, teacher educator, and researcher in the field of early childhood intervention. Coral's practical experience has included: special educator on a transdisciplinary home-based early intervention team, preschool special education consultant for the NSW Department of Education, and Academic Team Leader of the Early Years programs at Macquarie University. During her time at Macquarie, Coral won a federal grant to establish an inclusion support program for children with disabilities in childcare centres in predominantly disadvantaged areas of Sydney. Coral is a member of the coordinating committee for the International Society on Early Intervention, Honorary Senior Lecturer

at Macquarie University and member of the Board of the STaR Association, which supports children with disabilities in regular childcare. Coral has published her research on early childhood inclusion in Australian and international peer-reviewed journals.

CARL LEONARD is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education and Co-Coordinator of the Master of Special and Inclusive Education Program at The University of Newcastle, Australia. He has research interests in holistic, innovative, communication-rich leadership structures aligning a core focus on *wellbeing*; teaching and learning structures embedded in implementation science; and universal design for learning as the springboard for success. Carl worked in schools for 28 years in various teaching, leadership and consultancy positions as an advocate for public education, inclusivity and diversity

Simultaneous to this, Carl also lectured in the postgraduate programs at The University of Newcastle, aiming to foster the growth and development of the current and next generation of teaching professionals. In addition to working full-time in schools up until mid-2019, Carl has achieved significant scholarly output including one sole-authored book, a range of journal articles and presentations at national and international conferences.

MICHELLE RALSTON has extensive experience in mainstream and special education, teaching children from 3 years of age through to 18-year-olds. She has led whole school change in literacy and inclusion in her roles as learning-support team coordinator, assistant principal, itinerant communication/language disorders and learning support teacher within mainstream schools. She lectures at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in early childhood, primary and secondary inclusive and special education, collaboration, learning difficulties, communication disorders, positive behaviour support, social emotional learning, learning difficulties, disability discrimination legislation and education policy. Her current research interests include the Disability Standards for Education and related policies, learning and development experiences for school staff, and the role of school leaders in promoting inclusive practice.
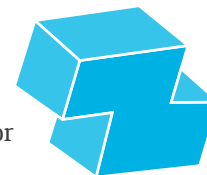
UMESH SHARMA is Professor in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia where he is the Academic Head of the Educational Psychology and Inclusive Education Community. Umesh's research programs in the area of disability and inclusive education span India, Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa as well as Australia, Canada, USA and New Zealand. He is the chief co-editor of the *Australasian Journal of Special Education* and the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Inclusive and Special Education*. He has authored over 150 academic articles, book chapters and edited books that focus on various aspects of inclusive education. His co-authored book *A Guide to Promoting a Positive Classroom Environment* was the recipient of the International Book Prize Award from the Exceptionality Education International. He was recently (2019) named the top Special Education Researcher (Field Leader) in Australia based on the impact of his work locally and internationally by the Australian Chief Scientist https://specialreports.theaustralian.com.au/1540291/. His main areas of research are: positive behaviour support, inclusive education for disadvantaged children and policy and practice in special and inclusive education.

DEAN SUTHERLAND is an Associate Professor in the School of Psychology, Speech and Hearing at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand. His research focuses on communication, education and parent/teacher-child interactions, in particular supporting children and young people (and their families) who experience difficulty developing or retaining communication skills. This work involves working with diverse populations, including children with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental and neurological conditions such as cerebral palsy.

MICHAEL L. WEHMEYER, PhD is the Ross and Mariana Beach Distinguished Professor of Special Education; Chair of the Department of Special Education; and Director and Senior Scientist, Beach Center on Disability; all at the University of Kansas. His research and scholarly work has focused on issues pertaining to self-determination, positive psychology and disability, transition to adulthood, the education and inclusion of students with severe disabilities, conceptualising intellectual disability, and technology use by people with cognitive disabilities.

Acknowledgements

Standards mapping grid

This book is designed to assist readers to achieve the Australian Professional Standards for Graduate Teachers. The following grid shows how the content of particular chapters contributes to the Standards.

Professional Knowledge Standards	Chapters
1. **Know students and how they learn**	
1.1 **Physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning.	4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11
1.2 **Understand how students learn** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.	4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
1.3 **Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds** Demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies that are responsive to the learning strengths and needs of students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.	1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13
1.4 **Strategies for teaching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students** Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of the impact of culture, cultural identity and linguistic background on the education of students from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds.	8, 9, 12
1.5 **Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of strategies for differentiating teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
1.6 **Strategies to support full participation of students with disability** Demonstrate broad knowledge and understanding of legislative requirements and teaching strategies that support participation and learning of students with disability.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13
2. **Know the content and how to teach it**	
2.1 **Content and teaching strategies of the teaching area** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the concepts, substance and structure of the content and teaching strategies of the teaching area.	4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11,12, 13
2.2 **Content selection and organisation** Organise content into an effective learning and teaching sequence.	4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
2.3 **Curriculum, assessment and reporting** Use curriculum, assessment and reporting knowledge to design learning sequences and lesson plans.	4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13
2.4 **Understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to promote reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians** Demonstrate broad knowledge of, understanding of and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and languages.	1, 8, 12
2.5 **Literacy and numeracy strategies** Know and understand literacy and numeracy teaching strategies and their application in teaching areas.	4, 8, 9, 10
2.6 **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** Implement teaching strategies for using ICT to expand curriculum learning opportunities for students.	3, 4, 5, 8, 12

Professional Knowledge Standards	Chapters
3. **Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning**	
3.1 **Establish challenging learning goals** Set learning goals that provide achievable challenges for students of varying abilities and characteristics.	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
3.2 **Plan, structure and sequence learning programs** Plan lesson sequences using knowledge of student learning, content and effective teaching strategies.	4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13
3.3 **Use teaching strategies** Include a range of teaching strategies.	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13
3.4 **Select and use resources** Demonstrate knowledge of a range of resources, including ICT, that engage students in their learning.	3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11
3.5 **Use effective classroom communication** Demonstrate a range of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to support student engagement.	4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13
3.6 **Evaluate and improve teaching programs** Demonstrate broad knowledge of strategies that can be used to evaluate teaching programs to improve student learning.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
3.7 **Engage parents/carers in the educative process** Describe a broad range of strategies for involving parents/carers in the educative process.	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13
4. **Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments**	
4.1 **Support student participation** Identify strategies to support inclusive student participation and engagement in classroom activities.	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12,13
4.2 **Manage classroom activities** Demonstrate the capacity to organise classroom activities and provide clear directions.	3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13
4.3 **Manage challenging behaviour** Demonstrate knowledge of practical approaches to manage challenging behaviour.	6, 8, 11
4.4 **Maintain student safety** Describe strategies that support students' wellbeing and safety working within school and/or system, curriculum and legislative requirements.	6, 8
4.5 **Use ICT safely, responsibly and ethically** Demonstrate an understanding of the relevant issues and the strategies available to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of ICT in learning and teaching.	4, 8
5. **Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning**	
5.1 **Assess student learning** Demonstrate understanding of assessment strategies, including informal and formal, diagnostic, formative and summative approaches to assess student learning.	3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10,12, 13
5.2 **Provide feedback to students on their learning** Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose of providing timely and appropriate feedback to students about their learning.	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13
5.3 **Make consistent and comparable judgements** Demonstrate understanding of assessment moderation and its application to support consistent and comparable judgements of student learning.	4, 5, 10

Professional Knowledge Standards		Chapters
5.4	**Interpret student data** Demonstrate the capacity to interpret student assessment data to evaluate student learning and modify teaching practice.	4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13
5.5	**Report on student achievement** Demonstrate understanding of a range of strategies for reporting to students and parents/carers and the purpose of keeping accurate and reliable records of student achievement.	4, 5, 6, 11, 12
6.	**Engage in professional learning**	
6.1	**Identify and plan professional learning needs** Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the National Professional Standards for Teachers in identifying professional learning needs.	4, 6, 12
6.2	**Engage in professional learning and improve practice** Understand the relevant and appropriate sources of professional learning for teachers.	3, 4, 6, 8, 12
6.3	**Engage with colleagues and improve practice** Seek and apply constructive feedback from supervisors and teachers to improve teaching practices.	3, 4, 6, 12
6.4	**Apply professional learning and improve student learning** Demonstrate an understanding of the rationale for continued professional learning and the implications for improved student learning.	3, 4, 5, 6, 8,12
7.	**Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community**	
7.1	**Meet professional ethics and responsibilities** Understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.	1, 2, 4, 6
7.2	**Comply with legislative, administrative and organisational requirements** Understand the relevant legislative, administrative and organisational policies and processes required for teachers according to school stage.	2, 3, 4, 6, 13
7.3	**Engage with the parents/carers** Understand strategies for working effectively, sensitively and confidentially with parents/carers.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13
7.4	**Engage with professional teaching networks and broader communities** Understand the role of external professionals and community representatives in broadening teachers' professional knowledge and practice.	3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13

PART A

INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Introducing inclusion in education

Iva Strnadová and Phil Foreman

This chapter aims to:

1.1 Provide an overview of principles that underlie inclusive practices

1.2 Explain the concept of disability

1.3 Identify other forms of diversity

1.4 Explain terminology and concepts related to inclusive practice

1.5 Explain the impact of the use of language about disability and diversity

1.6 Locate inclusion as part of a range of educational responses

1.7 Provide an overview of approaches to teaching students with a disability in regular classes

1.8 Explore diversity across the lifespan

1.9 Myths and facts about disability and diversity

1.10 Explore the future of inclusion

Introduction

diversity
Reflects the wide variation in educational needs of students in contemporary classrooms and the need to be aware of factors related to their ethnic, cultural and social backgrounds, their special abilities and, if relevant, their disabilities.

disability
The functional consequence of an impairment. For example, because of the impairment of spina bifida, the disability may be that a person is unable to walk without the assistance of crutches.

Teachers in the twenty-first century expect to have a **diversity** of students in their classes. The term 'diversity' may refer to students' cultural backgrounds, their social and family backgrounds, their ethnic origins, their ability level or their functional level. For classrooms to be optimal learning environments, teachers need to understand the diversity of their students, and to provide appropriate programs and learning conditions. In the past, many classes in Australia and New Zealand were not very diverse, often containing students from similar backgrounds and only rarely having a student with a significant disability. However, teachers are now likely to have students from many different countries, from varying religious and ethnic backgrounds, and from a variety of family arrangements including nuclear families, single parent families, shared parenting families, and same-sex parent families. They are also likely to, at some stage, teach students with a diagnosed **disability**. It is the successful inclusion of a diversity of students, including in particular those who have a disability, that is the primary focus of this book.

Most contemporary classrooms will include one or more students with a diagnosed intellectual, physical, **sensory** or **learning disability**. The recent Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD, 2020) in Australia has also highlighted areas of focus such as cognitive, sensory and social/emotional domains, and the fact that students may not have a diagnosis and yet have real and important learning needs (NCCD uses the term 'imputed disability'). This inclusion of students with a range of

needs that happens in regular classrooms reflects the widespread agreement that people with a disability have a right to participate fully in the community. Consequently, many parents of students with a disability choose to send their child to their local school rather than to a special school or unit. The prospect of having students with a disability in their classes may cause concern for some teachers, but these concerns are often misplaced. Good teaching provides for the individual needs of all students (see **Figure 1.1**), and challenges can come from many students, including those with or without a disability.

sensory disability
Impairment of vision or hearing, including deafness and blindness.

learning disability (or difficulty)
An impairment in one or more of the processes involved in using spoken or written language. This may particularly show itself in problems with reading, writing, spelling, speaking, listening and mathematical calculations. (In the UK, intellectual disability is referred to as 'learning disability', which is a different concept.)

FIGURE 1.1 Good teaching provides for individual needs

Some teachers will find that a child with a diagnosed disability is less challenging than other students in the class. The example of Mia, in **Narrative 1.1**, illustrates this.

NARRATIVE 1.1

Mia's considerations

Mia is a 12-year-old girl who is paralysed from the waist down as a result of a car accident when she was 7 years old.

She is about to commence at her local high school in a large country town. She uses an electric wheelchair. Her academic work is above average. She would like to work on web design when she leaves school.

Some planning is needed before Mia arrives. Perhaps a learning support team will be established, with Mia, her family, the year teacher and a learning support consultant from the school or region. Among the questions the team will consider are:

- How will Mia deal with the problem of stairs?
- Are there any obstructions to her wheelchair?

✓ **FACT SHEET**

Students with physical disability

- Is there a wheelchair-accessible toilet?
- Does Mia need assistance in using the toilet or accessing other school facilities?
- Are there special transport needs?

These considerations will be done *with* Mia (her active input) and not just *about* Mia.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some other questions that Mia and her learning support team will need to give consideration to before Mia begins high school?

Most education systems will provide support for the issues raised in Narrative 1.1, and will have a procedure for assessing each student's support needs. However, once these questions have been answered and appropriate supports have been put into place, it is likely that Mia will cause her teachers fewer problems than many other students in the class, such as those who resist teacher authority. Yet there was a time when Mia would have spent all of her school career mixing only with other students with a physical disability, simply because the problems she has were regarded as insurmountable in a regular school. No-one would suggest that it would be reasonable for students to be grouped educationally according to their weight, ethnicity or skin colour, so why would it be reasonable for Mia to be grouped according to one specific aspect of her humanity (her physical disability)? The same comments apply to Christopher, whose parents' voice is heard in Narrative 1.2, later in this chapter.

In the last 35–40 years, attitudes to disability have changed considerably. Since the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) in 1981, it has become more likely that people with a disability will have the same choices as people without a disability. Until the later part of the twentieth century, many students with a disability either did not attend school or attended a separate 'special' school. This was part of a general policy of keeping people with a disability separate from the so-called 'normal' community. As a result, most teachers, other than those who had chosen to be 'special education' teachers, were unlikely to have much contact with students with a disability.

In earlier times, segregation was even more pervasive. It affected all aspects of living. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a range of institutions was developed, some of them very large. This was done with good intent, to protect vulnerable people from possible harm or abuse in the wider community. This separation was also believed to benefit their families and society generally by allowing them to 'get on with their lives' without having to worry about the child with a disability. It was common for the institutions to be physically isolated from the rest of the community, and the treatment of residents was not always kind. Even people who remained at home with their families were sometimes hidden away, or expected to mix only with other people with a similar disability.

Although some institutions still operate, despite the de-institutionalisation movement that focused on closing down all institutions, we now recognise the right of people with a disability to make choices in the way they live their lives. It is accepted that most people wish to choose where they live, who they mix with, where they work, and how they spend their leisure time. In the past, many adults with a disability were separated from the general community in environments that gave them little opportunity to make any choices in their lives, even in such routine matters as who they would talk to, what they were going to eat or when they would go to bed.

Changes that have occurred over the last 35–40 years have meant that children and young people with a disability generally live at home with their parents, or elsewhere in the community, rather than in a large institution. They may also attend the local school. As a result, classroom teachers are now likely to have some students with a disability enrolled in their schools and classes.

1.1 Principles underlying inclusion

A number of principles have formed the basis of policy and practice for the inclusion of students with a disability and other forms of diversity. School systems have used these principles to develop system-wide policies; school leaders have used them as a basis for school policy and practice, and classroom teachers have used them in the preparation and implementation of programs. Five underlying principles are outlined below.

Principles of social justice and human rights

It is now much less likely than it was in the past that people will have their lives restricted or determined by their gender, religion, race, ethnicity, sexuality or disability. The changing attitudes to disability that have produced changes in education have been part of a broader **social justice** movement, which has led to changes for several minority or disadvantaged groups, including women and indigenous peoples. It is now recognised that people with a disability want to be regarded as *people* first; they want to make decisions about their own lives, and they do not want these decisions to be solely or primarily based on their disability. Inclusion in education is often as much a rights issue as it is an issue of what works best in all circumstances.

social justice
A belief system that is based on equity, human rights and fairness for all.

These changes in social attitudes have been supported, and sometimes instigated, by legislation such as the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and its related education standards in Australia; and the *Education Act 1989* and the *Human Rights Act 1994* in New Zealand. In Australia there are five federal anti-discrimination Acts as well as state-based legislation. Current legislation is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

Parents, students and policy makers have all supported the view that attendance at the neighbourhood school is a valued option that, while not necessarily mandated, should be available to all. This means that all teachers can expect their classes to contain students with diverse abilities, backgrounds and experiences (see **Figure 1.2**). As a result, teachers need to be able to adapt their classroom organisation, teaching methods and approaches to provide for a wide range of individual, social and cultural differences in students.

FIGURE 1.2 All classes contain students with diverse abilities, backgrounds and experiences

All children can learn

Until about 30 or 40 years ago, it was thought that some children were incapable of learning. As a result, public school systems in Australia and New Zealand, as elsewhere in the world, provided programs only for students who were deemed to be 'able to learn'.

Students with an intellectual disability were classified, using deterministic labelling, as 'educable', 'trainable' or 'custodial', depending on their IQ scores (Foreman, 2009). The public systems provided programs for those who were 'educable' and possibly for those who were judged to be 'trainable'. Other students were regarded as medical 'cases' and were not usually accepted in the public education system. Until 1972, principals in some Australian states could refuse to enrol Indigenous students if there was 'community objection' to their enrolment.

However, since the 1970s there has been widespread acceptance that all children have capacity to learn, and that all children are entitled to an appropriate publicly funded education program. For students with a disability, these programs were initially provided in separate schools, especially for students with more severe disabilities. More recently, much education has occurred in more inclusive settings, including in regular classes, although separate special schools remain an option in some areas.

This is not to say that the learning that takes place is the same for all students. For some students with a severe disability, learning to indicate when they are hungry, thirsty or tired, or to show a preference for one activity over another will have a significant positive effect on the quality of their lives. It is not typical school learning, but it is still learning, and it can be nurtured and developed by teachers and other staff in school settings.

Normalisation

normalisation
The concept that all people, regardless of disability, should be able to live a life that is as normal as possible for their culture. In education, the principle of normalisation suggests that all children should have the opportunity to attend the local school.

Normalisation has formed the basis of the special education policies of most school systems. It is a social justice concept based largely on the writings of Bank-Mikkelsen (1969), Wolfensberger (1972, 1980) and Nirje (1970, 1985) and has impacted primarily on the lives of people with a disability. The concept of normalisation embraces the belief that people are entitled to live as 'normal' as possible a lifestyle in their community. Normal is taken to mean what most other people in that culture would prefer to do. It can easily be shown that it is not 'normal' for most people in Western cultures to live in a dormitory and eat in a communal dining room. It is not 'normal' for adults to have little choice about their daily activities or to be prevented from intimate sexual contact. Thus, a residential institution that was influenced by the concept of *normalisation* might change its dormitories into one- or two-person bedrooms, provide opportunities for residents to choose and perhaps cook their own food, select their own clothes and activities, and interact freely with people of both sexes.

In relation to education, the principle of normalisation suggests that all students should be able to attend the neighbourhood school, or perhaps attend an independent school, as preferred by students and their families. Wolfensberger later stated that he considered normalisation theory to have been 'subsumed by the broader theory of **social role valorisation**' (1995, p. 164), which looks at the various 'social roles' that people perform; for example, husband, wife, partner, friend, teacher, colleague, leader. Some social roles are obviously much more highly valued than others. The way others respond to our social roles affects the way we perceive ourselves.

social role valorisation
A reconceptualisation of normalisation by Wolf Wolfensberger that is based on the social role assumed by individuals, and the value placed on that role by society.

Wolfensberger pointed out that the social roles of people with a disability tend to be poorly valued. If people with a disability are to be genuinely included in the community, it is important that their social roles are 'valorised'. This means they need to be given roles and opportunities that are valued by the rest of the community. For example, street begging is a very poorly regarded activity in almost every culture, with very low status. As such, it would be contrary to social role valorisation to have people with a disability raising money for charity by holding donation boxes in the street.

The least restrictive environment

Another principle underlying the movement into regular schools is that of the **least restrictive environment**. This is based on the principle that some environments are intrinsically more restrictive than others, and that people's lives should be restricted to the minimum extent possible. Probably the most restrictive environment that we can imagine is a jail, yet for many years, large residential institutions for people with a disability have been even more restrictive than some jails. Because of the social changes referred to earlier in this chapter, many people with a disability in Western countries who previously lived in an institution now either live with their families, in group homes, other alternative residential situations or independently in the community. The institutions that continue to operate have generally made a large effort to provide more choice for their residents, a more *normalised* lifestyle, and fewer restrictions. Most people prefer to live in non-restrictive environments.

School systems usually provide a range of classes and schools to cater for students with additional needs resulting from a disability; and in the past some of these have provided very restrictive environments. School systems have moved towards improved levels of personal participation and control for students, and fewer restrictions. Whereas 30 years ago students with a disability were likely to have been placed in one of the first three settings listed below, they are now more likely to be in one of the other four settings (Dempsey, 2011). Residential special schools are now rare, and fewer new separate day schools are being built. The main growth area for separate special schools is for students with emotional or behavioural disorders (Dempsey, 2007).

The range of educational settings provided by school systems, from most restrictive (1) to least restrictive (7) is as follows:

1 **residential school** for students with a disability
2 separate special day school
3 separate special school on regular campus
4 **special unit** located in regular school
5 single special class in regular school
6 single special class in regular school, with part-time regular placement
7 regular class.

There are many variations in the way students use these settings. Some students attend a regular class with minimal adjustments by the school, while others need to be provided with extensive support including building alterations, equipment, full-time or part-time **teacher assistants**, or specialist advisory services. Other students enrol part-time in a special class and part-time in a regular class. The process of deciding the best educational placement for a student is often complex. Most schools and school systems see this is ultimately as a parental decision, based on advice from educational and health-care professionals. Some parents prefer their child to be in a specialised unit which focuses on their special abilities or disability. They believe that the child will receive more individual attention in a specialised unit, and that the child's social acceptance will be easier in a separate setting. This is a perfectly legitimate view and, as will be shown later in this chapter, there is mixed evidence on what is 'best' for the student. However, many parents have a very clear view that they want their child to be in the neighbourhood school with siblings and other children from the community. Many factors impact on parental choice (Byrne, 2013) (see Narrative 1.2, below).

A regular class may not always be less restrictive than a special class. For example, if Mia (see Narrative 1.1, above) was in a school that had very limited wheelchair access, she would

least restrictive environment
The opportunity for people with a disability to live in environments that give them the greatest range of choices; that is, the fewest restrictions.

residential school
A school that includes living or boarding facilities.

special unit
A group of two or more special classes within a regular school.

teacher assistant
Person employed to assist a teacher in the classroom. This position is also known as a teacher's aide, school learning support assistant/ officer, or education assistant, but in this book the position is generally referred to as 'teacher assistant'.

be in a more restrictive environment than if she attended a school designed to accommodate wheelchairs. However, this does not mean that the ideal solution is for Mia to attend a school for students with physical disabilities, which would be fully wheelchair-accessible. This solution would impose other restrictions. A better solution is that all schools, like other parts of the community, should be wheelchair-accessible.

Making a school accessible can be an expensive process. Most school systems design new buildings to be as accessible as possible, and older school buildings are then adapted for access according to a timetable, or as the need arises. Often, minor adjustments are all that is needed. A change in room timetable can mean that a class need not go upstairs or across the playground after each lesson period. Most students who use wheelchairs are willing to accept some inconvenience while they wait for ramps to be built or for equipment to be purchased. What matters most is that there is a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and an effort to make things work for them. They realise that it takes time for ramps to be installed, or for a piece of chair-lifting equipment to be ordered or transferred from another school. Narrative 1.2 gives a clear picture of the joys and difficulties of educating a child with disability, even when all are well-meaning and cooperative.

NARRATIVE 1.2

Christopher's educational journey

FIGURE 1.3 Christopher at high school

Our son Christopher was born in 1987, the youngest of three boys. He has Down syndrome, his main difficulty being very poor speech. He has a lot to say though, and talks confidently to a large range of people, including on the phone to friends and family. He loves to speak at public events like weddings or birthdays. Chris moves in a lot of social and work spheres and even with limited language skills he knows people by name, has friendly conversations with them, and is a popular member of any group. It is not that hard to keep up with the many topics of his conversation, using a mix of guesswork, context and knowledge of his life. We have also seen a society-wide shift in people's willingness and openness to engage with communicators like Chris. Communication at all levels in his life has been a keystone to good outcomes.

We knew when he was born that we would try to give him a life and an education as much like his brothers' as possible. Now that he is 29, we can look back on the milestones and bumps along the road. Chris was well catered for by school and post-school training and education programs because segregated and isolationist practices were being phased out, and he had mostly happy and socially inclusive experiences during his education. We were, however, motivated to join advocacy groups and political campaigns in the '90s because change in educational practices and funding was slow. It was immensely satisfying to see Australia introduce the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2012. Chris is now part of this, with his own planner and the means for us and him to negotiate his future.

Chris' education and pathway through life can be seen in the context of his family, school, and societal context, because it is the people around him who worked together effectively, who helped him achieve what he has. We can highlight many excellent strategies, initiatives and programs that have led to his present good adjustment and happy life. There are clear guidelines here for good educational practice, but some cautionary tales as well.

FIGURE 1.4 Christopher as an adult

Long day care

The staff here modelled good play, cooperation and age-appropriate expectations for Chris – attitudes that we reminded ourselves and others about, as it would have been easy to 'do too much' for him and delay his learning. At this stage, the staff made adjustments for him as needed, and were able to use his desire to join in and belong as a motivator. They also actively helped other children to understand and accommodate Chris' unusual speech and behaviours. We found early childhood educators, in general, to be open to an inclusive approach, and we appreciated the staff's perseverance in working to achieve a cohesive atmosphere. They always took time to tell us something about his day that had gone well, so we could talk to him on the way home. We needed to share all we knew about his learning for our mutual benefit. Chris was very happy at long day care.

Regular preschool

Before he started school, Chris attended a local preschool two days a week, with funding assistance provided for some of those hours. The staff focused on ready-for-school skills, particularly writing and drawing and small group work. They used sequenced learning and task analysis to work with Chris. Belonging to a group of peers without a disability was great modelling for him, and he looked forward to going each day. Staff here also believed in the benefits of inclusion. We talked with staff about his progress, and believed he had the basis for fitting into an inclusive school setting.

Starting school

Based on the **psychometric tests** that were part of the enrolment procedure in 1992, we were offered a special school for Chris, but asked for, and were allocated, a special class in a regular school in another suburb. We were disappointed all the same, because we hoped for – and Chris and our middle son expected – that he could attend our local school. Communication between preschool, school and placement personnel was nil.

psychometric tests
Assessments that measure mental states and processes. Examples are intelligence and personality tests.

Transition-to-school guidelines were not formalised until 1997 in New South Wales, and they are still in development. A NSW Government Standing Committee on Transition in 2012 recognised the importance of good planning and practices for all times of change in the lives of people with a disability. Yet, there is still no legislation in Australia which would clarify transitions-related responsibilities of all relevant stakeholders, including development of individual transition plans (ITPs).

We can vouch for the very different journey that parents embark on when they have a child with a disability. Starting school is one of the early major hurdles to get through, and the experience can be traumatic. Having older children may only serve to highlight what a different world you have entered.

Funding and practice at the time Chris started school was not to the liking of many parents, and in 1996 we campaigned for change in an election year under t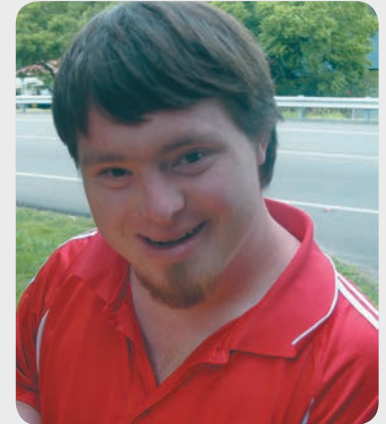he banner 'Kids Belong Together'.