Chapter 5

Exceptional Students: Teaching Learners with Special Needs

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Describe five categories of students who have special needs.
2. List three essential factors to be considered when teaching students who have special needs.
3. Explain the requirements of individualized education programs (IEP's) as set forth by Public Law 94-142.
4. Provide two definitions of "gifted students" and define of one alternative strategy for teaching these students.
5. Explain why the length of time a specific disability has existed is important academically.
6. List three characteristics of students with intellectual impairments.
7. Identify and describe students with behaviorally based disorders.
8. Name three rights Public Law 94-142, IDEA, NCLB, and ESEA Flexibility provide for students who are labeled as special needs or disabled.
9. Explain the characteristics of an individualized education program for a student who has a special need.
10. Define mainstreaming and explain why earlier attempts to mainstream special students failed.
11. Develop two alternative strategies for soliciting the cooperation of students and families during IEP planning and implementation sessions.
12. Define the teacher's role in seeking services for students with special needs.

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During our nation's early history, society tried to isolate and ignore students with special needs but now our schools are committed to providing for their unique learning needs.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout this book we have examined how students develop and behave socially, emotionally, and mentally. You have learned that environment, developmental maturity, and academic experiences affect student behavior. We know that each student perceives the academic environment in a unique way, filtering observations through the individual's *perceptual screen*—previous experiences which give meaning to new experiences. For example, middle-school student Carlos, whose older brother has just bought his first car, may become quite curious when his science teacher introduces a unit on internal combustion. But his classmate, Trent, who has no older siblings may find the same unit boring. Angela, whose family spent a week vacationing in Mexico may be interested in learning Spanish; whereas, some of her classmates may find the topic dull.

Ms. Barnes's seventh graders (see the Todd box on pages 153–154) were very comfortable with their fellow mainstreamed students; whereas, other classes not privy to Ms. Barnes's expertise may have been less at ease. The heredity and/or environment of the life outside of school of some students may be so different from their classmates' their ability to perform academically may require special help. As Ms. Barnes related to Todd, education for students with special needs should be a primary goal of formal education.

EDUCATING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

During our nation's early history, those students who were noticeably different from their peers were often viewed with suspicion and even disdain. In many instances, individuals who had special needs were literally locked away from the rest of society. The concern was not for helping these individuals, but for protecting "normal" people from them.

But, as psychologists and society learned more about these "special" people, their educational needs slowly began to be developed and recognized. By the middle of the century, classes for exceptional students became a reality. Unfortunately, the results of these special classes were often more negative than positive, and student differences were magnified. Often, the least-experienced and least- prepared teachers were assigned to teach exceptional students.

Additionally, the method of putting all impaired students together had a negative effect: it drew attention to students who were different, and their problems amplified. Such results led to efforts that placed students with disabilities in the classrooms with nondisabled students.

TODD WILLIAMS...

received word that three new students would be enrolling in his classes at the start of the second term. Two of the new students were to be "mainstreamed" from special classes they had been attending. The principal, Ms. Wickersham, informed Todd that one of the students was confined to a wheelchair but was a B student academically. The second student was hearing impaired and made average grades. The third student had an IQ of 148, but her grades were poor. When Todd expressed concern about his limited experience teaching such students, Ms. Wickersham suggested he visit Ms. Barnes's seventh-grade math class.

When Todd entered Ms. Barnes's class early the next day for his appointment to observe and glean information, he saw three students, one sitting quietly in a wheelchair and two in loud disagreement. "No, it's my turn," insisted Leona.

"No, it's my turn," argued Chuck. Before the argument got any louder, Ms. Barnes interceded. "Chuck, it is Leona's turn; you are scheduled for tomorrow." Chuck shrugged and wandered to his seat as Leona grinned and wheeled Mario, the student in the wheelchair, to his desk. Todd noticed that Mario's desk was a small table that was tall enough to fit over the wheels of his wheelchair.

As Ms. Barnes greeted the class, she passed written instructions to two students sitting in the front row. Todd later discovered that these two students were hearing impaired. As the class continued, Todd noticed Leona turning textbook pages for Mario and sharing her notes. Occasionally, a student would tap the shoulder of one of the hearing-impaired students to point out something noted on the board. Todd was very curious about something else. Every 30 minutes, Ms. Barnes placed a token in a cup on the desk of a large, red-haired student (Ralph).

Two hours into the class, and for no apparent reason, Ralph let out a high-pitched scream, then laughed as he pounded his hands on his desk. Todd was startled by the sudden noise and very surprised by the lack of a class response. The students, who were working on fractions at the time, did not respond at all. There was no laughter; no one even looked in Ralph's direction. The students continued to work as if nothing had happened. Ms. Barnes responded by walking to Ralph's desk and removing two tokens from the cup. Ralph's muttering of "I don't care" was totally ignored as Ms. Barnes walked away. However, when 30 minutes passed, a token was placed in Ralph's cup.

When time came for lunch, Leona continued to help Mario, putting up his books, pushing him to the lunchroom, helping him through the lunch line, and sitting with him. Todd was full of questions as he followed Ms. Barnes. "Leona is mature and considerate to help Mario as she does. What were she and Chuck arguing about earlier?

"Oh, they were just arguing over whose turn it was to be Mario's

assistant for the day. The students take turns helping Mario by being his assistant. They look forward to this; they really like him. He's a very popular class member," explained Ms. Barnes.

"But how did you get the students to be so cooperative and supportive?" questioned Todd.

Ms. Barnes continued, "Well, I usually have three or four students every term who are challenged or impaired; so during the first week in class, I spend some time talking with the class about student differences, but mostly about how students are alike.

I am very open and honest with my students and when I ask for their help, they respond. It is voluntary but I do provide some incentives. For example, Mario's daily assistant gets to be first in line for activities outside the classroom."

Todd was impressed and inquired, "What are the tokens with Ralph all about and why did he suddenly yell in class?"

Ms. Barnes smiled and answered, "Ralph has a behavior problem. He has outbursts that can be disruptive in class; therefore, I put him on a token program. He earns a token for every 30 minutes he does not disrupt. He can cash in his tokens for privileges he and I agreed on."

"What kind of privileges?" quizzed Todd.

"Well, 20 tokens earn 30 minutes of his choice of creating T-shirt art, reading sports magazines, or doing computer activities. We had to start with a token every 5 minutes at the beginning of school. I hope to phase out the tokens before the term ends. He's doing much better."

"But none of the students paid any attention to him when he yelled," responded Todd.

"Yes, I know," replied Ms. Barnes. "I'm so proud of them. I talked with the students in Ralph's absence and asked for their help. I asked them to completely ignore Ralph when he disrupted class. At the first of the year, they laughed and gave him lots of attention, and Ralph loved that. The class earns privileges by ignoring Ralph and completing their assignments. I want Ralph to learn that he can get attention by behaving in class and performing academically."

"Doesn't it take a lot of class time to provide for students with special needs?" asked Todd.

Ms. Barnes smiled, "Todd, do you know that Alexander the Great suffered from epileptic seizures; Franklin D. Roosevelt was confined to a wheelchair throughout his presidency; and Steven Hawking, one of the most brilliant minds of our time, is disabled by Lou Gehrig's disease. Further, Tom Cruise and Cher are LD (learning disabled). Todd, I had the opportunity to attend a performance by the "Famous People Players" last week. This play group is internationally known for its remarkable performances. All but 3 of the 30 plus cast are developmentally impaired. So many of the students with disabilities we have the privilege to teach are bright and creative. I am delighted to have the opportunity to spend class time with them."

Todd looked admiringly at Ms. Barnes for a time then finally asked, "Do you suppose you could help me develop a system for my class?"

Mainstreaming

The process of putting students with disabilities in class with nondisabled students is called **mainstreaming**. But, like special classes, mainstreaming has its limitations. One primary problem with mainstreaming was the manner it was initially implemented; most teachers lacked the special preparation needed for teaching, managing, and motivating students with special needs (Stern, 1992). Imagine your feelings of inadequacy if you had no training to teach students with impairments, but several such students were in your classes. Imagine the feelings of the students with impairments.

The result was many students placed in mainstreamed classes were ignored. Not knowing how to teach students with disabilities, many teachers could not make the needed adjustments. It was hoped by placing them with nondisabled students, students with disabilities would feel less different and be able to perform academically. But over time it became clear that the disabling conditions of students rarely fade by simply associating with others. Something more was needed that resulted in federal legislation commonly known as Public Law 94-142 (the Education for All Disabled Children Act of 1975).

Thomas Edison was withdrawn from school at an early age because his teacher thought he was incapable of learning. Fortunately, his mother, a teacher, recognized his genius and educated young Tom at home.

Neither isolating special students nor mainstreaming them without providing special instruction has been an effective way to meet their academic needs.

Public Law 94-142

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the Education for All Disabled Children Act, commonly known as **PL 94-142**. Because of the failure of attempts to fulfill the needs of students with disabilities through the provision of services in the regular education special classroom, PL 94-142 was amended in 1990. The word handicapped was replaced by disabled, and PL 94-142 was retitled as the **Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA)**. PL 94-142 ensures a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities. This legislation calls for the "least restrictive environment" that will allow students with special disabilities to be placed in regular education classes if those students are not restricted when placed with nondisabled students. The intent of the law was to keep students with disabilities in the classroom with students with no disabilities, as opposed to grouping and isolating them.

The 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Act enabled students with disabilities to be placed in regular education classes.

Research findings and demographic data leading to the enactment of Public Law 94-142 help us understand the need for this legislation:

- There are more than 8 million children who have disabilities in the United States today.
- The educational needs of children with disabilities are not being fully met.

- More than half the children who have disabilities do not receive appropriate educational services.
- One million children with disabilities are excluded entirely from the public school system.
- There are many students in regular programs whose impairments are undetected.
- Because public school systems lack adequate services, families often must find other services at their own expense (or sue the school system), although schools are *legally* required to provide these services!
- With appropriate funding, state and local educational agencies have the expertise and the methods to provide effective special education and related services.
- State and local educational agencies have the responsibility to educate students with disabilities, but they have inadequate financial resources to do so.
- Helping state and local educational agencies provide programs to meet the educational needs of children with disabilities facilitates equal protection of the law.

Americans Disabilities Act

In 1990, President George W. Bush signed into law the **Americans Disabilities Act (ADA, PL 101-336)** avowing, "Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down" (George Bush Presidential Library and Museum, 2011). Many consider ADA to be the most significant legislation pertaining to the civil rights of individuals with disabilities (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010). ADA goes beyond the classroom walls, prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities in both the public and private sector. ADA also broadened the traditional view of who was considered disabled to include, for example, "people with AIDS, individuals who have successfully completed a substance abuse program, and persons with cosmetic disfigurement. Further, any individual with an impairment substantially limiting a major life activity is covered (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010, p. 19). ADA requires communities to focus not only on appropriately educating children with disabilities, but on ensuring all buildings, facilities, and communication devices are nondiscriminatory. Consider the positive effect ADA has had for student with disabilities, specifically adolescents transitioning from high school to the public sector. ADA has provided hope and opened doors for students with disabilities as they progress beyond the K-12 classroom.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act was reauthorized by congress in 2001 and signed into law in 2002 by President George W. Bush (PL 107-110). This legislation became known as the **No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)**. As stated in Chapter 1, this law was primarily enacted to address the school reform reports of the 1990s. As it relates to students with special needs, this law proposed that all students, including those in special education, will be proficient in reading and mathematics, and later in science. Required annual testing in Grades 3–8 and at least once in Grades 10–12 is included in NCLB and the testing does not exclude special education students. The hoped benefit being that "assessment results will directly translate into instructional accommodations, further aligning special education and general education into a unified delivery system responsible for serving all learners" (as cited in Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010, p. 20). NCLB further mandates that all teachers be "highly qualified" and schools make "adequate yearly progress" toward the end result of schools being 100% proficient by year 2014. These mandates led to greater emphasis on "high-stakes testing" and to more general education curriculum being provided to special education students. It also changed how colleges and universities train teachers to ensure that graduates are considered highly qualified.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed into law a new version of IDEA (PL 108-446), commonly known as the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004)**. A major objective of this amendment was to align IDEA with the NCLB Act. For example, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) written for students with special needs, were required to address students' "educational progress," but this terminology changed to "academic and functional performance" after IDEA 2004 to more closely align with NCLB (Gargiulo & Kilgo, 2011). IDEA 2004 also addressed additional requirements for IEPs that schools must adhere. The writing and requirements for IEPs will be addressed later in this chapter.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility of 2011

On September 23, 2011, President Barack Obama introduced flexibility to specific requirements in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or NCLB. Recognizing that NCLB has led to school improvement but also recognizing that NCLB has failings, President Barack explained,

> "The goals behind No Child Left Behind were admirable. . . . Higher standards are the right goal. Accountability is the right goal. Closing the gap is the right goal. And we've got to stay focused on those goals. But experience has taught us that, in its implementation, No Child Left Behind had some serious flaws that are hurting our children instead of helping them. Teachers are too often being focused to teach to the test. Subjects like history and science have been squeezed out. And, in order to avoid having their schools labeled as failures, some states, perversely, have actually had to lower their standards in a race to the bottom instead of a Race to the Top." (The White House, 2011)

Termed the **Elementary and Secondary Act Flexibility (ESEA Flexibility)**, each state's education agency can request flexibility in specific requirements of NCLB "in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction" (U.S. Department of Education, 2011b). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011c), a provision included is that states that adopt higher standards are allowed to apply for waivers of the NCLB 2014 proficiency deadline. Schools may also apply for waiving the NCLB requirement of being labeled a failing school by not meeting adequate yearly progress. Further, schools can ask for more flexibility in the way they make use of their funding. However, it is stressed that the flexibility will not be granted in exchange for nothing. The schools are expected to "maintain rigorous accountability, including for subgroups of students" (U.S. Department of Education, 2011c). The impact of ESEA Flexibility on the nation's education systems and on how schools will adapt to educate students with special needs will unfold in the years to come.

Keeping abreast of current legislation and laws governing education is difficult but imperative for today's classroom teacher. Penalties for not following guidelines in legislation can lead to loss of federal funding, civil and criminal law suits, and even loss of a teacher's job. However, proactive teachers are aware that mandated legislations, with the purpose of benefiting students, can increase their effectiveness in the classroom. Despite the many changes to the laws and court challenges of the legislation, certain components have remained constant: students are afforded the right to a free, appropriate public school education, students with disabilities are to be educated in the least restrictive environment, students with disabilities are entitled to an IEP, assessments of students are to be nondiscriminatory, and families have the right to participate and to due process (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010). If a child is being considered for special education, the family must be offered,

Parents of special students have many rights to ensure the design and use of an effective IEP.

1. Notice of the proposed action
2. The right to a hearing prior to final action
3. The right to counsel at that hearing
4. The right to present evidence
5. The right to full access to relevant school records, including the right to purge information that is inaccurate, misleading, or discriminatory
6. The right to compel attendance of and to confront and cross-examine officials or employees who might have evidence of the basis for the proposed action
7. The right to an independent evaluation
8. The right to have the hearing open or closed to the public at the parent's option
9. The right to an impartial hearing officer

The hearings are to be held at a place and time convenient to family. In other words, students and their parents/family have a right to question the appropriateness of IEPs or plans developed for them and to demand educational plans that address the unique learning needs of the individual involved.

As noted in chapter 1, in February of 2012, ten states were granted permission to pursue school reform outside the requirements of 'No Child Left Behind'. Many more states are expected to be granted the same permission.

INTASC Standard 1 Learner development

The Teacher's Role

As Todd learned, illustrated by Ms. Barnes's class, if you work in the educational environment, you will be directly involved in complying with the guidelines set forth in state and national legislation. This will include developing a program plan each year demonstrating how your school is meeting legislative requirements. Your responsibility as a teacher will be to help educate students with disabilities and, like your other students, get the instruction and support they need. The process to accomplish this task is well defined by federal legislation.

Facilitating Individualized Education Programs

A meeting to develop an educational plan for each student with a disability is required within 30 days of the diagnosis of the disability but before the placement recommendation. At a minimum, those required to attend this meeting include a representative of the local school district who is knowledgeable in the area of the student's disabling condition, an individual skilled in interpreting the educational implications of the evaluation, the student's teachers (including a regular education teacher and a special education teacher), and a parent/guardian of the student. Teachers are responsible for seeing that the services planned are implemented. Furthermore, teachers are required to evaluate the program for students with disabilities in their classes. Federal laws require at

least one progress review each year and a complete reevaluation every three years. The state where you teach may require more comprehensive reevaluation procedures.

Teachers and families should work together sharing their concerns for the welfare of the student; by working together they better serve the student. Unfortunately, some parents/families are unlikely to be motivated to attend or participate in individualized education program meetings. Because some families are intimidated when faced with a room full of professional educators, the best approach to IEP meetings is a simple, friendly, jargon-free one in which teacher and families participate as equal partners. As McNamara (1986,) explained, "Being clear, precise and up-front with parents will pay high dividends in [your] ability to assist in carrying out the educational plan."

Each individualized educational plan must contain, as a minimum, these statements and projections:

- The child's current level of academic functioning
- Annual instructional goals accompanied with their instructional objectives
- The specific educational services to be provided
- The extent to which the child will be able to participate in normal classroom activities
- The plans for how the services will be initiated and the length of the services provided
- Annual, objective criteria for evaluation and a schedule for determining whether instructional objectives are being achieved

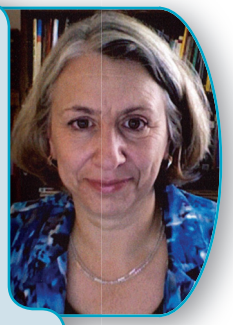
Before holding an IEP conference, teachers should carefully plan a strategy to gain the cooperation of all parties concerned.

Although any member of the planning team can make the initial draft of the IEP, responsibility for ensuring that the plan is implemented belongs to the teacher(s). Proactive teachers should view the IEP as an organized approach to providing the educational experiences needed by students with disabilities. We suggest that teachers and school professionals work with families prior to their first meeting for forming IEPs: For example, we suggest the following:

- Encourage families to bring questions.
- A week or two before the meeting, ask involved family members to think about long- and short-term educational goals for their child.
- Involve families in prioritizing goals for the year.
- Ask what motivators have been effective at home.
- Make a follow-up phone call or contact to ensure that involved family members clearly understand goals identified for their child and the steps to be taken to reach these goals.

The "A View from the Field" box offers further suggestions to teachers for seeking help for students with special needs.

A VIEW FROM THE FIELD



PROFILE

Dr. Lori Flint is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at East Carolina University. Teaching both graduate and undergraduate students, she earned her doctorate from the University of Georgia in Educational Psychology and a Master of Education in Talent Development from Ashland University. Dr. Flint serves on boards of several national and local organizations related to improving schools and student experiences. An active advocate for children at the local, state, and national levels, she has experience teaching and parenting gifted and creative children and adults, focusing on their needs from birth through adulthood. Her research interests include increasing student achievement and motivation, especially through the specific teaching of skills needed for school and real-life survival; gender; social and emotional areas; and individual differences such as gifted students with learning disabilities.

QUESTION: What services or resources are available in the schools to help teachers who have students with special needs?

Dr. Flint—When students exhibit characteristics or learning differences setting them apart from others, uncovering the basis for these differences can be challenging. Good educators need to be good problem solvers, using all available resources to unlock the talents inherent in every child. Teachers can start to better understand students by looking to special area teachers, such as health, physical education, business education, art, and music to gather clues about students' performance outside the "regular" classroom. If, for example, a student performs well in physical education, is it the teacher who makes the difference, or is the fact the student is able to move about during class time rather being constrained at a desk all day? In addition, the student's permanent record or cumulative folder often contains a wealth of overlooked information. Taking the time to sit down and examine trends of student behavior over time can provide a great deal of information.

QUESTION: Whom should a teacher ask for help?

The first and foremost important thing to keep in mind here is to ask for help. Too often, when children fail, educators simply give up, or even blame them for lack of success. Other places to turn for assistance are the gifted education specialist, the special education teacher, and the guidance counselor, depending on the specific needs/behaviors of the student. Parents or caregivers can also shed light on student behaviors, including both strengths and challenges. Finally, there are outside resources, such as district personnel in various areas, as well as university

faculty-researchers who can shed light on those children who are puzzles to us. Doing all this detective work is vitally important for the student's success in school, and it is immensely gratifying for the teacher who helps a child turn around. ■

INTASC Standard 3 Learning environments

Inclusion

Inclusion is a dominate practice in our nation's schools as they strive to meet legislative requirements pertaining to the least restrictive environment. Gargiulo and Metcalf (2010) define inclusion as "the movement toward, and the practice of, educating students with disabilities and other learners with exceptionalities in general education classrooms alongside their typical peers with appropriate supports and services provided as necessary" (p. 446). Figure 5.1 illustrates that the majority of students with special needs (54%) are placed in the regular education classroom.

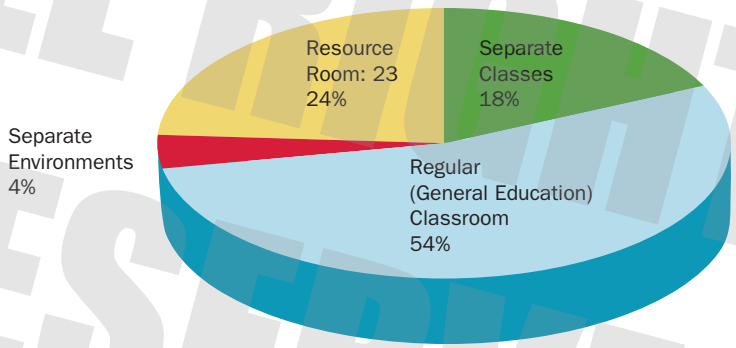


Figure 5.1 Percentages of Students with Disabilities Served in Various Educational Settings

Adapted from Gargiulo, R. M., & Metcalf, D. (2010). *Teaching in today's inclusive schools. A universal design for learning approach*, p. 6. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage.

Notes: Data are for students ages 6–21 enrolled in special education during the 2006–2007 school year. Information based on data from the 50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas. Separate environments include students receiving an education in residential facilities, separate schools, or hospital/homebound programs.

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Education. (2008). *IDEA data*. Available at https://www.ideadata.org/PartBReport.asp

The length of time spent in the normal classroom setting defines whether the student with a disability is designated to receive *partial inclusion* or *full inclusion*. Partial inclusion indicates that the student is in the regular classroom part of the day; and, full inclusion states the student is in the regular classroom the entire day. Inclusion is not meant to be a one size fits all approach to educating students with disabilities. The intent is not to place every student with a disability in the

regular classroom for the entire day. Nor is it the intention to expect regular classroom teachers to have the knowledge and expertise to appropriately educate all students with disabilities. Rather, the expectation is that the special education teachers and other experts attend the students' classrooms and assist the regular classroom teachers in meeting the students' needs. However, due to the short supply of special education teachers and lack of funding, many regular classroom teachers are left with much of the responsibility of educating students with disabilities. Unfortunately, some teachers feel overwhelmed and ill-prepared to attend to the needs of students with severe disabilities.

Research has indicated that approximately one-third of teachers who leave their position to teach at other schools or who leave the profession list mainstreaming as their primary reason for dissatisfaction (Morrison, 2009). Many pre-service teachers are concerned they will begin their teaching responsibilities without the skills they need to work in classrooms that include children with disabilities. Therefore, inclusion practices have created both supporters and critics.

Criticisms of inclusion argue that the time teachers must spend with students with disabilities takes time away from the nondisabled students. Critics are also concerned that teachers might lower academic standards to accommodate students with severe disabilities. However, when comparing inclusive to non-inclusive classrooms, there are no conclusive research data to indicate academic disadvantages in inclusive classrooms (Savich, 2008). The cost of educating students with disabilities in the regular education setting is also a concern. According to the U.S. 2005 Special Education Expenditure Program (as cited in Savich, 2008), it costs 1.6 times more to educate students with disabilities than those without. However, this expenditure is still less than what it costs to educate students with disabilities in a separate, special education classroom (Savich, 2008).

Proponents for inclusion practices point to the social and academic benefits inclusion has shown for students with disabilities. Research indicates social and cognitive gains (Savich, 2008) and an increase in self-esteem and self-concept (Wolfberg & Schuler, 1999) in children with disabilities. Furthermore, an inclusive classroom fosters a community valuing diversity and acceptance.

A major role of teachers is to help students feel they are an important part of their classes. Williams (1997) studied the effects of placing students with disabilities in the classroom with regular students and reported, "Interestingly, students in both rural and urban schools felt that they were members of a few classes and did not feel like members of others" (p. 139). Yet, feeling a part of the class affects both students' levels of motivation and academic achievement (Goodenow, 1993). Students with a high sense of belonging were found to be more academically engaged than their counterparts who had a low sense of belonging (Goodenow & Grady, 1994).

Janny and Snell (1996) reported that teachers with students with disabilities in their classrooms work to promote the idea that each of these students is just another student. Certainly, such teachers do not dote over these students; neither do they ignore them. Instead, they expect students with disabilities to follow routines and roles and participate in class activities as much as possible. Participation in class activities is especially important because classroom participation is associated with feeling a part of the class. As Williams (1997) explained, "Since class participation appears to be crucial to membership, students with severe disabilities need to be taught to acquire skills that will promote their active participation" (p. 149). Williams also reported that when teachers practiced fairness by sharing their attention among all students and involving all students in class activities, after being in class with disabled students for a year, the other students viewed their classmates equally.

When successfully implemented, the benefits of inclusion practices outweigh the disadvantages. Classroom teachers and special education teachers should collaborate to ensure that all students experience the benefits inclusion can bring. Table 5.1 provides a summary of key elements needed for full inclusion.

TABLE 5.1

Key Elements of Full Inclusion Models

- **"Homeschool" attendance**. Defined as the local school the child would attend if not disabled.
- **Natural proportion at the school site**. The percentage of children with special needs enrolled in a particular school is in proportion to the percentage of pupils with exceptionalities in the entire school district; in general education classes, this would mean approximately two to three students with disabilities.
- **Zero rejection**. All students are accepted at local schools, including those with severe impairments; pupils are not screened out or grouped separately because of their disability.
- **Age/grade-appropriate placement**. A full-inclusion model calls for serving children with special needs in general education classrooms according to their chronological age rather than basing services on the child's academic ability or mental age.
- **Site-based management or coordination**. Recent trends in school organizational reform suggest a movement away from central office administration for special education programs to one where the building principal (or other administrator) plays a large role in planning and administering programs for all children in the school.
- **Use of cooperative learning and peer instructional models**. Instructional practices that involve children learning in a cooperative manner rather than in a competitive fashion and using students to assist in the instruction of classmates with disabilities can be effective strategies for integrating exceptional learners in the general education classroom.

Source: R. M. Gargiulo & D. Metcalf, *Teaching in Today's Inclusive Classrooms. A Universal Design for Learning Approach*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010, p. 11).

PROACTIVE TEACHING

CLASSROOM SITUATION

Unless you teach in very unusual circumstances, you will have students with special needs in your classes. Some of these students will be physically disabled or sensory impaired. Some will demonstrate academic, behavioral, or social difficulties due to intellectual impairments,

PROACTIVE ALTERNATIVES

- Check available school records for information on the needs of your students and the services they have received or are receiving. Read the assessment reports, IEPs, health records, attendance reports contained in these files.

emotional disturbance, or learning impairments. Others may be gifted and talented. Your preparation for meeting the educational needs of these students is critical to your success as a teacher.

- Check with your school psychologist, guidance counselor, or someone in administration for information on related services available for exceptional students. Confer with previous teachers concerning the interests, abilities, and special needs of your students.
- Confer with previous teachers about what has worked in meeting the needs of these students in their classrooms.
- Talk to your students about how they view their school-related successes and failures and together work out a plan for a successful school year.
- Make plans for meeting with families early in the school year. Prepare in advance the kind of information you need from families and the information you can provide for them.
- Relax. Plan to look for the good in your students. Most students with special needs served in regular education settings are more like than unlike their peers!
- Realize that even your best students have the potential to fail. When what you attempt fails, regroup, re-plan, and try again.

THE NATURE OF SPECIAL NEEDS CONDITIONS

Although there are several common categories of impairment-physical, mental, emotional, sensory, and neurological-these categories often have considerable overlap. IDEA classifies disabling conditions using the following categories: autism, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairments (including deafness), intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments, speech or language impairments, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairments (including blindness). A developmental delay is defined as impairment in one or more of the following: adaptive development, cognitive development, communication development,

physical development, or social or emotional development. Approximately 10% to 12% of students in the United States have a disability and receive some type of special education service (Morrison, 2009). Table 5.2 indicates the percentages of children served under IDEA. Even students belonging to the same category differ because of three critical factors: (1) the *degree* of impairment (mild, moderate, or severe), (2) the *length* of time the student has been disabled or impaired, and (3) the *stability* of the condition.

TABLE 5.2

Children with Disabilities Ages 3 to 21 Served under IDEA

Category	Percentage Served
Learning Disabilities	44%
Speech or Language Impairments	22%
Intellectual Disabilities	9%
Emotional Disturbance	7%
Other Health Impaired	6%
Developmental Delay	4%
Autism	2%
Multiple Disabilities	2%
Hearing Impairments	1%
Orthopedic Impairments	1%
Visual Impairments	<1%
Deaf-Blindness	<1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	<1%

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2005). Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs, *26th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 1*, Washington, DC.

People have a tendency to underestimate the abilities of individuals with physical disabilities.

STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

Students with physical disabilities can qualify for special education services via three potential categories: multiple disabilities, orthopedic disabilities, and traumatic brain injury. If a student has a disabling health condition, they may qualify for services under other health impaired laws. When students have two or more disabling conditions requiring services in more than one special education area, they can be classified as multiple disabled. Orthopedic disabilities include individuals who typically have an impairment interfering with the normal functions of the bones, joints, or muscles, including internal

organs and systemic malfunctions. These impairments range from congenital (lifelong) conditions and deformities—such as limb absence, heart defects, hemophilia, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and spina bifida—to traumatic conditions, such as amputations or burns. Individual with traumatic brain injury have often suffered an external brain injury, for example, a brain injury due to an automobile accident. Traumatic brain injury does not include injury to the brain caused before or during birth.

The needs of students with physical disabilities are often intensified if the student has had the disability for a considerable length of time. For example, if the cause was congenital (birth defect), such as cerebral palsy, the student may have had limited educational experiences. Visual and speech defects are common; poor facial muscle control may cause drooling, giving the false impression of an intellectual disability, and causing teachers and other school personnel to underestimate the abilities of these students.

Teachers can help students with physical disabilities succeed by providing a climate of success, by accepting and including them in the social activities of the school, and by setting realistic, demanding expectations. Remember Mario, the student in a wheelchair in Ms. Barnes's class? He is a good example of not only succeeding academically in a regular education setting but also being accepted as a popular member of his class.

STUDENTS WHO ARE INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED

Students who are intellectually disabled have significantly sub-average intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior than their chronological- or grade-age peers. Below average intellectual functioning is often defined as an IQ of 70 or lower. The onset of an intellectual disability must occur before the age of 18. According to the American Psychiatric Association's (APA) Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, there are four levels of severity pointing toward intellectual functioning:

Classification	IQ
Mild	55–69
Moderate	40–54
Severe	25–39
Profound	24 and below

Those who are mildly intellectually disabled often are similar to normal classmates in height and weight, but closer observation often reveals they are lacking in strength, speed, and coordination. They also tend to have more health problems (Henson 1996, p. 176).

Students who are mildly intellectually disabled may experience frustration when expected to function socially and/or academically at their chronological age. Typically, they have short attention spans and are unable to concentrate for extended periods of time. Antisocial, disruptive, and inappropriate classroom behavior can often be attributed to the students' disability. Expectations to perform beyond their abilities sometimes results in frustrations manifesting in inappropriate social behaviors, such as acting out in class or refusing to attempt or complete class work.

Moderate Intellectual Disability

Because the level of intellectual development for students who are moderate is typically 25 to 53 percent lower than students of average intelligence, students with moderate intellectual disabilities often respond slowly to education and training. But, when given appropriate educational opportunity, many of these students can be educated for jobs requiring exceptional skills.

Students who lack memory skills, ability to generalize, language skills, conceptual and perceptual abilities, and creative abilities should be given tasks that are attainable, brief, relevant, sequential, and designed for success.

INTASC Standard 7 & 8 Planning for instruction & instructional strategies

Teaching Alternatives for Students Who are Intellectually Disabled

To learn more about your future role as a teacher of students with mental disabilities, consider the following questions:

1. What are the duties of administrators and support personnel?
2. What are the techniques available to school personnel to diagnose learners who have mental disabilities?
3. Are there examples of individualized education programs available for teachers?
4. How can I prepare my nondisabled students for the entry of students who are disabled into the classroom?
5. How can I prepare my learners with disabilities for entry into the classroom with learners who are nondisabled?
6. Where can I get help in learning how to evaluate learners with disabilities so that I will be demanding, yet fair, in my expectations of these students?
7. Where can I conduct low-anxiety, nonthreatening meetings with students with disabilities and their families?

Students Who Have a Behaviorally Based Disability

The diagnosing of certain disabilities is dependent upon symptomatology specifically related to abnormal, disabling behaviors. This includes attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism disorder, Asperger's Syndrome, and

Most students who exhibit apathy or hostility should not be classified as behaviorally disordered.

emotional disturbance. Students with these disorders are typically perceived as behaviorally confused or bewildered, often do not understand social stresses, and feel unaccepted in their efforts to resolve them (Love, 1974). These students are more at risk for being either hostile or apathetic. Those with serious behaviorally based disorders often require psychological services.

Most students who exhibit apathy or hostility should not be classified as disabled. The key elements with identifying these students are the intensity, duration, and frequency of such behaviors. For example, the student who occasionally disrupts class or yells at a classmate is probably not disordered, but the one who twice daily over a period of time has a violent, prolonged temper tantrum may have a behavioral disorder. Key in the diagnosis of a disabling condition is whether the behavior is significantly impairing the child's ability to learn and achieve in the classroom. At any grade level, especially the middle and secondary levels, students with behaviorally based disorders often show oversensitivity to criticism. Some may exhibit depression. Again, it is the frequency, duration, and intensity of the behavior that indicates the seriousness of the condition.

Prior to 1975, children with behaviorally based disorders, like other children with disabilities, were assigned to classes taught by specially trained teachers. After the enactment of PL 94-142, the method used to evaluate such children was changed. Many students with behaviorally based disorders are now educated, at least for part of the school day, in regular educational settings.

Teachers should arrange for behaviorally based disordered students to have successful experiences and provide a climate free of threat and fear.

Children who have behaviorally-based disorders often have limited ability to make independent decisions and are often significantly influenced by their peers. Ironically, and unfortunately, children who have behaviorally- based disabilities are sometimes socially rejected by their classmates, which can affect their academic progress. According to Bender and Evans (1989), "These students exhibit attention disorders and other problem behaviors which further hinder their academic progress" (p. 89).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder

Jamie, age 3, was expelled from preschool for frequent fights with other children. When Jamie played with other children, he would escalate the play into aggressive behavior and fighting. Examples of aggressive behavior included his throwing sand in the faces of other children and hitting them with toys. When the fighting became so aggressive that Jamie's teacher feared for the safety of the other children, she asked his mother to remove him from preschool. Jamie's parents were shocked by the teacher's request. They admitted that Jamie was an aggressive child, difficult to discipline, subject to frequent temper tantrums, and had a short attention span. Jamie had displayed such behaviors since infancy. His parents believed he would "outgrow" such behaviors, and that his teacher simply did not understand or know how to cope with Jamie. They believed another preschool would provide the educational environment Jamie needed (Campbell, 1988). Jamie suffers from *attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder* (ADHD).

Students diagnosed with ADHD are eligible for special education services under the category of other health impaired. **ADHD** is described as a set of symptoms reflecting excessive inattention or hyperactivity and impulsivity, within the context of what is developmentally appropriate for the child's age and gender (APA, 2000; Landau & McAninch, 1993). ADHD is found in 3 to 7 percent of children (APA, 2000). The disorder is much more prevalent in males; "with the male-to-female ratios ranging from 2:1 to 9:1 depending on the type" (APA, 2000). An individual can be diagnosed with ADHD by displaying symptoms related only to inattention or only to hyperactivity and impulsivity; or, a diagnosis can involve symptoms in both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity.

Symptoms of ADHD

The symptoms of ADHD are characterized by a child's inability to sustain a response long enough to accomplish assigned tasks. Therefore, the descriptions of "doesn't listen, can't concentrate, work independently, or complete assignments" (Barkley, 1990) are often correct.

According to APA's (2000) *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the symptoms necessary for diagnosis are as follows:

Inattention

- lacks attention to details or makes careless mistakes
- has difficulty sustaining attention
- does not seem to listen when spoken to
- does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork or other duties
- difficulty organizing
- avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks requiring mental effort
- often loses things necessary for tasks or activities
- is easily distracted
- often forgetful

Hyperactivity

- fidgets or squirms
- leaves seat in classroom or in situations in which being seated is expected
- runs or climbs excessively in inappropriate settings (in adolescents or adults, restlessness is experienced)
- has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly
- is "on the go" or acts as if "driven by a motor"
- talks excessively

Impulsivity

- blurts our answers before questions are completed
- has difficulty awaiting turn
- interrupts or intrudes on others (APA, 2000, p. 92)

APA (2000) further clarified that the symptoms must interfere with the student's ability to function in the classroom and in other settings. The symptoms must have been evident before age 7, persisted for at least 6 months, and present in two or more settings. If the individual presents six or more symptoms under inattention and six or more symptoms under hyperactivity/impulsivity, the diagnosis is ADHD Combined Type. If six or more symptoms are present under inattention but less than hyperactivity/impulsivity, the diagnosis is ADHD Predominately Inattentive Type. And if six or more symptoms

only under hyperactivity/impulsivity but less than six under inattention, the diagnosis is ADHD Predominately Hyperactivity Impulsive Type.

Because of their behavior, ADHD children face many social and academic problems in the classroom. Their behaviors may include stealing, lying, being aggressive, and violating rules. Additionally, their peers reject them because of their aggression, bossiness, intrusiveness, and low toleration for others. Academically, ADHD children are at high risk for underachievement, exhibiting such actions as being noisy and disruptive, being frequently out of their seats, and not completing homework and schoolwork (McGee & Share, 1988).

Treatment and Teacher Alternatives

The treatments for ADHD include medication, behavior management plans, and a combination of both medication and behavior management. Medication is the most prevalent treatment (Barkley, 1990). Concerta, Dexedrine, and Ritalin are common medications prescribed for individuals with ADHD. These medications increase the production of neurotransmitters in the brain. A large majority of children respond to medication and often experience improvement in attention and memory, are less disturbing to others, and have better relations with parents, teachers, and friends (Barkley, 1990). For children who do not respond to medication, the National Association of School Psychologists (1992) suggested that teachers' interventions should include the following:

- Classroom modifications to enhance attendance, academic production, and social adjustment (Chapters 6, 8, 9, and 12)
- Behavioral management systems to reduce problems most likely to be affected by attention deficits (Chapters 6 and 12)
- Direct instruction in study strategies and social skills (Chapters 2 and 8)
- Consultation with families to assist in behavior management in the home (Chapters 6 and 12)
- Working collaboratively with community agencies that provide medical and related services to students and families

Autistic Disorder and Asperger's Syndrome

Autism is sometimes first recognized by a child's family or guardians due to the child's lack of interest in social interaction. Individuals diagnosed with autism display "markedly abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a markedly restricted repertoire of activity and interests" (APA, 2000, p. 70). APA's (2000) diagnosis criteria specifies that delays occur before age 3 in at least one of the areas: language used in social communication, in social interaction, and in play activities. The majority of children diagnosed with autism also have an associated diagnosis of an intellectual

disability that can range from mild to profound. The reported cases of autism range from 2 to 20 cases per 10,000 individuals. The behavioral characteristics of individuals with autism include aggressiveness, hyperactivity, impulsivity, self-injurious behaviors, short attention span, and temper tantrums, especially in young children. In describing behaviors of autism, APA (2000) indicated,

> There may be odd responses to sensory stimuli (e.g., high threshold for pain, oversensitivity to sounds or being touched, exaggerated reactions to light or odors, fascination with stimuli). There may be abnormalities in eating (e.g., limiting diet to a few foods, Pica) or sleeping (e.g., recurrent awakening at night with rocking). Abnormalities of mood or affect (e.g., giggling or weeping for no apparent reason, an apparent absence of emotional reaction) may be present. There may be a lack of fear in response to real dangers, and excessive fearfulness in response to harmless objects. A variety of self-injurious behaviors may be present (e.g., head banging or finger, hand, or wrist biting). (p. 72)

Asperger's Syndrome (AS) is a disorder also marked by severe and sustained impairments in a child's social interactions. It is a separate disorder from autism due to differences in speech and language development. Children with Asperger's do not show severe delay in speech by age 2 as do children with autism. Further, individuals with Asperger's develop appropriate "spontaneous communicative phrases" (APA, 2000) by age 3; whereas, those with autism often do not. Further, children with Asperger's typically have normal intellectual abilities. Children diagnosed with Asperger's have "clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning" (APA, 2000, p. 84) which can manifest in a failure to develop peer relationships, in a lack of emotional or social reciprocity, and in a failure to develop appropriate nonverbal skills. Morrison (2009) provided the following recommendations for teachers to help students with Asperger's:

- *Use clear, concrete language*. While students with AS may have an impressive vocabulary about specific topics, they rarely understand jokes or sarcasm.
- *Help develop social skills*. Encourage partner or group work with assigned tasks. You will need to model appropriate behaviors or provide a written script for your students with AS.
- *Monitor peer relationships*. Many children with AS are bullied. If you sense students with AS are being intimidated or mistreated, step in and let those who are bothering the student know that teasing or harassing is not allowed in your classroom or in the school. (p. 154)

Emotional Disturbance

The behaviorally- based disability, *emotional disturbance*, is not a psychiatric disorder; rather, it is a term used in IDEA legislation to define and serve behavior disorders significantly impairing learning and academic achievement. This allows schools to serve a multitude of psychiatric behaviorally based disorders, such as, conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorders, and disruptive behavior disorders. The diagnostic criteria depend on the state and school system, however, the prevailing diagnostic characteristic is the student's behaviors necessitate intervention and services in special education in order for the student to succeed in school. According to the IDEA 2004 legislation, emotional disturbance is defined as follows:

I. *Emotional disturbance* means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree adversely affects a child's educational performance:
   a. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
   b. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
   c. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
   d. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
   e. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

II. Emotional disturbance includes *schizophrenia*. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined they have a serious emotional disturbance. (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Characteristics common in students with emotional disturbance indicate two patterns of behaviors: externalizing and internalized (Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009).

- *Externalizing* students are often aggressive, uncooperative, restless, and negativistic. They tend to lie and steal, defy teachers, and be hostile to authority figures. Sometimes they are cruel and malicious.
- *Internalizing* students, by contrast, are typically shy, timid, anxious, and fearful. They are often depressed and lack self-confidence. (Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009, pp. 204–205)

Teachers are more likely to identify students who display externalizing behaviors rather than internalizing. However, the student who is more withdrawn can be at greater risk for developing depression and for suicide

(Snowman, McCown, & Biehler, 2009). The following sections provide teaching strategies that have been shown successful with students who have behaviorally based disorders.

INTASC Standard 1 Learner development

Teaching Alternatives for Students with Behaviorally Based Disorders

As Carri (1985) argued, the characteristics of students who have behavioral disorders present teachers with a different set of demands than those placed on teachers of students with other disabling conditions. One successful approach is teaching behaviorally disordered students to monitor their own behavior. Bender and Evans (1989) reported, "Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of self-monitoring with various types of secondary disabled students, including both students with learning disabilities and students with behavioral disorders" (p. 207). Other approaches include relaxation training and class meetings.

Programs requiring students with behaviorally based disabilities to monitor their own behavior are effective in keeping students on-task.

Self-Monitoring

McLaughlin, Krappman, and Welch (1985) studied the effects of self-monitoring on four students with behavioral disorders who demonstrated low levels of task-oriented behavior. Baseline observations of behavior demonstrated the range of **on-task behavior**—defined as 'students working on the currently assigned classroom activities-was between 24 and 60 percent before the intervention'. During self-monitoring intervention, students were instructed to mark a "+" column on a recording sheet if they were on-task, and a "–" column if they were off-task. They completed this procedure whenever they thought about paying attention during half-hour instructional lessons over a 30- to 40-day period. An aide observed the students during the intervention and for 60 days after the intervention. The intervention phase showed a 28 to 67 percent improvement in on-task behavior, and the follow-up phase showed on-task behavior of 90 percent or higher for all four students.

Student intervention programs are effective when students believe in them.

Although self-monitoring has many advantages, several cautions are in order. First, studies demonstrating the effectiveness of self-monitoring have used subjects who were hyperactive or distractible rather than defiant or aggressive. Therefore, caution should be used when implementing this intervention with the latter types of children who have behavioral disorders. Finally, the requirements for implementation suggest that the student must "buy into" the process. If students do not find success in schoolwork or teacher praise, other reinforcers should be used. (See Chapters 6 and 12.)

Relaxing exercises can reduce the misbehavior of behaviorally based disordered students.

Relaxation Training

Another strategy that offers potential for teaching many students who are behaviorally disordered is *relaxation training* (monitoring students' involuntary

physiological processes, such as muscle tensing, brain wave activity, heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing patterns). "This procedure can be very helpful for the typical behaviorally disordered student who demonstrates hyperactivity, impulsivity, and frequent out-seat behaviors" (Bender & Evans, 1989, p. 91). The school counselor, school psychologist, or medical staff should be able to advise if such services are available in your school district.

Class Meetings

Yet another strategy for working with students who have behaviorally based disorders is the use of *class meeting*s. As early as 1965, William Glaser used this method in the development of **reality therapy**—a technique designed to focus on the specific behavior (rather than on the child) and to develop alternative behaviors to satisfy the student's needs. "This technique would be appropriate in a secondary civics class that included several non-disabled students as well as several students with moderate disabilities. Also, junior or senior high school classes that stress human relationships would be an appropriate mainstream setting for these meetings" (Bender & Evans, 1989, p. 93).

Effective use of class meetings for behavior control of students who have behavioral disorders requires the classroom teacher to have some understanding of reality therapy techniques. Both the teachers and students must know how to share power in discussions and be willing to participate in frank and open discussion. This requires a level of maturity some students don't have. Other classroom behavioral techniques for students who are behaviorally disordered are discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 12.

Students Who Are Learning Disabled

Students with learning disabilities (LD) have average to above average intelligence but are unable to adequately process information, and learning is often hindered. LD results from a dysfunction of psychological processes other than intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbance, sensory deprivation, or sociocultural factors. Students with learning disabilities may be awkward, hyperkinetic, and impulsive; others may appear hypokinetic and uninterested in academic activities. Because many regular education school programs are not designed to accommodate this type of behavior, these students are frequently viewed as having behavior problems. Frustration resulting from an inability to perform classroom tasks may lead these students to act out in class or fail to display "teacher-pleasing behaviors," such as raising a hand to respond or staying in their seat. Very few students with learning disabilities are hostile or physically aggressive, but their disruptive behavior can be frustrating to their teachers and peers.

Often students with learning disabilities have impairments in the psychomotor, visual, or auditory domain. Students who have *psychomotor disabilities* are likely to be in poor physical condition or exhibit awkwardness. Their written assignments can also provide clues—handwriting may be unusually large or small and written on one corner of the paper.

If the basis of the student's problem is visual, the teacher may notice that the student cannot follow visual directions, may tend to forget things seen, and may be easily distracted by surrounding activities. Furthermore, such students tend to move their eyes excessively or inappropriately. Auditory disabilities are characterized by students failing to follow oral directions, forgetting directions, and being easily distracted by noise and confusing similar sounds.

> The student with learning disabilities includes a broad range of neurological problems that are quite distinct from either retardation or emotional disturbances. The LD child is likely to have difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, and math. The LD child often has difficulties with attending, concentrating, remembering, organizing, sequencing, coordinating; and distinguishing right from left, letters, and numbers. (Wenar, 1994)

- According to the Learning Disabilities Association of America, 10 to 15 percent of students have learning disabilities. A child who demonstrates a number of the following may indicate a need for further testing:
- Is disorganized
- Is easily distracted
- Has a poor attention span
- Overreacts to noise
- Doesn't enjoy being read to
- Has poor hand-to-eye coordination
- Uses words inappropriately
- Is hyperactive
- Has limited vocabulary
- Is unable to follow directions
- Sometimes has poor emotional control
- Has difficulty remembering
- Chooses younger playmates or prefers solitary play
- (Wenar, 1994)

According to Wenar (1994), students diagnosed with learning disabilities need the opportunity to act and verbalize on what they learn. To help them, teachers should encourage students to verbalize what they have learned, construct models, draw pictures, and provide illustrations and pictures of what is to be learned.

Teaching Alternatives for Students Who Are Learning Disabled

Woodrich (1994) suggested that students who have learning disabilities and who were offered (1) immediacy cues (eye contact, forward leaning), and (2) focused immediacy cues plus modeling of exploration (drawing the child's attention to observations) often showed higher levels of exploration under both kinds of supportive conditions. The facilitative teacher must remember that any obstacles preventing success for these students, whether attitudinal, emotional, physical, or academic, need to be addressed.

Similar to Ms. Barnes's seventh-grade class Todd was fortunate to observe, many other approaches are available for reaching the reluctant student with learning disabilities. In Vancouver, British Columbia, nonproductive students are asked to draw a picture and then write a story below it. The teacher first discusses the content without referring to grammatical errors and later addresses grammatical errors. Lake Washington school district has volunteer tutors who keep daily progress charts. A New York inner-city teacher assigns students such complex topics as aerodynamics and rocket building. Students must read and work math and physics to build model rockets. The details of such techniques are discussed in Chapters 6 through 12.

STUDENTS WHO ARE SENSORY IMPAIRED

Teachers can help students develop confidence in themselves by demonstrating they have confidence in those students.

Students who are visually impaired and hearing impaired are referred to as *sensory impaired*. Visually impaired students include individuals who are partially sighted and who are blind; hearing-impaired students include those who are deaf or have partial hearing.

Visually disabled students vary in the extent of their disability; only about 10 percent of the legally blind are totally blind. Critical to teaching students with visual impairments is the *degree of the disability*. The *length of time* the student has had the visual impairment is also important. Those whose problems have been life-long often need additional help developing concepts of space and form; whereas, those whose blindness is recent often need more help adjusting to their loss of sight.

Students who have hearing problems range from those who can hear and understand speech by using such supports as hearing aids, to those who are classified as deaf, who at most are able to distinguish only amplified sounds. In considering the range of the hearing impairment, the primary task for the teacher is determining how the hearing loss affects the student's ability to do academic work. Again, how long the student has had the hearing loss is important, *whether the hearing loss occurred before or after the development of speech and language* is critical. A major problem of students who have been deaf since birth is the development of speech and language comprehension.

Teaching Alternatives for Students Who Are Sensory Impaired

When working with students who are visually and hearing impaired, a good beginning is accepting the students and believing in their ability to adjust to your classroom. Your confidence they will be productive students is essential. It is especially important to remember that a student who has a visual or hearing impairment does not necessarily have impaired intellectual functioning.

The teacher is responsible for creating a climate of acceptance among the student's peers. Because visually and/or hearing-impaired students are unable to pick up on all the stimuli providing clues as to how and when they should respond, they often respond inappropriately or not at all. Peers who are insensitive to these limitations may interpret their response (or absence of response) as unfriendly or antisocial. The limited vocabulary of some of these students may further restrict their responses. The teacher should make every effort to provide a positive climate focusing on the abilities and potentials of these students, rather than on their limitations. Suggestions for the classroom environment for students who are sensory impaired include the following:

- Seating the student(s) toward the front of the class or teacher
- Providing class assignments in bold, large print for students who are visually impaired
- Having all class assignments and class notes in print for students who are hearing impaired
- Using recorders for repeating academic information
- Working closely with families and school personnel who are knowledgeable in the area of the student's impairment, also taking advantage of sign-language interpreter if available in the classroom

Speech or Language Impairments

Speech and language are among the most complex behaviors that children learn. *Communication disorders* can be defined as a significant deviation in speech or language from norms based on sex, age, and cultural, ethnic, or social expectations (Haring, 1982). Communication disorders among students can have a detrimental impact on their academic and social behavior, resulting in the following:

- Students having difficulty communicating what they have learned and understanding what is to be learned, and
- Poor self-concept often as a result of self-consciousness, reluctance to attempt communication, and stress.

A fundamental goal of educators should be to identify academic deficiencies of students.

Speech or language disorders include *speech impairments*, defined as the inability to produce sounds effectively; *articulation disorders*, characterized by substituting one sound for another, distorting sounds, and adding or omitting sounds; and stuttering and voicing problems, which includes inappropriate pitch, quality, or loudness (Woolfolk, 1995).

Adapting instruction often includes the guidance of a specialist, but the classroom teacher can work with students to improve their communication difficulties. Suggestions for teachers include:

- Encourage students to speak out in class, but do not force them to do so.
- Communicate with families of students about resources outside the classroom.
- Listen attentively with patience, and do not allow ridicule by other students. (Lewis & Doorlag, 1991; Wood, 1989)

In addition, teachers should avoid interrupting or attempting to finish sentences for students with speech or language disorders. The teacher needs to create a safe, classroom environment allowing these students the time they need to speak and complete their thoughts without concern that others will make fun or become impatient with them.

PROACTIVE EXERCISE

You have students who are physically impaired, as was Mario in Ms. Barnes's class, and one who is sensory impaired. How would you accommodate their physical and academic needs?

TODD WILLIAMS...

classroom was quiet for the first time in 2 weeks. Quiet in an academic sense-the only noises were from squeaky chairs, the rustle of paper, erasers rubbing out incorrect and correct answers, and an occasional sigh. Todd's students were taking their six-week's exam. Todd enjoyed giving exams. No lecturing or lesson plans, just pass out exams and monitor. Exams are a time for students, rather than the teacher, to perform.

As Todd scanned his class, he was sure he could predict with considerable accuracy his students' test scores. Amy would make a C+, mused Todd. Amy was very popular with the other students, a cheerleader but, like many of her peers, often more interested in members of the opposite sex than in school. Ferris would, at best, make a D or fail. He was not interested in social studies, and Todd was surprised and pleased to learn that Ferris played first chair trumpet in the school orchestra. Ferris was scheduled to play a solo for spring graduation ceremonies. Ferris had confided in Todd that he wanted to drop out of school and form a rock band. Tina would make an A. Tina always made A's in everything. She was bright and quiet and worked diligently, an absolute delight for any teacher. She and Juan were competing for "highest academic honors" of their class. Theo, an exceptional athlete, would make an A or a B. Theo was the exception to the stereotype "dumb jock;" he made good grades. Al, the class clown, would make a C. Todd couldn't help but laugh at the stunts Al pulled in class, but he was still trying to figure out a way to get Al to study. "Maybe if I threatened to get him kicked off the debate team. No, I couldn't do that," thought Todd. "Or could I?" he mused.

Todd thought he would probably spend his teaching career trying to figure out the diversity of intelligence and talent among his students: Sherry, a C student who played classical piano; Steve, the B+ student who worked so hard to maintain his grades so he could get into a "good" university, whereas Tina and Juan made A's with seemingly little effort; and Stewart, confined to a wheelchair and who, despite being spoiled and obnoxious and a C– student, had the ambition and potential to be a sports commentator. "Assisting students to discover and capitalize on their talents is a special responsibility," Todd thought as Rick raised his hand for assistance.

Programs for the gifted must address subject matter thoroughly.

Most educators use the Wechsler Scales, the Kaufman Scales, or the Stanford-Binet to assist in identifying gifted students.

STUDENTS WHO ARE EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED AND TALENTED

Thus far, we have provided information to help teachers plan for students with many types of disabilities. Another group of students who often need special educational opportunities is the group known as the *gifted* and *talented*. In the

past, students who often have been the most neglected were too often those with exceptional gifts and talents. Such students, if appropriately challenged, have the potential to excel academically and socially. Attempts to reach these students have met with obstacles, including the lack of agreement on characteristics to be considered when defining this group. The next section we look at attempts to serve this special population of students.

Because the gifted and talented are not considered disabled, there is no federal interpretation of giftedness in IDEA nor are there federal mandates requiring special education services. Each state determines whether gifted students will be served, and schools must rely on local and state funding if serving these students. Currently, only 60 percent of states have legislation mandating services for gifted and talented (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2012). However, these exceptional students need appropriate educational experiences to help them develop to their full potential. An abundance of materials and resources are available to challenge these students; yet, traditionally; the practice has been to give the gifted the same assignments-and, perhaps even worse, more of the same problems assigned in class. This practice should be replaced by activities capable of holding their interest and challenging their intellect. Many school systems have trained professionals to work in programs for the gifted and talented. Ask whether your school or school system has such resources and inquire about programs for identifying gifted students. The teacher's first responsibility to these students is to identify them.

Identifying Gifted and Talented Students

Originally passed in 1988, the **Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act of 2001** provides the following definition of gifted and talented:

> Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. (National Association of Gifted Children, 2008 p, 10)

Most programs for gifted students group them for part or all of the day.

The determination of eligibility for services in gifted and talented programs varies in different states and in different school districts. However, a common criterion used for acceptance is obtaining an IQ of 130-135 or above on

the Wechsler Scales, the Kaufman Scales, or the Stanford-Binet. Furthermore, most school systems do not use IQ exclusively, but consider teacher rating scales, student grades, scores on standardized tests, and/or tests of creative thinking when determining eligibility.

When you think of a gifted and talented student, what characteristics come to mind? Bohlin, Durwin, and Reese-Weber (2009) summarized research on the common traits of students who are gifted and talented:

Many gifted students are self-conscious.

Grouping gifted students can improve their self-images.

- Students who are gifted master knowledge or skills in a particular domain earlier than their peers (Steiner & Carr, 2003; Winner, 1996). They tend to have above-average ability in a particular subject, such as reading, mathematics, science, art, or music, or they have above-average ability overall (Renzull, 2002).
- These students process information more efficiently, learn at a faster pace, use more effective strategies, and monitor their understanding better than their non-gifted peers (Davidson & Davidson, 2004; Robinson, 2000; Steiner & Carr, 2003).
- These students are independent learners. They require less direct instruction and support from teachers than their non-gifted peers (Winner, 1996). They also make discoveries on their own and solve problems in unique ways, showing flexibility and creativity in the way they apply their knowledge to novel situations.
- Students who are gifted possess a high level of interest and intrinsic motivation, an internal drive to learn and master topics within their area of giftedness (Winner, 2000). As preschoolers, children who are gifted display unusual curiosity, a high level of questioning, and an intense desire to learn (Creel & Karnes, 1988; Gross, 1993). School-aged students who are gifted seek out challenging tasks, exhibit boredom at tasks they consider too easy, and have high personal standards for their performance, sometimes to the point of perfection (LoCicero & Ashbly, 2000; Parker, 1997).

Once gifted students are identified, most programs providing special services group these students for part or all of the day. According to Feldhusen (1989),

> Children who are gifted and talented complain a great deal about the boredom of their classroom experiences; they are forced to spend a lot of time being taught things they already know, doing repetitive drill sheets and activities, and receiving instruction on new material at too slow a pace. These experiences probably cause

> gifted youth to lose motivation to learn, to get by with minimum effort, or to reject school as a worthwhile experience. (p. 6)

Grouping gifted and/or talented students for all or portions of the school day or week can serve as a motivator; interacting with other students who are also enthusiastic about astronomy, robotics, Shakespeare, or algebra can heighten enthusiasm for learning. In regular classes, gifted children often hide or suppress their talents or enthusiasm for academic topics because of the ridicule of peers such as being labeled a "nerd." In classes for the gifted and talented, the reverse is often true: mutual reinforcement and enthusiasm for academic interests can be very motivating.

A research study on grouping the gifted, Kulik and Kulik (1987) concluded that the most positive effects of grouping came from programs designed especially for talented students. Students in these programs gained more academically than they would have in heterogeneous classes. Special within-class grouping designed for talented students raised academic achievement substantially. The Kuliks (1987) concluded that grouping can be a powerful tool in the education of gifted and talented students.

Feldhusen (1989) presented the following highlights of research on gifted youths; the research provides several useful guidelines for serving this special population.

1. *Identification*. Schools are often ineffective in identifying gifted students, especially in finding talent among children from poverty and minority backgrounds, very young children, and underachievers. Identification is most often based on intelligence tests; use of creativity tests or achievement tests is rare. Multiple data sources should be used to identify types of giftedness and to specify appropriate program services.
2. *Acceleration*. Acceleration motivates gifted students by providing them with instruction that challenges. Accelerated students show superior achievement in school and beyond. Despite the fears of some educators, acceleration does not damage the social-emotional adjustment of gifted youths.
3. *Grouping*. Grouping gifted and talented youths for all or part of the school day can serve as a motivator. In special classes or cluster groups for the gifted, mutual reinforcement for academic interests prevails. Removing gifted students from regular classrooms does not deprive other students of role models; instead, it allows them to be leaders and top performers.

Removing gifted students from regular classrooms does not deprive other students; instead, it allows them to be leaders and top performers.

PROACTIVE TEACHING

CLASSROOM SITUATION

1. You notice that a few of your better students with inadequate math backgrounds learn by rote to get correct answers, but they do poorly on written problems.

2. Earlier, Todd mused about the variety of academic skills among his students. Similarly, some articulate well, some read fluently, others appear to have good listening and note-taking skills. Some students work well independently, others are successful working in groups, and many prefer teacher-oriented lectures.

PROACTIVE ALTERNATIVES

- When developing new academic material in math or any subject, identify the knowledge your students will need to accomplish the lesson's objectives. Take the appropriate measures to discover whether students have those skills. This might be accomplished with a pretest. Have remedial material prepared that can be used to review students on essential background material information.
- Rote memory requirements for new academic material should be kept to a minimum. Successful cognitive growth among students is more likely when rote memorization requirements are infrequent (Glover & Bruning, 1990).
- Prepare a variety of methods to teach new information. Use visual aids such as PowerPoint, charts, diagrams, computers and iPads, if available.
- Check your library or media center for videos on the subject.
- Plan field trips and group work, and locate guest experts on current academic topics. If appropriate, provide the opportunity for students, especially elementary students, to handle objects related to new concepts. An example might be wooden or plastic geometric shapes (squares, triangles, balls, rectangles) used to teach the concepts of density, volume, area, length, and width.

Teaching Alternatives for Gifted and Talented Students

Once gifted and talented students are identified, how can teachers teach them? Let's follow the experiences of one new teacher thrust unprepared into a classroom of gifted students.

CASE STUDY

Gerald Lassiter was an outstanding student in elementary school, high school, and college. In his sophomore year of high school, he took the SATs and scored 1370. He was salutatorian of his high school class. When he enrolled in a major state university on the Atlantic coast, he surprised everyone, including his family, by deciding to become a social studies teacher. In large measure, this decision was sparked by Gerald's admiration for one of his high school teachers.

Two months prior to completing his final year of college, Gerald was selected by the School of Education faculty as the outstanding senior in teacher education. With a grade point average of 3.9 (4.0 = A), he graduated magna cum laude and landed a teaching position at one of the best schools in the state for student teaching, Benton's West High School.

West High School, serving an affluent area of the city, had won numerous citations for excellence. Gerald realized that Benton offered the social and cultural advantages of a major city, and West High School was a dream come true for a first-year teacher.

Gerald's assignment included teaching three sections of American History and two sections of Social Studies. However, two weeks before classes were to begin, Gerald's principal, Dr. Bradovich, informed him, "I have to make a minor change in your teaching assignment. We just had a late resignation from Ms. Eleanor Moody. She taught our section of social studies for gifted and talented students. I would like to give that class to you. You'll have four sections of history along with the gifted and talented class."

After a pause, Gerald responded, "I'm a little uncomfortable with having to take the class for gifted and talented. I don't have any special preparation in that area."

"Don't worry," the principal assured him. "We have a coordinator in the central office who will supply you with plenty of assistance. Her name is Dr. Turner. I'm going to have her send you some materials right now so you can look them over in the remaining weeks before

school starts. I have a great deal of confidence in you. After all, you're a gifted person, yourself. I think this assignment will be challenging for you and for the students."

Gerald was unsure whether to be worried or honored by his new principal's decision. In reality, he felt both. Using the materials forwarded to him by Dr. Turner and two books he purchased from a university bookstore, Gerald spent the week before the start of school consuming information about teaching gifted students. His first official act when he got situated in Benton was to contact Dr. Turner and arrange an appointment. During the meeting, Dr. Turner gave Gerald a box of materials, including specific lesson plans for the first 10 classes. "I suggest you try to follow these plans as closely as possible," she urged him. Not knowing what was in the lesson plans, Gerald simply nodded and left.

The first day of classes was exciting. Gerald was especially anxious to meet his third-period class-the advanced section in social studies for the gifted and talented. The class had 10 students, all seniors.

When Gerald introduced himself, one young man in the front row immediately inquired, "What happened to Mrs. Moody? She was supposed to teach this class." "Mrs. Moody resigned and the class was assigned to me," Gerald responded. One female student asked, "Weren't you here student-teaching last spring? I think my sister was in your American history class."

For the most part, the students were pleasant. Gerald immediately sensed, however, that competition among the group was intense. These were the 18 brightest students he had ever encountered. He was thankful that Dr. Turner had provided him with the materials. He knew he would need all the help he could get.

On the third day of class, Gerald was surprised to find Dr. Turner sitting in the room at the beginning of the period. "Don't mind me," she said. "I just want to observe." Dr. Turner returned at least once a week for the next 3 weeks. She would sit silently and didn't' provide Gerald any feedback following her visits. At first, he didn't mind, but now the visits were becoming troublesome. In large measure, this was due to the fact things were not going as well as Gerald had hoped. The students exhibited little enthusiasm. They were overtly complaining about the class being "too routine;" and they kept asking when they would be doing things independently. Gerald decided it was time to talk to Dr. Bradovich.

Effective programs for the gifted students must provide for in-depth, content-based learning while providing for exploratory learning as well.

The appointment took place in the principal's office after school. Gerald started by providing a brief summary of what had occurred in the class, up to that point. He was candid about the student dissatisfaction. "Dr. Bradovich, I'm convinced that these students want to work more independently. Dr. Turner's lesson plans, the ones she gave me and wants me to follow, are designed to have the entire class doing the same things."

"Have you tried talking to Dr. Turner?" Dr. Bradovich inquired. "Yes, very frequently. But I never get anything from her except more lesson plans. I really think these students want to compete academically against one another. I think they want to be turned loose on challenging projects."

"Well, she's the expert, Gerald," the principal responded. "She's pretty well respected in this school system."

"When I decided to become a teacher," Gerald stated, "I thought I would have the opportunity to use my talents to be creative. You know, that is true with regard to my American history classes. Yet, the gifted and talented class seems to be very confining. At times I feel like I'm just a robot in class. In this instance, I think the students are correct. The class is too confining."

"Gerald, you have a long and probably successful career ahead of you. Be patient. Schools require certain levels of structure. We cannot afford to have teachers doing 'their own thing.' Dr. Turner's paid to provide advice, and that's what she's doing."

Clearly, this is not the experience teachers or students want to have. In analyzing what went wrong here, address the following questions:

1. What criteria did the principal use to assign the gifted and talented class to Gerald? Is Gerald at a disadvantage because he is a first-year teacher? Why or why not?
2. Discuss the positive and negative ramifications of teachers being given lesson plans that they are directed to follow.
3. Should teachers have significant degrees of freedom to apply their professional skills? Should first-year teachers have any less freedom than their more experienced peers? Explain your answer.
4. Discuss the mistakes made by Gerald, Dr. Turner, and Dr. Bradovich.
5. What would be an appropriate curriculum for these students?

If the needs of gifted students are to be met, once they are identified and grouped, they must be provided with a special curriculum. A curriculum alternative for gifted students has three important dimensions:

1. A content-based mastery dimension that allows gifted learners to move more rapidly through the curriculum.
2. A process/product/research dimension that encourages in-depth and independent learning.
3. The freedom to explore issues, themes, and ideas across curriculum areas.

(VanTassel-Baska et al., 1988).

Emphasis should be placed on both the written curriculum and instructional techniques (Table 5.3). A shift in instructional techniques and a procedure for reviewing and adopting text materials are needed.

PROACTIVE EXERCISE

You have two exceptionally gifted students in your class (IQs above 130). One earns excellent grades; the other earns only average grades. How would you address their academic needs?

TABLE 5.3

Appropriate Adaptations of Curriculum, Instruction, and Materials for Gifted Learners

Curriculum	
Compression by using a diagnostic-prescriptive approach for basic skill learning	Development of advanced product related to the content area
Acceleration of content	Integration of content area by key ideas, issues, and themes
Reorganization of content according to higher-level skills and concepts	Integration of ideas across related content areas
Infusion of higher-order thinking skills into content	
Instruction	
Faster-paced instructional pattern	Use of cooperative learning groups for problem solving and special projects (cluster by ability/interest)

More frequent use of inquiry techniques	More frequent use of discussion
Use of varied questioning strategies that include convergent, divergent, and evaluative	Greater use of independent contract work and study
Use of a variety of instructional strategies	
Materials	
Advanced reading level	Problem sets, exercises, and activities organized from simple to complex and including examples that extend 2 to 4 years off level
Higher-level questions for discussion	Extension activities that allow students to pursue a topic in depth
Ideas for group and independent student investigation	Idea connections to multiple areas of curriculum

Many contemporary programs for gifted and talented students include nontraditional content. Basic research skills can be taught to gifted children of middle-school level and even younger. Scientific research methodology is being taught successfully in science classes. Junior high students are being employed by school districts to conduct workshops for teachers on the use of computers (Torrence, 1986, p. 640). In other classes for gifted students, such skills as inventing, logical reasoning creative writing, thinking and forecasting are being taught. See the Proactive Teaching box for other ideas on stimulating gifted students.

PROACTIVE TEACHING

CLASSROOM SITUATION

You have several gifted students in your classes. You notice they are typically well behaved but some seem to be bored with the day-to-day assignments and some are not performing as well academically as they should.

PROACTIVE ALTERNATIVES

- Prior to the start of the school year, prepare class assignments that are advanced for the grade level you are teaching. Also, prepare interesting and stimulating projects such as debates, oral presentations, simulations, and field projects designed for advanced students but can be used by any student who is willing and prepared.

- Confer with counselors, school psychologists, former teachers, and families to determine interests, ideas for academic projects, and other school services available for your gifted and talented students.

STUDENTS WHO ARE UNDERACHIEVERS

Underachievers are students with high intellectual or academic potential whose performance falls in the middle third **in** scholastic achievement-or worse, in the lowest third (Gowan, 1957). Most teachers realize that underachievement is a serious problem. Many students achieve far below their abilities. A second reason for concern is students who are achieving below their abilities academically are also contributing socially below their abilities (Henson, 2012). Further, once gifted students begin to perform below their ability, the trend is difficult to reverse.

More than half of all gifted students achieve well below their ability levels.

Identifying Underachievers

Underachievers, like all special students, must first be identified by the teacher before they can get help. You may find it more difficult to recognize underachievers because they are frequently mistaken for low-ability students (Spicker, 1992). Note the frequent characteristics of underachievers (Saljo, 1991):

Underachievers are often mistaken for low-ability students.

- Belligerent toward classmates and others
- Extremely defensive (given to rationalizing, ad-libbing, excusing failures, lying)
- Fearful of failure and of attempting new tasks because of the likelihood of failure
- Resentful of criticism, yet likely to be highly critical of others
- Prone to habitual procrastination, dawdling, daydreaming, sulking, brooding
- Frequently absent
- Inattentive (wriggling, doodling, whispering)
- Suspicious, distrustful of overtures of affection
- Rebellious
- Negative about own abilities

Often low performance is a result of expectations of the teacher, and/or parents, and/or the student herself

Perhaps no student would display all of these characteristics but any student who shows several should cause concern.

Some of the likely causes of underachievement are physical limitations (such as poor vision or hearing), learning disabilities, and even social maladjustment. Often performance below ability is a result of low expectations at home and school, which leads to low expectations by the student. But to be sure that a particular student is indeed performing well below ability, you must check previous performance records, report cards and standardized tests. For example, a student who is making C's but has stanine IQ scores of 8's and 9's, is clearly performing below ability. Stanine scores designate the particular one-ninth segment on the bell curve where the student scores compared to peers.

INTASC Standard 1 Learner development

Methods for Teaching Underachievers

Once you have identified underachievers in your class, you have alternatives to help them improve their academic and social performance. Consider using some of the following:

- Guidance or counseling to develop positive self-concepts
- Extensive use visual mediums instead of textbooks; use of computer recorded lessons to improve listening, thinking, and reading skills
- Firsthand experiences to stimulate and motivate, especially for students from disadvantaged backgrounds (remember, upper- and middle-class students, as well as poor and some minority students, may come from such backgrounds)
- Assignments and teaching methods adjusted to student interests and abilities relating to established goals, whether personal or academic
- Teacher-student sessions for planning and explaining classroom material to be covered
- Tutoring by willing volunteers or peers who can provide the warmth, understanding, and praise often missing at home
- Group therapy with a warm, understanding counselor or teacher to discuss freely any fears, frustrations, or angers
- A team approach to working with underachievers who are gifted or talented, including the teacher(s), family, a counselor, and student
- Grades and tests as measures of progress indicating areas needing additional work
- Instruction on concentration, remembering, understanding and following directions.
- Instruction in problem-solving and the inquiry method
- Informal grading such as conversations with students and observing their performance in the classroom.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Technology plays an important role in the lives of individuals who have disabilities. Parette, Hourcade, and Vanbiervliet (1993) wrote that "the increasingly expanding possibilities of technologies to help children in academic settings will require educational and related services personnel to rethink the scope of instructional opportunities for students with disabilities" (p. 19). Establish a systemic procedure for assessing and purchasing appropriate technology for students with disabilities.

TABLE 5.4

Assistive Technology Conferences

Conference	Date	Attendance	Target Audience	Contact
Technology and Persons with Disabilities- Annual Conference on Contemporary Applications Of Technology	Spring	2,000	Mixed	Office of Disabled Student Services California State University-Northridge 1811 Nordhoff Street -DVSS Northridge, CA 91330. 818/885-2587
ConnSENSE	Summer	200-300	Mixed	UConn Special Education Technology Lab 249 Glenbrook Road, U-64 Storrs, CT 06269-2064. 860/486-0172
RESNA Annual Conference	Summer	1,000-2,000	Mixed	RESNA 1101 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 700 Washington, DC 20036. 202/857-1199

International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication	Summer	1,000	Mixed	Applied Science and Engineering Laboratories University of Delaware/ A. I. duPont Institute P. O. Box 269 Wilmington, DE 19899 · 302/651-6830
Annual Closing the Gap Conference	Fall	1,200	Mixed	Closing the Gap P.O. Box 68 Henderson, MN 56044 · 612/248-3294
International Technology and Media (TAM) Conference	Winter	400	Educators TAM	c/o The Council for Exceptional Children 1920 Association Drive Reston. VA 22091-1589 · 703/620-3660

Source: Parette. Hourcade, & Vanblervliet, 1993

- To match technology effectively with any student, there are two major considerations: characteristics of the student and characteristics of the technology.
- The characteristics of the student are of utmost importance. Concerning students with disabilities, an assessment should be made of students' present level of functioning academically, socially, and physically and also their preferences concerning technology.
- Once relevant characteristics have been identified and considered, the focus should be placed on the diversity and quality of technology available.
- Simplicity of operation is essential with students, especially those with mental or physical impairments.
- Technologies will be used for a long period of time, so adaptability and the potential for upgrading are very important.
- The reliability and repair record of the technology being considered is crucial. For example, students using wheelchairs daily will cause wear and tear on the seats and armrests, and equipment can become soiled and damaged. Therefore,

reliability and performance are crucial. The best information about technology reliability can often be obtained from the students who use the technology.

- Many resources are available for those interested in technology for students with disabilities. Table 5.2 includes conferences that address the research, availability, costs, and variety of adaptive technology.

SURFING • THE • WEB

The National Association of School Psychologist provides a resource library that includes information pertaining to students with special needs: **http://www.nasponline.org/resources/index.aspx**

Web Sites of Professional Organizations Devoted to Specific Disabilities:

American Association on Intellectual Disabilities and Developmental Disabilities: **http://www.aamr.org/**

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association:**www.asha.org/**

National Association of the Deaf: **www.nad.org/**

National Association of Gifted Children: **http://www.nagc.org/**

National Autism Association: **www.nationalautismassociation.org/**

National Center for Learning Disabilities: **http://www.ncld.org/**

National Federation of the Blind:**www.nfb.org/**

U.S. Autism and Asperger's Association: **www.usautism.org/**

A Teacher's Class

NAME: Renée Hidgon Coward, former member of the North Carolina Teacher of the Year Team

I have a poster on my lab table of a huge orangutan slumped up against a tree trunk. His expression is 100 percent exasperation. The caption says, "Just when I figured out all the answers to life, they changed all the questions. That poster has become a symbol of my philosophy of teaching.

Eighteen years in the classroom has taught me that it is physically impossible for me to teach my students the answers to all the questions of life. Not only are those answers changing at this moment, but the questions in our culture, changes in our needs, and

expectations result in changes in our questions. The answers of today will not solve the questions of tomorrow.

I can, however, empower my students and help them determine their own questions; and I can help guide them in gaining the skills necessary for solving questions. This requires a tremendous leap of faith on the teacher's part because it involves giving up a position of ultimate authority and assuming the position of facilitator of learning.

To empower students means students assume responsibility and don't wait for an order, while the teacher relinquishes the giving-orders mode. Empowered students can use genetic engineering and DNA fingerprinting analysis as tools to solve classroom mysteries. Empowered students can convince county officials of the need to rebuild silt fences to better contain eroding streams' banks. Empowered students can build a half-scale model of the space shuttle and launch it from their classroom. Empowered students can reach for the stars. *(Asheville Citizen Times,* 1997) ■

RECAP OF MAJOR IDEAS

1. Today, when possible, students with disabilities attend classes with their nondisabled peers. This may require providing special instruction and activities for these students or adapting teaching materials and class activities.
2. Individuals who have no disabilities have a tendency to underestimate the mental ability of students with physical disabilities.
3. Federal law requires teachers to design an instructional program that meets the unique learning needs of each student with disabilities.
4. In working with students who have disabilities, teachers should always consider the degree of severity of the disability, the duration, and the level of stability.
5. Students with behavioral disorders need to experience success and should not be subjected to threats or ridicule.
6. Families of children with disabilities have the right to help plan educational programs for their children and a right to evaluate it and require changes to improve it.
7. Public Law 94-142, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (amended from 1975), requires that students be placed in the environment that will least restrict their learning; for some students

this will require special classes, but for most it will mean placement in classes with peers who do not have disabilities.

8. All teachers have multiple responsibilities for meeting the educational needs of all students in their classes, including both students who are disabled and nondisabled.
9. The percentage of gifted students who perform poorly is too high.
10. Programs for gifted students must provide for in-depth, content-based learning and also for independent and exploratory learning.
11. Grouping gifted students removes them from much peer criticism and allows the other students to experience more success.
12. There are ways to identify underachievers and help them.
13. The earlier teachers begin seeking help for students with special needs, the more likely their efforts will succeed.

FURTHER APPLICATIONS

1. Because developing IEPs should be a cooperative effort, you can facilitate this process by developing a way to solicit the cooperation of parents and the student. When working with parents ,you should avoid using jargon. This is an excellent first step to improving your relationship with parents and the student. Identify two additional methods that might facilitate parent and student cooperation in developing an IEP.
2. Research studies have shown that exposure to disabled students improves teachers ' attitudes toward working with them. Increase your contacts with individuals who are disabled by seeking out individuals who are disabled at the university or at a local school. If your college has a special education department, ask for an appointment with a faculty member; or if you have an opportunity to visit a local school, make an appointment with the counselor who may wish to contact a district special educator. These educators may be able to give you helpful advice plus arrange opportunities for you to tutor a student who has a disabling condition.
3. Teachers can facilitate learning for students who are orthopedically disabled by providing a climate of success and by including them in the social activities of the class. Consider the following (which Ms. Barnes used with her seventh graders):
    a. Assign a student on a daily or weekly basis who functions as an assistant for students who are orthopedically impaired. Responsibilities might include (depending on the degree of disabling condition) turning textbook pages; assisting the students

in getting to the lunchroom, playground, and bathroom and writing down assignments.

b. Provide a recorder or written instructions for students who cannot write because of a disabling condition. This allows them to keep up with class assignments, lectures, and homework requirements.

c. Locate orthopedically disabled students in the classroom in an area that allows for mobility. Often this is near the front of the class close to the doorway. Students who are in a wheelchair or who must use aids for mobility, such as crutches, are often very mobile if given space.

List two additional ways a teacher might facilitate social and academic success for the student with orthopedic disabilities. Compare and exchange your list with those of your classmates.

4. The serious student is sometimes challenged to find ways to succeed academically without alienating less-dedicated classmates. You can help. List two ways you could make academic success a rewarding endeavor for gifted students. Compare your list with those of your classmates.

KEY TERMS

mainstreaming
PL 94-142
American Disabilities Act
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004
Elementary and Secondary Education Act Flexibility 2011
individualized education program (IEP)
inclusion
cooperative learning
orthopedic disabilities
intellectual disabilities
autism
Asperger's Syndrome
emotional disturbance
attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
speech impairments
articulation disorder
on-task behavior
relaxation training
class meetings
sensorily impaired
learning disability (LD)
gifted and talented
grouing
acceleration
underachiever
stanine score

LOOKING AHEAD

Educational psychologists believe both "good" and "bad" student behavior is learned. By understanding how students learn to behave, teachers can design and use activities leading to desirable social and academic behavior. The classroom environment dramatically influences student behavior and learning. Chapter 6 explains the many known classroom variables influencing such student behavior. ■