

Teaching in Inclusive School Environments

Stuart Woodcock, Roselyn Dixon, and Kathleen Tanner, 2013, Macksville, Australia: David Barlow Publishing, 232 pp., ISBN 978-1-921333-53-8
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Teaching in Inclusive School Environments is a new text that 'aims to provide pre-service and beginning teachers with content to assist in understanding inclusive classrooms and strategies to support effective teaching in today's schools' (Foreword).

General first impressions are positive, given the book's Australian origins, so that the school and special education terminology, legislation and practices will be familiar to those working within Australia. The book is written in a very clear, readable style, and the text is broken up with photos, diagrams and text boxes, providing information in an easy-to-absorb format. Each chapter begins with an overview and ends with a range of appropriate and worthwhile tutorial activities for groups, pairs and individual investigation. In addition, there are further readings (between two and five per chapter) and a large reference section at the end of the book, which could be better placed following relevant chapters. There are also internet links at the end of each chapter; more of these with a short explanation for each would also have been helpful.

Chapter one provides an introduction from an Australian historical perspective, which will assist pre-service teachers to understand and appreciate some of the factors and events leading to the development of special education and inclusion. The following chapter picks up and expands on the theme and philosophy of inclusion. Rounding out the first part of the book is the third chapter, which provides a particularly comprehensive explanation of the legislation and policies that govern the treatment and education of children with disabilities in Australia, including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (DSE, 2005). This chapter also contains many case studies that illustrate duty of care legislation and how this applies to teachers.

The next two chapters address inclusion and differentiation in greater depth, including the universal design for learning (UDL) model and Tomlinson's differentiation framework, but with no mention of the development, implementation and assessment cycle of the individual educational plan (IEP). The rest of the book applies these two approaches within specific disability groupings, although the authors emphasise that they do not support a 'disability as a deficit' model. The next six chapters focus on students with language and communication difficulties, general and specific learning disabilities (including attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities and twice-exceptional students. These chapters have a useful practical component, with case studies and descriptions of strategies.

Both primary and secondary settings are considered, although early childhood and early intervention are not covered, nor is transition between educational settings or from school to work or further study. Brief attention is given to classroom management issues, including behaviour management, together with parent interactions, which have been found to be two areas of concern for beginning teachers (Melnick & Meister, 2008). Similarly, literacy and numeracy issues receive limited attention.

This text is half the size (232 pages) and half the price (A\$55) of comparable textbooks, without the addition of online resources and is therefore limited in the depth of discussion and information it can offer; however, as a beginning text for pre-service teachers it has some strengths and provides a functional resource. A header or footer on each page to indicate the chapter topic to aid quick access would be helpful, as well as details within the index, rather than providing a long list of pages that may or may not have the content for which the reader is looking.

References

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- Melnick, S.A., & Meister, D.G. (2008). A comparison of beginning and experienced teachers' concerns. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 31(3), 39–56.

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