BOOK REVIEW

THE BEYOND ACCESS MODEL: PROMOTING MEMBERSHIP, PARTICIPATION, AND LEARNING FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM
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BY

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Educators and future educators often express concerns regarding the inclusion of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities within the general classroom. Until recently, students with exceptionalities were excluded from participation in the general classroom, and in some circumstances, the involvement of students with exceptionalities is more indicative of an integrative model rather than true inclusion. Many professionals who support the idea of inclusion struggle to translate their support into practice. Thankfully, the solution is provided in the form of the Beyond Access Model. This text is a practical, straightforward handbook for all education professionals.

The authors, members of the Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire, are ardent advocates of meaningful and active engagement of individuals with disabilities within the community. This text serves as a guide for education professionals on supporting students with disabilities as important members within the general education classroom. As the title endorses, the focus is on moving students beyond simple access to meaningful membership and participation in the classroom with purposeful concentration on learning of the general education curriculum. Whereas other models centre on functional skill development, the goal of the Beyond Access Model is on academic learning.

The 10 chapters of the text are divided into three sections. Section one introduces the Beyond Access Model, section two provides the evidence-based foundation for the model, and section three is a detailed guidebook for using the model. The first chapter begins with Jay, a fourth-grade student with autism. His story is used to support the powerful benefits of the Beyond Access Model. Prior to his educational team utilizing the BA Model, Jay was present in

the general education classroom, but was not an active participate, nor did he have a method to communicate his understanding of the curriculum. After his learning team began using the BA Model, Jay gained meaningful participation and membership into his classroom, and greatly exceeded the team's previous academic expectations.

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of special education in the United States, and brings the reader to the current state in classrooms today. The rationale on how the BA Model will fill the gap between existing practices and promising research is then identified. The vision is described as, "when students with IDD are provided with appropriate instruction and supports, they can learn grade-level academic skills and communicate in ways that are commensurate with their same-age peers without disabilities" (Jorgensen, McSheehan, & Sonnenmeier, 2010, p. 24). This chapter concludes with a summary of the four phases that comprise the BA Model.

Chapter 3 presents a key component of the Beyond Access Model, the presumption of student competence. The challenge to the reader here is to think differently about inclusive education. The reader is asked to envision Kelly, a student with an intellectual and developmental disability, and presented with two hypothetical scenarios. In the first, Kelly is assumed to have low intelligence, as measured by current assessment tools. The educational team sets minimal learning goals, choosing instead to focus on Kelly's functional skills. The reader is then asked to imagine that in Kelly's future the assessment tools evolve to the point where her actual intelligence level can be accurately attained. It is discovered that the original scores were incorrect, and Kelly is much more capable than was thought. The damage to Kelly is that a faulty assumption about her abilities prevented seizure of opportunities for meaningful learning. In the second scenario, the reader is asked to envision Kelly's educational team presuming she is competent and structuring the learning plan to reflect her competence. The outcome in the second scenario is a proficient, successful Kelly, and reflects the importance of presuming competence and structuring learning opportunities commensurate with competence.

Chapter 4 describes the best instructional approaches and strategies that form the core of the BA Model: membership, participation, and learning. "Membership in the general education class represents students having access to valued social roles and the symbols of belonging" (Jorgensen, McSheehan, & Sonnenmeier, 2010, p. 58). When a student is presumed competent, they are given the opportunity for equitable interaction with classmates. The BA Model encourages participation with age-mates and the general education curriculum, the foundation of learning. Chapter 5 provides an outline for collaborative teaming within the BA Model. This chapter is critical in assisting with the selection of members, formation of the team, and establishment of effective policies to ensure the promotion of student learning.

Chapters 6 through 9 describe the four iterative phases of the BA Model: assessment, instructional planning, implementation, and evaluation. Within these chapters, the reader will find clearly identified best practices supported by anecdotes and research. One of the benefits of this text is the accompanying CD-ROM with adaptable forms for use by the educational team implementing the BA Model. The adaptable forms enable any educational team to apply the structure of the model while modifying the checklists, forms, and templates to each unique situation. The final chapter addresses the crucial role of a supportive administrative team in the successful implementation of the BA Model. The afterword provides third-party support for the

BA Model from an internationally recognized expert in inclusive education and the first-hand account of a BA Model facilitator in an elementary school.

This text clearly presents the outline and direction of an effective model for inclusive education. The anecdotal and research support give credence to the model, and the authors present an impassioned argument for inclusion in the general education classroom. The authors effectively prioritize the steps an educational team can take to ensure inclusion through membership, participation, and learning. The provision of these practical strategies and checklists will reduce the likelihood a learning team would feel overwhelmed by the prospect of inclusion of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities within the general classroom. The text is loaded with valuable information and is useful for new and experienced inclusive teams. As a university instructor, I see this text providing a tangible, effective, and easy-to-follow model for educators as they strive to best serve all students. I highly recommend this text to educational professionals seeking guidance on implementing meaningful inclusive education.