

Book Review
*Inclusion of Exceptional Learners in Canadian
Schools: A Practical Handbook for Teachers*

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In this fifth edition of *Inclusion of exceptional learners in Canadian schools: A practical handbook for teachers*, Hutchinson highlights universal design for learning as a strategy for inclusively meeting the range of strengths, needs and interests among students in typical classrooms across Canada. Additionally, Hutchinson has included current information about student and teacher mental health in every chapter. Hutchinson's text provides pre-service and in-service teachers with an accessible resource that will be valuable for recognizing and responding to a variety of exceptionalities, while planning for universally designed instruction.

Overview

Aimed primarily at an audience of pre-service teachers, this textbook is divided into two main sections. The first provides a wide range of background knowledge necessary for teachers in inclusive learning settings. The first two chapters focus on current strategies for adapting instruction and individual education plans. Hutchinson introduces the ADAPT strategy (Accounts of students' strengths and needs, Demands of the classroom, Adaptations, Perspectives and consequences, Teach and assess) for systematically differentiating teaching in a way that recognizes the students' strengths and needs and the demands of the classroom environment (Chapter 1) and continues to provide numerous examples throughout the text. The next chapter explores the development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) using the ADAPT strategy.

Given these basics, the following four chapters provide specific information about special needs commonly identified in Canadian students. A wide variety, but by no means an exhaustive list, of exceptionalities are grouped under five broad categories: Learning and Behaviour Exceptionalities, Mental Health Challenges (Chapter 3), Intellectual Disabilities and Autism Spectrum Disorder (Chapter 4), Communication Exceptionalities, Physical Exceptionalities and Chronic Health Conditions (Chapter

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5), and Teaching for Diversity: Aboriginal Students, Diverse Cultural Backgrounds, and Students Who are at Risk (Chapter 6).

The second part of this textbook focuses on effective instructional approaches for inclusive classrooms, emphasizing universal design for learning (Chapter 8), differentiated assessment (Chapter 9), and fostering relationships (Chapter 10).

Scattered throughout this book are sections entitled “Theory and Research Highlights from Educational Psychology” which offer brief summaries of past and present research into related areas. A convenient jumping off point for further study, these Highlights also provide the necessary background information for the ideas being presented in the text.

This textbook also includes a glossary, name and subject indices, and references. Numerous text features provide additional information, links to online resources, suggested further reading, and internal cross-references. Each chapter includes learner objectives, suggested activities and questions for review. Pearson Canada offers an eText version of this textbook that allows students to use a full range of digital tools for text review and mark-up, text-to-speech accessibility, as well as links to videos, animations, or other activities throughout the text. An instructor supplement is also available.

Critical Evaluation:

Hutchinson presents pre-service teachers with a national perspective on inclusive education for students with exceptionalities. Each chapter begins with a brief vignette relevant to the chapter’s content. As a whole, these stories serve to express the breadth of diversity among students as well as the depth of understanding and service provided to them in schools across Canada.

The first part of the book (Chapters 1-6) provides a wealth of succinct information about an impressive variety of exceptionalities for teachers of all experience levels. This textbook is a resource that should remain within arm’s reach.

The second part of the book (Chapters 7-11) warrants particular attention because of its sensitivity to the well being of students, and teachers, in classrooms. The book provides explicit and detailed guidance and explanations of not only the “how-to” but also the “why” of creating a respectful, supportive classroom environment that sets everyone up for success.

Past perspectives on differentiated instruction (DI), differentiated assessment (DA) and universal design for learning (UDL) as being separate and different from strategies and standards used for “regular” education students persist in schools.

This textbook offers the ADAPT strategy as a method for planning instruction and assessment that takes into account the individual needs of all students, inclusive of those with exceptionalities. This perspective represents the paradigm shift that is at the heart of successful inclusive education.

This book is an excellent resource for instruction of pre-service teachers, and will remain a go-to resource throughout their early years of teaching.

REFERENCE

Hutchinson, N. L. (2017). *Inclusion of exceptional learners in Canadian schools: A practical handbook for teachers (5th Ed)*. Toronto, Canada: Pearson. ISBN 978-0-13-409588-2

About the Reviewer

Georgina H. Davidson, B. Ed., M. Ed., is a Student Services Learning Leader at a large urban middle school in Calgary, AB. She is a career special educator, having worked in the field for 28 years in segregated classrooms as well as a variety of inclusive settings. In addition to her work with children, she now focuses on mentoring teachers in the art of inclusivity.