Differentiated Instruction for Successful Inclusion: A Treasure Chest for Standards-Based Strategies

I. Module One: Introduction
   B. Inclusion: History, Research and Philosophy – Cathy Hamilton

1970s: Mainstreaming Legislation

- Mainstreaming is the practice of allowing children with disability to come out of segregated classrooms and into general education classrooms
- A good idea with unanticipated flaws
- Mainstreaming legislation was intended to offer children with disability an opportunity to have an equitable curriculum
- Legislation came without required training for educators
  - Teachers coming into the profession had no class work dealing with children with disability
  - General education teachers had not been prepared to have children with disability in the room
- General education teachers were told not to expect the children with disability to learn
  - Someone else would be their teacher
  - Someone else would be someone certificated and credentialed in special education issues
  - Someone else would deal with giftedness
- Students with identified disabilities still had help of special education teachers but were to be offered an opportunity to be in a general education classroom
- Teachers who were not trained had many emotions
  - Anger about lack of training
  - Scared that the right kind of education would not be provided or a disability would be exacerbated
  - Frustration
- Some students were sent back to segregated classrooms with the least structure
  - Music
  - Physical education
  - Recess
  - Lunch
- It was thought that children with disability would not be able to handle the rigor of an academic class

1990s: Classroom Inclusion

- Fifteen years of research showed that
  - Mainstreaming had been costly
  - What was hoped for did not happen
  - Students sent to general education classrooms had not been remediated
  - Some students fell further behind
• New legislation did not call for mainstreaming or visiting into regular education classrooms but for full inclusion
• Less than 20 percent of the students on IEPs coming into schools and staying to graduation had less than a normal life

**Journey to Standards-Based Instruction**

• Challenged to look at research and go more deeply, to seek out possibilities for a deeper life for kids with disability
  • Ask:
    o Are we playing any part in the sad lives of these kids?
    o Are we, in our limitations, becoming their limits?
    o Are we challenging them to the extent that we ought to, or are we settling for stereotypes and less information than gathered on other students?
  • Questioning led to the journey of becoming one of the 16 high schools in the nation that is research-driven on behalf of all children
  • Came at same time that Ohio Department of Exceptional Children began a new program – “Standards-Based Instruction for All Learners: A Treasure Chest of Strategy”
    o Work has evolved from early days when principles were informed of their role in an inclusive environment
    o APEX Program sought to bring principals only to the meetings believing that leadership would be able to assist teachers
  • Within three years moved to “Leadership for Results” Program
    o Evolution occurred
    o Realized that while initial offering had been to special education students, it became obvious that other students without an IEP needed authentic strategies and assessments around learning
    o Became aware of students with gifted status who could also get lost in the mix
  • “Leadership for Results” evolved into a program that would reach out to all learners – “Treasure Chest”
    o Recognizes that on any given day a child may have a challenge making our limits his limits

**Inclusion**

• Talking about inclusion causes a great deal of emotion for some
• Some believe that segregated education always brings a kind of shame
• Excited to become inclusive
• NCLB came without a mandate for training, causing some to relieve the same history of the mainstreaming legislation of the 1970s
• In some places inclusion means all kids are pulled out of segregated rooms and put into general education rooms
• Students who have experienced nothing but a segregated environment can be frightened by inclusion
• Segregated environments
  o Until 1990s, normal that a child with an IEP came to school, was in general education homeroom for 15 – 20 minutes and then moved away from general population into a classroom of 4 – 12 people
  o Student were served by the same teacher all day for 3 – 4 years except when randomly sent to a mainstream class
  o Some students were deemed incapable of being mainstreamed and spent their entire day with 1 teacher
• Moving to concept of inclusion
  o Thinking totally different
  o Started with the concept that the day would be spent with the general education population
  o Would be in classrooms with same-age, typical peer students
  o Did not mean a student would not need to be pulled out for different kinds of service
    - Speech therapy
    - Occupational therapy
  o Some schools embraced environments allowing therapies to occur in the general education classroom
• Fear as former teacher, principal and always as a mom is that without critical thinking more harm than good could be done
  • Concept of inclusion is one of being rather than doing
  • Inclusion is not about doing; it is about being
  • Inclusion is about believing that children have a right to be a part of a natural community
  • The greatest fear of inclusion is that lack of training will lead to our limitations becoming theirs
  • Imperative that if the right things are done by all children a mode of continues learning must be in place
  • Never-imagined best strategies need to be sought out

Assessment and Strategies

• Does the capacity exist to assess in a way that teachers were trained to assess?
• Are teachers so married to paper and pen tests that they cannot understand performance tests as being as valuable and authentic as paper and pen tests?
• Children are coming to school who can never get into the game if paper and pen tests are demanded
  • There is a plethora of strategies that were not available 30 years ago
  • Education is a profession that has been soaring in knowledge
  • Teaching strategies come into question almost as quickly as they come into print as more is learned about how the brain functions

Research

• Education has to be very grateful to the giants in education
• Early giants
  o Benjamin Bloom
    ▪ Work around taxonomy
    ▪ If you want children to critically think, let them practice
    ▪ Research says when educators think a child is not bright, they often do not allow the child to move up Bloom’s Taxonomy
    ▪ The child is instead kept in the world of knowledge level questions
    ▪ It is hard to grow without opportunities
  o Robert Rosenthal
    ▪ Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement (TESA)
    ▪ Work was both embarrassing and powerful
    ▪ Research said that when educators believe children are bright, they are held to higher standards and expectations and given more attention
    ▪ Work is huge to fill in gaps for children coming to school without input strategies to get into the academic game
    ▪ Begs educators to build relationships with kids so there is hope that they can attain high academic standards
  o Madeline Hunter
    ▪ Came full force in 1970s and 1980s
    ▪ “If it can be taught, it can be learned”
    ▪ Asks what strategies are being used to teach a new skill
    ▪ Challenges educators to critically think about how children are approached with new learning
    ▪ There is one thing that a master teacher always does – think

• Today’s researchers embrace the research of the past
  o Robert Marzano
  o Rick DeFour
  o Rick Stiggins
  o Grant Wiggins
  o Jay McTigue
• Today’s educators don’t have to learn everything anew
• Today’s educators have to remember the good as the new comes before them

Labeling is Disabling

• Journey to more inclusive school environment
  o Critical that reflection occur on meaning
  o 85 – 90 percent of all students in IEPs are also from generational poverty – Ruby Payne
    ▪ Not all are clinically disabled
    ▪ They are culturally and linguistically different and very easy to place
• Labels placed on children over the last 30 years precede them before walking into the classroom
  o Mentally retarded
  o Cognitively delayed
  o Severe behavior handicapped (SBH)
  o Emotionally disturbed
• Those without deeper understanding of labels can be put off by them
• Labels should be moved off teachers
  o Do not refer to teachers as learning disability or cognitive delayed teachers
  o Students served can escape the label
• Labeled students linger behind so other students do not see them walk into segregated environments
  o Students don’t like their friends thinking they’re stupid
  o Rooms were intended to be places where cognition could grow; not where kids would get reputations for not being bright
• The hope today is that there be more forethought as children are moved along the plan
• SBH label
  o Should be referred to as “severely broken hearted”
  o Unfortunately, labels are a requirement of the government
  o Some types of IQ tests don’t always reveal a student’s true IQ

Adaptations and Equity

• People sometimes see the difference and act as though it makes no difference
  o Is it fair for a child with disability to get an A – she couldn’t get it without adaptation or special help?
  o Is it fair for people who wear glasses to be allowed to drive when they couldn’t if they didn’t have them?
• Critical when talking about adaptations that
  o People identified with disability have a difference
    ▪ The difference makes a difference
    ▪ That students acknowledge disability and resent adaptation begs the question
    ▪ Assistance is needed
    ▪ Assistance should be the least amount needed in order to perform
    ▪ Students should not be made to be more disabled
  o Lack of training has moved some into learned helplessness
    ▪ Students are given far more accommodation than needed or wanted
    ▪ Want to dignify students to the degree that they do what they can while being held to high expectations with differentiated strategies
• NCLB legislation
  o Requires that every child be expected to approach the same standards
  o Standards don’t have to necessarily be approached through the same strategy
• Educators want students to have an equitable education
Without equity, students with disability will have a far different quality of life in adulthood
  - Without equitable education, students find themselves
    - Jobless
    - Homeless
    - Faced with institutionalization

Create a Safe and Welcoming Environment

- Educators want all students to feel physically safe
  - Students are not afraid that someone from the outside will hurt them
  - Students are more afraid of bullying from their peers
- Children should be made to feel welcome and invited
- People say they would have met state report card standards if one special education child had passed the test
  - It is pretty easy to feel unwelcome when labeled as the reason a school gets a bad report
  - Seriously doubt that one child carries all that burden
  - Children should feel they are welcome, wanted and if absent the school would be less without them
- “If we want children to critically think, they must first feel safe and they must first feel welcome. When we pull these two off, we’ll be able to do the third component – master teach.”
  – Reuven Feuerstein (1948)

Master Teach

- Master teaching is not a master degree certification
- The master teacher is one who remembers why he or she came into the field and is empowered to impact the lives of all children
  - The master teacher reaches out with strategies not only around content but around pedagogy
  - An entire classroom can grow in their respect for the efforts of a student with disability while accommodating that student’s needs

IQ

- Growing an IQ has yet to be claimed as educators embrace authority in what can be taken to a child’s life
- Educators can grow an IQ
- With engaged and interesting classroom performance, a young student’s IQ can actually grow – What Works in Schools, Robert Marzano
  - Teachers 20 years ago were told that IQ was static and could not be changed in a significant way
  - Children can be taken on a higher intellectual academic journey if educators engage them in critical thinking
  - One cannot have a label of learning disability without at least an average IQ
Touch the Future

- “I touch the future; I teach” – Christa McAuliffe

- Christa McAuliffe forever said to teachers that they have authority over the lives of children and the future they hold

- It behooves each teacher to give their extraordinary best, be open to new learning, collaborate and come out of isolation as new ways of thinking are embraced around at-risk children