Chapter 12
Special Education Service Delivery Models around the Globe

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines various service delivery models being used around the world. It discusses models of inclusion, in which all students are placed into the public school educational arena and the regular education teachers provide the services to the student with special needs while the special education teacher is used as a consultant. It continues with a discussion about other types of service delivery models, such as separate schools or even institutions away from family, friends, and society. It concludes with a discussion about the future trends within the field of special education service delivery models and what can be done to improve them.

INTRODUCTION

In almost every country around the world, there is some form of education for students with special needs. However, the service delivery models vary depending on the country's culture, society, and how students with exceptionalities are accepted by the population. In some countries, students with exceptionalities are educated alongside their peers, similar to the inclusion service delivery models that can be found in the United States. In other countries, the service delivery model consists of segregating students with exceptionalities in a separate school or not permitting the students to attend school or classes at all.

Within the United States and Canada, including students with special needs within the regular educational classroom has been accepted and practiced for a number of years. However, in other countries, this is not the case. Still, some countries that have not practiced inclusion are beginning to do so. For instance, the European Union, which consists of 27 countries—Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—came together and decided that inclusion education was the best

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thing for students with learning disabilities. The first thing they decided to focus on was the terminology of inclusion. This group decided that the term they would use would include any student who would be susceptible to exclusion from the general or regular education classroom as opposed to only students identified with exceptionalities. This group also recognized that only through collaboration among themselves and their teachers can inclusion education be provided to all students with special needs, thereby providing a high-quality education for all. The European Union also recognized that in order to have high academic achievement among students with exceptionalities, they need to provide teachers who can differentiate instruction and provide research-based instructional strategies so that these children will have the benefit of excellent instruction. In order to acquire highly trained teachers, this group decided that the teacher training programs within their countries at their universities and colleges must include practical skills experience for preservice teachers and that they should provide these teachers with coaches or mentors who will provide support and share their expertise with these rookie educators once they are in their own classrooms (Donnelly & Watkins, 2011). Hence, the practice of inclusion was started in Europe.

All the countries studied herein have laws in regards to the education of students with disabilities. Some countries enforce these laws religiously by having all schools follow the same policies. In other countries, like the United States, the individual states or provinces are permitted to develop their own special education programs within specific guidelines. Still, there are other countries where although they have laws to educate students with special needs, these policies are not enforced due to political reasons and/or society's negative attitudes and prejudices toward students with special needs.

SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS AROUND THE WORLD

The bulk of this book has focused on service delivery models currently being used in the United States with students with disabilities. Following is a discussion of different service delivery models around the world, some very similar to U.S. models, and some vastly different.

Finland

The service delivery model in Finland is inclusion because this society believes that every child has a right to an education. Within Finland's educational policies, collaboration among all stakeholders (school and society) is stressed, and as a consequence, educators focus on each child's individual needs both academically and socially.

Students in Finland do not start school until the age of 7 unless there is a need for them to start earlier, such as having an identified disability. Students are expected to finish their required education within nine years of starting school; however, students with special needs can go to school two additional years. Students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities do not study the same curriculum as their nondisabled peers, as they are placed into a classroom with a fulltime special education teacher. Instead, they study subjects such as "motor skills, language in communication, social skills, activities of daily living and cognitive skills" (Halinen & Järvinen, 2008, p. 89). These children, although educated in a different classroom, are still connected physically to the school.

Finland has a unique educational system in many ways. First, all students regardless of whether they are disabled are educated in one school, and the general education teachers are responsible for educating students who have special needs. Educators support early intervention as soon as it is noticed and can be initiated by a parent or classroom teacher, and they only provide indi-