# Chapter 1
# Challenges to Inclusion

**Angela Chen**
*Independent Researcher, USA*

## ABSTRACT

*The expansion of inclusion practices has led to an increase in the integration of special education learners into general education classrooms. In order to meet the needs of all learners within inclusion classrooms, general and special education teachers must combine their respective teaching expertise. However, there are significant challenges to inclusion opportunities arising from a variety of sources. These major barriers to integration are described as environmental, knowledge-based, and relationship-based challenges. Examples of these challenges are discussed with respect to issues related to inclusion faced by both general and special education teachers.*

## INTRODUCTION

The movement to offer equitable learning opportunities for students with disabilities has increasingly shifted the educational landscape toward providing inclusive opportunities with their general education peers (McLeskey, et al., 2012). Data trends from the emergence of this movement show a steady increase in the percentage of time spent by students with disabilities in regular education classes (Williamson et al., 2019). In light of this shift toward greater accessibility in general education placements, there is a need for establishing more inclusive practices in the classroom setting. The benefits to placement in an inclusion classroom or opportunities in an inclusive setting have been demonstrated across students with and without disabilities (Burstein et al., 2004; Dessemontet, 2012). In order to create an integrated and inclusive learning environment, it is necessary for general and special education

teachers to work closely together. Collaborative effort must be made in order to have a cohesive educational plan, engage in open communication, share ideas and strategies, and demonstrate mutual respect. However, there are substantial challenges to the creation and continuation of inclusive opportunities that offer benefits to typically developing students and their atypical peers.

This chapter aims to describe possible roadblocks on the path to collaborative inclusion opportunities in schools. These hurdles are separated into three categories: environmental, knowledge-based, and relationship-based. Environmental challenges include external circumstances outside the control of educators. Consider the lack of physical accommodations for students with disabilities that restricts access to parts of a classroom. The accessibility of the school building is the first step to inclusion opportunities. Challenges stemming from the environment also encompasses limited curricular resources available to educators and more importantly, the time and opportunity for collaboration. Knowledge-based obstacles include misconceptions about inclusion from parents, students, or teachers. This also takes into account the lack of teacher training or experience on effective educational strategies and tactics resulting in limited adaptability to novel teaching situations. This is applicable to general education teachers who may lack a depth of knowledge about specific disabilities or vice versa, to special education teachers who have not experienced difficulties found in a general education classroom. Without a collaborative effort, teachers do not have the opportunity to supplement their weaknesses with another's strength. The potential lack of partnership may also result from relationship-based challenges between educators. Teachers that are divided by their differences or do not have adequate time to develop a positive rapport limit the potential for successful inclusion experiences. It acts as a barrier to forming integrated relationships between educators necessary to create comprehensive educational planning for students. Classrooms can experience part or all of these challenges to some degree. In order to create a collaborative and effective environment for all learners, steps must be made to identify and overcome the barriers that impede progress.

The obstacles to creating a successful inclusion classroom can be daunting to any single educator but it highlights the importance of building collaborative relationships resulting in benefits to all learners. Disjointed approaches to teaching may impede a successful learning environment and impede student progress. Emphasis is placed on the limitations of time and its ramifications on relationship building and collaboration between teachers. This chapter concludes with a summary and suggestions on overcoming the challenges to effective inclusion in classrooms.

20 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/challenges-to-inclusion/282794

## Related Content

Developing a Culturally Competent Workforce that Meets the Needs of Pacific People Living in New Zealand
Fuimaono Karl Pulotu-Endemannand Monique Faleafa (2017). *Workforce Development Theory and Practice in the Mental Health Sector (pp. 165-180).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/developing-a-culturally-competent-workforce-that-meets-the-needs-of-pacific-people-living-in-new-zealand/171510

Verbal Aggression and Gender Dynamics From E-sports to Academic Settings: A Case Study of Honor of Kings
Shinan Luo (2025). *Training and Development in Transnational Higher Education (pp. 407-428).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/verbal-aggression-and-gender-dynamics-from-e-sports-to-academic-settings/376675

Promoting Student-Centered Learning Strategies via AI Chatbot Feedback and Support: A Case Study at a Public University in Vietnam
Tran Tin Nghiand Lam Thi Quynh Anh (2024). *International Journal of Teacher Education and Professional Development (pp. 1-25).*
www.irma-international.org/article/promoting-student-centered-learning-strategies-via-ai-chatbot-feedback-and-support/356403

Diversity and Inclusion in the Academy: A Classroom Perspective
Susan Swayzeand Rick C. Jakeman (2019). *Faculty Roles and Changing Expectations in the New Age (pp. 50-65).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/diversity-and-inclusion-in-the-academy/221563

Vocational Personalities of School Principals: A Phenomenological Study
Ahmet Bozakand Tuncer Fidan (2019). *Vocational Identity and Career Construction in Education (pp. 178-197).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/vocational-personalities-of-school-principals/219389