

# Chapter 11

## Inclusive Practices in Institutions of Higher Education: Transition and Post-Secondary Planning

**Beverly Sande**

*Prairie View A&M University, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*In this chapter, the author will highlight some of the hurdles students with disabilities (SWDs) face in institutions of higher education (IHEs) and share some recommendations on how best faculty and staff can support SWDs matriculating through their programs and graduate on time with a baccalaureate degree. The author addresses concepts such as resilience, deficit models, instructional roles (instructor versus facilitator), myths, and misconceptions of working with SWDs, social justice, advocacy, public policy reform, and inclusive models for IHEs. In this chapter, the author approaches these concepts by illustrating the social justice notions related to identity and access to IHE as experienced by SWDs. The author considers whether institutions perceive some programs as unsuitable for some SWDs or whether SWDs perceive some courses as inaccessible, hence not worth pursuing.*

*“In special education, there’s too much emphasis placed on the deficit and not enough on the strength.” -Dr. Temple Grandin*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Identifying appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities (SWDs), especially in institutions of higher education (IHEs), has continued to seem like a moving target. Despite disability being a part of the human condition and many people today having at one point in time experienced working with an individual with a disability or going to school/college with someone with a disability, the challenges these individuals continue to experience seem to persist. Inclusive practices are suggested as a possible solution. To ensure inclusion in IHEs, campus leaders must consider how to fully embrace all students, faculty, and staff with and without disabilities, and implement strategies that meet their needs. This transition to effective practices begins with developing the culture of inclusion, eliminating the deficit mindset, and having an inclination for social justice and equity literacy. When developing a culture of inclusion, colleges and universities have specific responsibilities to students with disabilities to ensure they can learn and achieve their goals by providing the supports they need. It is essential to read the case study in the appendix section, including the questions that follow to implement some of the practices proposed within this chapter.

## **TYPICAL MYTHS AND MISPERCEPTIONS**

### **Students With Disabilities Cannot Cope With the Rigor of Higher Education Coursework**

Students with disabilities (SWD), when provided appropriate accommodations, can perform just as well as their non-disabled peers. Students who were able to meet the rigor of high school can meet college and university education rigor. To adequately meet college/university requirements, SWD need accommodations that will give them access to the academic content. Accessibility may be achieved by a variety of means, such as provision of notes and lecture recordings, preferential seating, more time on assignments and tests. However, if a student requires modifications, the responsibility falls to the student and those providing assistance to ensure the course material is accessible and the student will participate like their peers successfully. Instructors must not discourage students from specific fields of study if they meet admission requirements/qualifications, assuming that their disability will impact their performance.

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