

Eastern Kentucky University

Encompass

Honors Theses

Student Scholarship

Fall 2021

Exceptional Learners and the Inclusive Classroom

Alicia R. Harris

Eastern Kentucky University, alicia_harris187@mymail.eku.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://encompass.eku.edu/honors_theses

Recommended Citation

Harris, Alicia R., "Exceptional Learners and the Inclusive Classroom" (2021). *Honors Theses*. 862.
https://encompass.eku.edu/honors_theses/862

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu.

Eastern Kentucky University

Exceptional Learners and the Inclusive Classroom

Honors Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

Of The

Requirements of Hon 420

Fall 2021

By

Alicia Harris

Faculty Mentor

Dr. Maria L. Manning

Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Leadership

Abstract

Exceptional Learners and the Inclusive Classroom

Alicia Harris

Dr. Maria L. Manning

Department of Teaching, Learning and Educational Leadership

This thesis includes a brief history of special education and how individuals with disabilities were previously treated both in and out of the classroom. The identification process is then described along with different categories that students can be placed into. After the discussion about special education and individuals with disabilities the importance of Inclusion and the effects that it has on those students is described. The final section of the paper discusses strategies that can be implemented in the classroom to support students with disabilities while in the classroom. Some of the strategies that are discussed are accommodations, modifications, Universal Design for Learning, and HLP's. Throughout the entire paper the idea of social emotional learning and its importance for students with disabilities is discussed. Through teaching social emotional skills to students with disabilities teachers are increasing the students' quality of life. Social emotional skills are not only beneficial for students with disabilities, but they can also benefit students in the general education classroom as well by teaching them ways to be successful in the outside world. Overall teachers are trying to give their students the best possible education allowing them to be as successful as possible as they transition into post-secondary life.

Keywords and Phrases: Inclusion, Social Emotional Learning, Special Education, High Leverage Practices, Interventions, and Exceptional Learners

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	Page 5
2. History of Special Education.....	Page 6
3. What is an Exceptional Learner.....	Page 18
4. What is Inclusion.....	Page 21
5. Key Teaching Practices.....	Page 24
6. Conclusion.....	Page 42
7. References.....	Page 44

Acknowledgements

I would like to say thank you to Dr. Manning and everyone else who helped me along with writing my thesis. Dr. Manning was very helpful throughout the entire thesis writing process. She was always willing to conference and guide me whenever my thoughts would get tangled over this very important topic. I think that she served as a great role model demonstrating the importance of advocacy. I am thankful for all of the other educators who served as guidance for this thesis so that it could develop into this advocacy statement. I would also like to thank all of my ECU Honors professors that I have had throughout my time in the program. Each and every one of them shaped me into a hardworking scholar who was able to complete the task of writing this thesis. Finally, I would like to thank everyone who takes the time to read this paper and learn from my research and continue in the fight for advocating for the rights of those with disabilities.

Introduction

Children and youth with special needs come into our lives, leaving footprints on our hearts. We are never the same and neither are they. Since these children can easily impact the lives of those around them, it becomes everyone else's responsibility to leave that same positive impact on the lives of those children. One of the ways that society can support exceptional learners is through inclusion both in and out of the classroom. Inclusion should also open access to curriculum (Bakken, 2016). Inclusion looks like allowing everyone to participate in classroom discussions as well as activities outside of the classroom. Historically, supporting children with special needs has not always been the main concern of teachers. After a series of legislative changes, the classroom is becoming a more inclusive environment that is allowing for potential growth of all children. When the needs of individuals with disabilities are put in the forefront of everyone's mind the system begins to change for the better.

In order to fully understand inclusion and why it is so crucial for student success it is important that we understand the historical roots and current practices within the field of special education. Teachers can begin the change by focusing on proper use of language, inclusion with the integration of high leverage practices (HLP) (McLeskey et al., 2017). to improve the student's educational experiences. Specifically, one group of HLPs emphasizes the need for social/ emotional/ behavioral practices. By engaging in social emotional learning students are learning strategies to improve their lives outside of the classroom which in turn makes their lives easier inside the classroom. The inclusion movement has transformed over the years to provide support for the social emotional

learning of children and youth with disabilities allowing for a more positive growth environment for exceptional learners.

The History of Special Education

The defining mark in the history of special education is the 1960's. Prior to the sixties there were no laws that required school attendance. Parents were easily overwhelmed by their children with exceptionalities. Society and those around them were saying that it would be easier to send their children to group homes where they could stay and be "taken care of" rather than try to care for them at home even if they had a desire to care for their child themselves. This societal pressure would cause parents to go against their better judgement and send their children away thinking that the school would be able to provide better care for their child. For example, Bruno Bettelheim was an advocate for separating children from their parents to immerse them in "total therapeutic milieu" (Herman, 2019). In her blog, The Autism History Project, Herman pointed out that Bettelheim used the many reports from staff members in his Orthogenic School to advocate for this separation. Children were at risk of being abused or neglected while they were staying in these group homes, and some of the most memorable homes were Willowbrook, Bruno's Orthogenic School, and the Dozier School. Little did these parents know that the group homes they were sending their children to were not safe environments.

Willowbrook State School

Willowbrook was a state school that housed children with all different types of mental and physical disabilities such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and many more. As we look back at residential homes, Willowbrook is especially known for being a home

for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Willowbrook had a ratio of 30 residents per one staff while the common ratio in public schools was four children per staff member (Weiser, 2020). Weiser explained that the impossible ratio of residents to staff created repulsive conditions at Willowbrook. Children who needed help at mealtime were left to attempt to feed themselves which resulted in spilling food on the floor and all over themselves. It was a common occurrence in Willowbrook for residents including children to eat with their hands, spill food on the floor and then pick it up and eat it. Events such as these resulted in unsanitary conditions that they were forced to live in which also affected their health and personal hygiene. Many children had broken bones that never healed properly, skin rashes from not bathing, and matted hair that could not be brushed. According to Weiser, parents had limited visiting rights such as not being able to see their children for the first six months that they were in Willowbrook. After the first six months parents could only periodically visit their child. Since parents' visitation rights were limited, it was hard for them to notice the adverse physical conditions of their loved ones until it was too late. Societal rules implied that since these children were different that they needed to be hidden from the rest of the world. Group homes such as Willowbrook became the place to send them under false pretenses of care and affection.

Bruno's Orthogenic School

Another residential treatment facility that fostered negative outcomes was the Orthogenic School. Bruno Bettelheim ran a residential treatment center for children with autism from 1944 to 1973 known as the Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago. While Bettelheim only ran the center until 1973 it is still a functional running treatment center to this day. Bruno Bettelheim was an advocate for

separating children from their parents to immerse them in “total therapeutic milieu” (Herman, 2019). In her blog, The Autism History Project, Herman pointed out that Bettelheim used the many reports from staff members in his Orthogenic School to advocate for this separation. She further stated that Bettelheim focused his research on those who live in what he called “extreme situations” which is why he turned to children with autism. He began to write case studies of what he was experiencing inside of the treatment center. According to Herman, Bettelheim wanted to establish emotionally healthy “object relations” which could be used as a therapeutic mechanism for children with autism to change their worldview enough so that they could communicate verbally. There were mixed emotions about Bettelheim. According to Herman, some saw him as a tireless crusader who was sympathetic towards children with autism, but others claimed that his “cure” rate of 85% was unrealistic or even impossible. Bruno’s work with psychogenesis began to lose ground as biogenesis became more popular (Herman, 2019). Psychogenesis is the psychological cause to which a mental illness or behavioral disturbance may be attributed to a physical cause. Biogenesis on the other hand refers to the process where living things come from other living things. Parents began to blame Bettelheim and others. Bettelheim committed suicide which led to the Orthogenic School starting to receive complaints and were even charged with physical abuse. After Bettelheim's death, questions about his credentials began to emerge. His reputation was permanently tarnished.

Dozier School

Another residential facility that transformed the course of special education was the Dozier School. The Dozier School is a historical example of the treatment of

individuals who had learning and behavioral disorders. The Dozier School for Boys was a state-run institution in Florida. Around 300 boys, known as the “White House Boys” were sent to this reform school in the 1950’s and 60’s (Allen, 2012). The horrors that came out of this house are unimaginable, 81 boys were known to have died in the school, but the location of their remains are still unknown. According to Allen, boys could be sent to the school for committing crimes, running away from their families, or for simply not having a family. The Dozier school has been known by many names since it was opened in 1900. Even from the beginning it was known for its harsh conditions and brutal treatment. Over the years, Allen explains that survivors have come together to share their experiences. One of these survivors named Cooper, recounts his first brutal beating where he was tied down to a bed and beaten with a leather strap 130 times. Roger Kiser described a student’s death by a dryer. Sadly, there were many more stories just like these from other students who attended Dozier school. However, the government determined that there was not sufficient evidence to support the claims being made (Allen, 2012; Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2010). In the report, Kiser claimed, there was no evidence that a staff member was responsible for any of the student deaths despite students seeing staff members pulling children out of bathtubs dead and one was even pulled out of the dryer where he had been killed. Investigators used the school records to find the graves of 31 students who had been killed in the school. Those same records show that fifty other boys died in the home though their remains have still not been found. Kimmerlie et al. (2012) reported it is hard to determine cause of death for many of the boys. These boys had families who loved them, and their lives have been completely uprooted and ruined by the deaths of their children. Even more, the families are disturbed

by the fact that their bodies have still not been found. The Dozier School and their staff members treated these boys as less than human. It is possible there were countless other homes treating children with disabilities the exact same way. Based on the accounts and personal experiences, it was clear something had to be done. Legislative action was critical.

In 1975, Public Law 94-142 also known as Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was passed which said that all children were guaranteed a free appropriate public education (FAPE). PL 94-142 was later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990 (IDEA). IDEA continues to undergo revisions with the most recent in 2004 (IDEA, 2004). In 1975, the EAHCA was revolutionary in the progress of special education rights. The act was composed of six major components: FAPE for all students, least restrictive environment (LRE), an individualized education program (IEP), procedural due process, non-discriminatory assessment, and parental participation.

IDEA and FAPE

The first major component of EAHCA was FAPE for all students and this forced schools to open their doors to every single student. Prior to PL 94-142 there were no compulsory laws for children to attend public schools. This law was the turning point. Now that schools were open to all children, their attendance became mandatory, but it was just one small step in the right direction of inclusion. Even though the doors were open to all students did not mean that every student was welcomed with open arms. Handler (2007) explains in *The Classroom Down the Hall* that underrepresented groups continued to have challenges with FAPE as the school was using special education as a

cover for racism in the school system by sending students of color away to a separate classroom. Children of color and those who had any form of disability were shunned and segregated to their own classroom *down the hall*. Handler explains that placing the students who were deemed to be undesirable in this segregated classroom the school was following PL 94-142 while still keeping a public image that was acceptable in the culture at the time. These classrooms were completely segregated from the general education classrooms. Students were unable to socialize with the general education students. By keeping these students isolated from their peers limits their chances to engage in social emotional learning. These types of skills are the ones that make life easier and more enjoyable for the student. Inclusive practices are critical in the student's personal development. While mandatory school attendance and a public education was a step in the right direction it was not the solution to the problem of inclusion.

IDEA and LRE

In 1975 The EAHCA also enacted the LRE requirement. LRE can be defined as, “educating children with disabilities with general education classroom as much as appropriate and removal of a child with disabilities from that environment is subject only to cases wherein the learning needs and accommodations of a child cannot be met inside a regular classroom environment” (Francisco et al., 2020). LRE is a critical component of the IDEA process and a critical part of the inclusion movement. By advocating for the inclusion of the student in their LRE they are then able to be with peers and receive the necessary support to foster opportunities for social and academic growth (Spaulding et al., 2015). Being placed in the LRE allows the child to participate in social emotional learning (SEL). SEL can be defined as the process through which all young people and

adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (MacDonnell et. al., 2021).

IDEA and IEP

The next two crucial changes from PL 94-142 were parental participation and the creation of the individualized education program (IEP). The IEP is defined as “a written formal document for each child diagnosed with a disability and having special learning needs” (Francisco et. al., 2020). The IEP is required to address: (1) the present level of academic functioning; (2) annual goals and accompanying instructional objectives; (3) educational services to be provided; (4) the degree to which the pupil will be able to participate in general education programs; (5) plans for initiating services and the length of service delivery; and (6) an annual evaluation procedure specifying objective criteria to determine if instructional objectives are being met. The creation of the IEP was a critical advancement in special education rights allowing children with disabilities to have their needs heard and finally validated.

IDEA and Procedural Due Process

Another impact of PL 94-142 was procedural due process. Due process means that parents were allowed to challenge the school and other individuals if they believed that their child’s needs were not being met in the classroom. This could include the child not receiving the services listed in their IEP, disagreeing with placement, disagreeing with the evaluation results, and believing that the IEP does not meet the child’s educational needs (Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education, n.d.;

IDEA, 2004). This ability for parents to challenge the school and advocate for their children strongly ties into the aspect of parental participation that was lacking prior to the passage of PL 94-142.

IDEA and Non-Discriminatory Assessment

The next impact of PL 94-142 includes non-discriminatory assessment. Non-discriminatory assessment refers to the identification and evaluation methods that the school is using to determine whether or not the student has a disability (ProjectIDEAL, 2013). Schools should ensure that they are using non-biased assessments so that they are identifying the students who truly need the services. Non-Discriminatory assessment ensures that students are not being placed in special education services simply because of their race, culture, or native language. One of the safeguards that have been put into place to ensure unbiased assessment is ensuring that all assessments are given to the student in their native language. Identification also cannot be based off a singular assessment in order to eliminate placement based off a biased test. Prior to IDEA 2004, many students were being placed in special education classrooms simply because they were African American, and schools were using biased testing masking racism (Handler, 2007; IDEA, 2004).

IDEA and Parental Participation

The final impact of PL 94-142 was parental participation. Parents were called to participate in their child's education including attending meetings regarding the Individualized Education Program for their child. Prior to the 1970s parents were not able to advocate for their children and their unique educational needs; however, with the passage of PL 94-142, parents were finally able to advocate for their children and receive

the best possible education. This allowed parents to feel like their voices could be heard and they were no longer being pushed by the public to shun or isolate their children.

While advancements were made in the field of special education, the culture of the seventies was still unaccepting of children with disabilities. Due to the negative culture teachers, no matter how accepting, were not properly trained to address challenging behaviors. As students with disabilities were integrated into the classroom tension began to build leading the way for restraint and seclusion to take hold in the classroom. The United States Department of Education defined seclusion as the involuntary confinement of a child alone in a room or area that the child is physically prevented from leaving (Jewell et. al., 2017). Jewell and colleagues defined restraint as any manual method, physical or mechanical device, material, or equipment that immobilizes or reduces the ability of an individual to move his or her arms, legs, body, or head freely. Restraint and Seclusion are still issues in today's society. In 2003, Michael Renner-Lewis III who had autism died in school after he was restrained face down by several staff members (ABC News Network, n.d.). While the statistics are still high there is work being done to lower them. In the 2013-2014 school year one out of every one hundred special education students were restrained or secluded in the school which equates to nearly 70,000 students in one year. According to Samuels (2020), states reported that more than 200,000 students were restrained about three times per student. These are recent statistics meaning that these are living people not historical figures whose lives no longer have an impact. Not only are the effects physical for students, restraint and seclusion also leaves the student with mental and emotional damage as well.

Exceptional learners were also negatively impacted by violence. In 1999 the Columbine school shooting occurred which was a turning point in school safety across the nation. Prior to the shooting there was not a police presence in public schools but after Columbine there began to be police officers in schools all over the nation. After the shooting in the nineties schools adopted a zero-tolerance policy on violence and this policy led to the increasing use of restraint and seclusion. Children would be kicked out of the classroom for very small disturbances, and they were sent to tiny 10X 10 padded rooms where they were physically locked in (*New York State of Education Department, 2011*). There are different types of restraints such as physical and mechanical restraints. Physical restraints which are defined as restrictions of a student's freedom of movement by a staff member holding the child. There are also mechanical restraints which are devices that are used to restrict a child's freedom of movement (Jewell et. al., 2017). Jewell and colleagues discussed how the historical restraint and seclusion procedures were very traumatic for both the child and the staff members who were involved. Sadly, this trauma was being ignored because teachers felt cornered and believed that they had no other options to control the child while they were having an emotional outburst. Children should be treated like human beings despite throwing tantrums or having other disruptive behaviors related to their disability.

Thankfully, changes are being made regarding restraint and seclusion. The battle is not over yet. In 1998 the Hartford Courant reported that there were 142 deaths related to restraint over a ten-year period (Villani et. al., 2012). In the year 2011-2012 over 100,000 children were either restrained or secluded; there were also 4000 students who were subjected to being mechanically restrained in the same school year (Jewell et. al.,

2017). In 2017-2018 80% of the individuals who were restrained were individuals with disabilities under IDEA (Lenhart, 2021). While these numbers still appear to be quite high progress is being made in the use of restraint and seclusion. According to Jewell et al. (2017) and colleagues there is more that can be done in the fight against restraint and seclusion as 87.5% of states or territories still allow for prone restraints or restraints that restrict breathing and only 45% of states and territories require or recommend that schools automatically notify parents or guardians of the use of restraint or seclusion on their child. There are even 39% of states that still have no laws, policies or guidelines concerning the use of restraint or seclusion. Since not all states have policies in place to inhibit the use of inappropriate discipline behaviors it disproportionately affects students of color and those with disabilities (Grant, 2005). This is a bigger problem for elementary school students because younger students are more likely to be restrained than high school students (Jewell et. al., 2017). This can create issues because of the age of the students and their impressionable nature. Children need to be nurtured and the adults in their lives need to encourage and support the child in order for them to flourish. Samuels (2020) presented alarming statistics to show the importance of advocacy for students with disabilities so that we can call attention to the alarming number of deaths and injuries in the classroom from restraint and or seclusion. Another change that is being made in the special education field is implementing a room clear rather than removing the child who is engaging in the escalating problem behaviors (Maxwell, 2019). Maxwells explains that a room clear can be defined as removing everything from the classroom except the escalating student, the teacher, and possibly another faculty member for support if needed. Teachers will remove all other items that could be used to cause harm either to

the student or the teacher. During an escalation a student could easily grab something and throw it at another student if these items are not removed from their reach. The transition to room clears allows for a more inclusive classroom because teachers are taking every precaution to keep the student in the classroom itself. If students are constantly being removed from their classroom, then it might be a sign that a functional behavior assessment (FBA) needs to be conducted.

As seen in the previous paragraphs individuals with disabilities faced many hardships. While there have been advancements in the field there is still a long way to go in disability rights. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides civil rights to all individuals with disabilities in programs which receive federal funding such as jobs and appropriate educational outcomes (ADA National Network, 2018). Section 504 applies to health, employment, welfare and social services. Section 504 can allow individuals to qualify for services that they would not have received under IDEA. Another step in the fight for disability rights is the passage of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA], 1990). ADA was the last of the laws to be passed in 1990. ADA is a broad law which protects individuals with Disabilities in many different aspects of life and specifically Title II prohibits discrimination by state and local governments. ADA, like section 504, is used in a broader context than IDEA. Under ADA a disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Since this definition is even more broad than IDEA's definition it allows more individuals to be included and protected (ADA National Network, 2018). The passage of these laws has allowed individuals with disabilities to live their lives in the same manner

that their peers live. Disability rights are just as important as civil rights to ensure a fair and equal treatment of all individuals. Without the passage of these laws individuals with disabilities would still have the lower quality of life that they did in the historical age of special education. Disability rights increased quality of life for all individuals.

The history of special education was filled with hardships that had to be overcome in order to achieve a more inclusive and beneficial classroom for students with disabilities. While the classroom is becoming a more inclusive environment, not all the necessary changes have occurred. Special education teachers are also being faced with the task of educating their peers and others about the importance of inclusion and equity in the classroom. If a teacher's main goal is to teach their students not only the classroom curriculum but also life skills that they can use in their day to day lives then why would they ever want to remove a child from the classroom.

What is an Exceptional Learner?

In order to get a better understanding of the special education system one must understand the parts that make it up along with the defining characteristics of those parts. Let's begin with who special education was created for. Students who receive special education services are referred to by a few different names, but the most important title is an exceptional learner. An exceptional learner can be defined as any child who is identified as scoring out of normal range on assessments either above or below average scores (Hallahan et. al., 2019). Students must go through an entire process to be identified as an exceptional learner and needing an IEP. The identification process starts when either the teacher or parental guardian recognizes that the student has a potential problem

either in their learning abilities or behaviorally. Next the student is given a set of interventions to help with their learning process and the results of these interventions are highly documented to record whether or not they are effective for that student. If the interventions that are given to the student are not effective the student is then the referral process is initiated. IDEA states that the school has 45 days to gain parental consent and conduct the assessments. The assessments are then conducted and the types of assessments that can be conducted are IQ tests, achievement tests, classroom work samples, classroom observations, or checklists completed by parents or teachers. Teams come together to host an eligibility meeting to discuss the assessment findings and if it is determined that they meet the criteria established by IDEA meaning that the disability adversely affects educational performance (IDEA, 2004). After the team establishes that the child has a disability under IDEA then an IEP team is formed so that they can establish the student's IEP so that the child can begin to receive services. According to IDEA, The IEP is reviewed annually or whenever it is needed due to a lack of progress and every three years the student's eligibility for special education services are re-evaluated.

Disability Categories

After the student has been identified as having a disability that adversely affects their educational performance requiring them to need special education services, they are then placed into a disability category. The IDEA identifies thirteen disability categories: Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairments, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairments, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury,

Visual Impairments including blindness. However, there is some flexibility in identification measures. For example, Kentucky has fourteen eligibility categories which include Autism, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairments, Other Health Impairments, Specific Learning Disabilities, Speech or Language Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury, Mild Mental Disability, Deaf-Blindness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Functional Mental Disability, Hearing Impairment, and Visual Impairment. Each of these different disabilities categories has its own set of characteristics (IDEA, 2004; ProjectIDEAL, 2013). One might ask why does this identification process matter and the short answer would be that proper identification leads to proper resources. Teachers want to ensure that students get placed in the proper disability category to ensure that they are receiving adequate resources for their individual needs. This is the same reason why doctors want to ensure that they are properly diagnosing their patients so that they can give them the proper medicine to treat their illness. The initial diagnosis provides a starting point for teachers to target which interventions and strategies would be the most effective for that student

Each of the different disability categories has a unique set of resources that can be used to support the student. IDEA (2004) requires that educational plans be individualized. Disability categories allow for resources to be allocated based on need. Student resources can come in many different formats that are clearly stated in the student's IEP. For example, if a student needs a testing accommodation such as extended testing time, the IEP would outline the accommodation and the necessary resources required to meet that accommodation. The classifications are helpful with developing best practices. For example, if a student is identified with a learning disability as

dyslexia, teachers can begin to initiate appropriate reading interventions. Since there are so many HLPs that can be implemented, teachers need an initial diagnosis to begin exploring intervention options. While receiving the proper resources is very important, the reason that the identification process is so critical is for the proper distribution of resources for the students who need it the most. Identification labels help individuals to better understand how the needs of minority groups are addressed.

Over and Underrepresentation

A common problem in the special education field is over and underrepresentation. Historically there has been a disproportionate number of certain races in the special education classroom (Artiles et. al., 2010). If there is an overrepresentation of certain groups in special education based on their race rather than their need then it takes away the money, time, and other resources from those students who actually need the services. On the other hand, if students are not being represented in the classroom, then it creates the issue of students not receiving the services that they need in order to be successful in the classroom. While the identification process was designed to help those who needed services, assessment bias has been an ongoing problem (Council for Exceptional Children, [CEC], 2021). By ensuring that all of the students who are receiving services truly need them it creates a system that serves the individuals it was created to serve. This is why students' IEPs are reevaluated annually as well as why these students are reevaluated for special education services every three years. These reevaluations allow students to transition to their LRE when special education services are no longer needed.

What is Inclusion?

As the special education culture has shifted to a more inclusive focus it is important to know what is meant by inclusion. Inclusion can be defined as creating an environment where any individual or group will feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate in the classroom activities (Francisco et. al., 2020). How teachers and other personnel choose to speak about individuals with disabilities will shape their educational career. Language use is the easiest change that can be made in the classroom to create a more inclusive environment. By teachers and students using inclusive and appropriate language it allows students with disabilities to feel that they are valued in the classroom. This sense of validation and worth creates a positive classroom culture for all students. Inclusion is not a one size fits all situation each student will have different needs in the classroom which can affect how inclusion looks for that student.

As a part of the student's IEP the team must identify their LRE which can be described as choosing classes and setting based on the child's individual strengths instead of by their eligibility category. The different types of environments that students can be placed in are the general education classroom, special education classroom, special schools, homebound, or residential facilities. Students can be in a combination of settings for their LRE. For example, a student could be in the general education classroom for seventy-five percent of their day, but they are in the special education resource room during math which makes up twenty-five percent of their school day. Inclusion is important for students with disabilities because they need opportunities to be around children their own age (Calabrese et. al., 2008). This interaction with their non-disabled peers is crucial for developing social skills, but students need to feel a sense of security and a sense of community within these interactions.

Sense of Security

One way to ensure a sense of security in the classroom is through the use of person first language and identity first language whenever appropriate. Teachers should know the difference between Identity and Person-First Language so that they can properly use them in the classroom. Person-First Language places an emphasis on the person and not on their disability meaning that they are not identified by their disability they simply have the disability (Hoffman et. al, 2020). An example of person-first language would be Catherine has a learning disability. Person-first language should be used whenever we are not sure how a person would like to be identified. Person-first language is a more inclusive way of speaking. Identity-first language is completely different from person-first Language. Identity-first language is when the individual prefers to have their disability come first when they are being referred to (Hoffman et. al., 2020). Someone might prefer identity-first language over person first language because they are trying to promote acceptance and awareness about their specific disability. An example of identity-first language is Justin is the autistic boy in the class. The Deaf community is a major advocate for the use of identity-first language because they want to make others aware of their pride for their disability and cultural identity for being deaf. If teachers are willing to model the proper use of language when speaking to students with disabilities, then their peers and students will begin to model the same way of speaking. If everyone begins to model this way of speaking it will create an environment that all students will feel comfortable in allowing for a free exchange of communication and personal growth.

Sense of Community

One way to build a sense of community is through language. Language has shaped our community and our culture. One example is Rosa's law. In 2010, Rosa's law was passed which effectively eliminated the use of the term "mental retardation". Originally the term was created to be an accurate description of those who had intellectual disabilities but over time it transformed into an offensive term. After the passage of Rosa's Law, the terminology was changed to intellectual disability. Something as simple as a change in the terminology used to describe a student in the classroom will completely change their willingness to participate in the classroom activities. Now that the importance of inclusion in the classroom has been identified we can now discuss some of the strategies that can improve a student's social emotional learning in the classroom.

Key Teaching Practices

Now that who needs educational supports in the classroom has been established, let's discuss the different supports that students can receive. A teacher will read through the student's individualized educational plan in order to see what supports are specifically laid out for that student's needs. These supports can include accommodations and modifications, universal design for learning (UDL), and high leverage practices. Supports such as accommodations and modifications need to be used in the most appropriate manner so that the student is benefiting as much as possible from the specific support. For example, an accommodation would be the use of a calculator on a math exam. A modification example would be shortened assignments for example a math test would only have ten questions rather than 30. One example of UDL would be flexible workspaces. Finally, an example of high leverage practices would be teaching social

behaviors. Now we can discuss each of the supports that students can receive and how they are different from each other.

Accommodations and Modification

An accommodation can be defined as anything that does not change the final product the student is expected to accomplish (National Parent Center on Transition and Employment, 2019). Accommodations are much more common in the classroom environment. Each aspect of school can be accommodated to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities. Some of the most common examples of accommodations are the use of calculators, oral responses, the use of a scribe, or having the questions orally read to them. Teachers can accommodate the classroom environment itself in order to support student learning (Da Fonte and Barton-Arwood, 2017). Some examples are providing headphones to block noises, creating a pass system to allow for more frequent movement breaks, and keeping a clear and tidy workspace that reduces visual distractions in the classroom. Directions can be accommodated through providing them both visually and orally, the use of visual aids, and even showing the final product so that students have an idea of what they are supposed to do/complete. There can also be behavior modifications to support students in the classroom. These can include the use of nonverbal clues to show inappropriate behavior, pairing students up so that they have a model of good behavior and rewarding positive behaviors to encourage the use of them. Modifications however structurally alter curriculum or education outcomes (National Parent Center on Transition and Employment, 2019). Another way to think about it is that modifications change the student's graduation requirements. Modifications are rarer but the most common ones include shortened assignments/ tests or alternative

assignments/tests. Almost every single aspect of school can be modified for students with disabilities. For example, books can be modified to a lower reading level with similar ideas. Teachers can even modify their grading to create a pass/fail system, give partial grades based off effort on the assignment, or allow for missed problems to be reworked and then the score be averaged out. Scaffolding can be defined as forms of support provided by the teacher (or another student) to help students bridge the gap between their current abilities and their intended goal. When properly used scaffolding provides the right amount of support to allow the student to achieve their goal on their own and as they become more and more confident with the material the scaffolding is removed until the student is completing the task all on their own.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning is a type of strategy that general education teachers can implement in their classroom to support students with disabilities (CAST, 2018). Universal Design for Learning or UDL simply means that teachers create their lesson plans so that they are accessible to all types of students (Nave, 2020). UDL can be used in learning goals, the instructional materials used, how students are assessed, and the instructional methods that the teacher uses. When teachers create their learning goals, they should keep in mind how they are presenting the information, what the student is doing as a task, and how students are engaging with the material. When implementing UDL teachers want to create learning goals that are inclusive of all learning styles. For example, if students watch a video and then complete a worksheet about fractions only helps the auditory learners. In order to make that lesson more inclusive the teacher can offer the student the choice of where they would like to learn, students could watch the

video if they are auditory learners, draw pizza fractions if they are visual learners, build fractional groups if they are tactile learners and so on. By allowing these students to choose where they learn the best gives them a sense of entitlement with their learning, and it provides the teacher the opportunity to guide the student in the right direction to what will support their learning needs. Some of the traditional media types that teachers use are text, audio, and images but each of these media types comes with their own set of challenges. For example, students with visual processing difficulties can struggle to understand what they are seeing in a video but students without disabilities can also struggle with the use of images because they can be difficult to see especially if the student is sitting in the back of the classroom. The final element of teaching where UDL can be applied is assessment (CAST, 2018). In order to apply UDL to assessment, teachers should provide their students with flexible opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills that they have learned in the classroom. A simpler way of stating this is that assessments are more than written tests. Teachers can have students present oral reports, perform plays, or even build a diorama in order to demonstrate their understanding of the content. By providing these different assessment types of teachers can scaffold and support their students during the learning process which in turn allows the student to be more successful. Universal design for learning is a strategy that all teachers can easily start to implement into their lessons and classroom environment so that not only those students with disabilities can be successful but every single student in the classroom can be successful.

High Leverage Practices

In the education field there are a set of practices (HLP's) which are considered to be extremely effective in the daily classroom and they can be broken down into four different categories. These categories are assessment, collaboration, instructional, and social/emotional/behavioral and for the purposes of social emotional learning we will focus on the last category.

HLP's that promotes social emotional learning

The HLPs that are in the social/emotional/behavioral category are HLP 7 Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment, HLP 8 Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students learning and behavior, HLP 9 Teach social behaviors, and HLP 10 Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans. Each of these HLPs come with their own sets of strategies that teachers can implement in order to support students with disabilities and their social emotional learning.

The first practice we will dive into is HLP 7: Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment (McLeskey et al., 2017). In order to create this respectful learning environment teachers, must establish rules and expectations that are appropriate for their students and as they learn and grow with these rules throughout the year teachers are able to give their students feedback. By having a set of clear and consistent rules students are able to know exactly what is expected of them in a given situation which reduces their disruptive behaviors while increasing their engagement. By fostering a successful learning environment, the teacher is in turn fostering successful learners. By treating exceptional learners as human beings with feelings which should be respected allow the student to learn how to treat others outside of the classroom. Another

strategy is to establish a clear routine that is followed in the classroom allowing students the opportunity to answer both academic and social questions throughout the day.

Students with disabilities will benefit from questions such as, “When we are in the library what voice level should we use?”. This allows students to practice their engagement in a non-threatening situation because there are no consequences. By practicing these skills in the classroom teachers are strengthening the student’s ability to participate in discussion outside of the classroom.

The next HLP that we will take a look at is “Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior” (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Feedback is used in the classroom to both support and encourage the student in their educational journey. Positive reinforcement can be used in the classroom to support and continue the students' use of desired behaviors. Social skill learning should be supported and encouraged in the classroom just as much as academic skill knowledge is encouraged. Since some disabilities create a deficit in social skill knowledge students need to be taught how to engage in these desired behaviors. Teachers can use both intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators to encourage students to engage in desired behaviors. Teachers use these motivators to encourage students to practice both academic and social skills that they might be struggling with. Since teachers are modeling the proper use of motivators, students, especially those with disabilities, will be able to apply these same skills to their daily lives. Skills that are learned inside of the classroom can be applied outside of the classroom, but some students will need to be taught how to apply these skills so by teaching these students how to motivate themselves it will lead to more learning in the future.

The next HLP that we will take a look at is number nine, “Teach social behaviors” (McLeskey et al., 2017). HLP 9 might be the one most closely connected to the concept of social emotional learning because it has a focus on teaching those social skills that students can lack due to their disability. Teachers need to explicitly teach these students about social skills such as communication, manners, etc. Prior to planning the lesson teachers need to identify their prior knowledge about that specific skill just as they would for any content area standard so that they can effectively adapt the lesson to meet the students’ needs in the classroom. After the teacher has taught the specific skill and the students begin to understand how to carry out the skill, teachers can begin to encourage the use of that skill in the classroom to lead to mastery of the skill. After a child has mastered a particular skill teachers can then work on teaching maintenance and generalization of that skill. Maintenance is when the fluency and accuracy of the particular behavior has been retained over a period of time. Generalization is when the student can transfer that behavior into other settings besides the classroom. Special education teachers really focus on teaching their students maintenance and generalization so that they can not only be successful inside of the classroom but also after they leave and move on to their post school choices whether that be college, trade school, or within the workforce. Like the other HLP’s that we have already looked at, reinforcement is critical to teaching social behaviors. Teachers want to ensure that they are reinforcing the positive and desirable behaviors that their students are engaging in, so that they can achieve mastery of the skill. For most students they are not able to match the appropriate strategy to the specific situation they are in (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). For example, a student might know that counting to 15 can help them

to calm down whenever they are angry but when the situation comes, they result to a different strategy such as throwing a tantrum in order to express their emotions. This mismatch of strategies is what creates difficulties for these students in the classroom. By explicitly teaching these students what to do whenever they are angry and modeling those skills for students, they are able to bridge the gap creating a better understanding of social skills and how to react to specific scenarios. Another approach that is beneficial is breaking down the situation and discussing each of the parts with the student. Provide them with a step-by-step checklist that they can use in order to ensure that they chose the correct coping skill. Providing students with frequent reminders using a variety of prompts such as visual and auditory to use their new skills along with lots of positive feedback will help to promote maintenance and generalization. Social skill instruction has been proven to improve a student's social functioning throughout their entire lives and when it is paired with generalization strategies then it leads to improved social emotional functioning of students with disabilities.

The final HLP that will be discussed is HLP 10: Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans. A functional behavioral assessment is routinely conducted to determine what occasions and what maintains current patterns of student problem behaviors (McLeskey et al., 2017). A functional behavioral assessment includes a hypothesis about what function the behavior serves for the child and then the teacher will develop a behavior intervention plan to develop interventions and replacement behaviors for the student to engage in. The behavior intervention plan will also include modifications that the teacher can make to demonstrate the replacement behavior which they hope the student will engage in. An

example of this is when a student who struggles with speaking out of turn is ignored by the teachers when they are speaking out of turn and chooses to call on the student who is patiently waiting and raising their hand. Functional behavioral assessment-based interventions have been found to be more effective in reducing their undesirable behaviors. As a part of functional behavioral assessments teachers need strategies to de-escalate a situation in which a student is having a behavioral episode. Organizations such as the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Program provide training for school districts and their staff members in order to be better prepared when the de-escalation process is needed and in the proper use of restraints as a last resort (Jewell et. al., 2017).

HLP's Instructional

The next few HLP's that we are going to discuss grouped together under the idea of Instruction. There are twelve different strategies that teachers can implement in the classroom that will lead to student success. These strategies are similar to the previous ones but with an extensive focus on instruction.

The first HLP that we will discuss in the Instruction category is number 11: Identify and Prioritize Long and Short-Term Goals (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Whenever teachers establish both short term and long-term goals it allows them to concentrate their instruction on what is the most important for the student. Short term goals allow the student to get a sense of satisfaction after they accomplish that goal and long-term goals serve the continued purpose of creating something that students can work towards constantly. One example of these goals and how they relate to students with disabilities are IEP goals. The IDEA requires that there

be goals on every student's IEP that relate to their current academic progress. These goals show that the instruction that the student is receiving is actually beneficial for the student. If students are not making progress toward their IEP goals, then the instruction they are receiving is not beneficial for the student. These goals are not only beneficial for students with disabilities, but they provide the same support for all other students as well creating an overall successful classroom.

The next HLP 12 is Systematically Design Instruction toward a Specific Learning Goal (McLeskey et al., 2017). This practice states that teachers design their curriculum so that it builds upon itself in order to support the child and their educational needs.

Teachers would not teach Jane Eyre before the child learns their letters. While this is a drastic example it demonstrates what the HLP is saying. While learning goals are beneficial for these children if they are not clear, concise and logical then the goal is less effective for the child. While studies have been conducted on learning goals, they have not been able to isolate the study to just the learning goals but there is still evidence that overall learning goals can be effective for students.

HLP 13 is Adapting curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). This can be seen especially in how special education teachers will take the curriculum that the general education teacher is presenting in the classroom and adapt it so that it meets the needs of the student. If necessary, for the student, teachers can adapt the materials that are required for the assignments such as simplifying the text so that the child is able to independently read the material. Content enhancements are a range of strategies that teachers can implement that will enhance the students' learning. A few examples of these enhancement

strategies are graphic organizers, guided notes, and mnemonics. Each of these strategies provide unique support for the student during their learning process so that they can be successful both in and out of the classroom.

The next HLP that we will discuss is number 14 which says, teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence (McLeskey et al., 2017). Students with disabilities need to be explicitly taught to use learning strategies so that they can implement them into their education. Similar to the social emotional strategies that were previously discussed, students with disabilities need to be taught these specific strategies so that they can learn to maintain them and generalize those same strategies. Some common cognitive strategies are summarizing text structure, self-regulated strategy development, enhanced anchored instruction, mnemonic strategies, and self-monitoring. These strategies are taught to students through explicit instruction and other strategies such as think alouds that help students to think about their thinking.

Providing Scaffolded Support is HLP number 15 (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Scaffolding means that teachers provide the student with support whenever necessary for their learning and these supports are gradually removed as the child becomes more comfortable with the task at hand. Scaffolding allows teachers to expand what they are teaching students. If the task is too difficult for the student, the scaffolds provide the necessary support for them to be successful. Scaffolding can be used to help expand the student's zone of proximal development by showing the student new tasks that are more challenging but with the support provided through scaffolding they are able to complete those tasks which will eventually lead to the student completing the task independently.

The next HLP that will be covered is number 16. HLP 16 says to use explicit instruction (McLeskey et al., 2017). Explicit instruction is a direct structured supportive and systematic methodology for teaching academic skills. Whenever the teacher uses explicit instruction, they provide a model for the student which guides them through the process so that they can begin to understand the process and do it on their own. Explicit Instruction is a set of teacher behaviors that have shown to be successful with those students who are struggling. Explicit Instruction can be used in combination with other HLP strategies so that all students can be successful in their learning endeavors.

HLP 17 is the next strategy that will be discussed. This HLP is about the use of flexible grouping (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Flexible grouping allows the teacher to differentiate the instruction that the students are receiving so that it is targeted to their needs. Groups can be formed in many different manners, but the most common ways are homogeneously and heterogeneously. Homogeneous grouping means that everyone in the group is performing at the same level. For example, all of the students who are performing below grade level would be in a group together so that they can get specifically targeting instruction that is designed for their needs and abilities. On the other hand, heterogeneous grouping means that children of all different ability groups are together in one group so that higher performing students can work with lower performing students which allows both students to make growth in the content area. Grouping allows for differentiation of instruction and student growth. Each type of group has their own unique strengths and weaknesses, and teachers need to decide what is best for their students and their needs.

Next, we will discuss using strategies to promote active student engagement which is HLP 18 (McLeskey et al., 2017). This is a very important strategy because if students are not actively engaged in their learning, then they are less likely to learn and retain the material. Active engagement allows the student to take ownership of their education and that leads to a sense of pride. If they are proud of what they are doing in the classroom it immediately increases their retention. The first step to creating this sense of ownership is creating active engagement between student and teacher. Students with disabilities tend to have higher dropout rates than their general education peers but by increasing student engagement it lessens the chances that the student will drop out. Positive engagement should be started early and used frequently to ensure that the student continues to stay engaged with the material. For example, a simple “Well done I think that you're doing a really great job on that problem” will keep the student engaged and motivated to work on the material.

HLP 19 is the next one that will be discussed, and it says Use assistive and instructional technology (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Technology is a great resource that teachers can use to support all students in their learning process. Technology can be used for engagement purposes, instructional purposes, or even adaptive purposes. The engagement aspect is one that is very common in the classroom environment such as educational games. One example of an educational game is Coolmathgames.com which is a website filled with online math games where you must solve problems in order to achieve the goals of the chosen game. The next purpose that technology can play in the classroom is instructional. This can be seen through the use of resources like Nearpod to present material, Kahoot for review, or PBS

learning library for educational resources like videos. The final purpose that technology can play in the classroom is adaptive purposes. Technology can be used to help students with disabilities function in the classroom. They can use iPads for text to speech functions, Translation purposes if the child is an English language learner, or visual reminders of classroom expectations. All of these different uses of technology in the classroom allow for overall success for all students which creates the inclusive environment that children with disabilities need.

Moving on to HLP 20 which states, Provide Intensive Instruction (McLeskey et al., 2017). This intensive instruction is to ensure that students are getting what they need out of their education. Many schools use a system known as Response to Intervention or RTI which breaks student's down into three tiers based on their assessment performance. Tier one are students who are performing at or above grade level. Tier two are the students who are performing slightly below grade level but could easily start to perform at grade level. Tier three students are the ones who need extensive intervention in order to perform at grade level. This HLP focuses on tiers two and three since they are the ones who need the most assistance. Teachers go through extensive data collection and testing to show that the interventions that are being provided during their intensive instruction is actually benefiting the student and helping them to progress towards grade level performance.

Next, we will discuss HLP 21 which is teaching students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). This HLP is the core of what special education is all about. Teachers want to ensure that students are learning the content and the social skills needed

for the classroom but what happens if they cannot maintain those skills from year to year and what happens when the student is not able to use those skills outside of the classroom. It could be asked if teachers were even successful if their students are not maintaining and generalizing the content. Maintenance and generalization are skills that students need in order to be successful outside of the classroom. Being able to take the social skills that they learn in the classroom and apply it to their real-world situations increases quality of life. This increasing quality of life leads to students becoming more successful and independent.

The final HLP in the instruction category is number 22 which says to Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior (McLeskey et al., 2017). Instructional feedback is one of the teachers most beneficial tools to guide students' learning. Teachers are able to encourage their students whenever they are achieving intended goals through positive feedback. Feedback should be delivered to the students on their assessments in a timely manner and it should be age appropriate. Since feedback is goal directed students are able to see their progress towards their educational goals. One of the most common types of feedback is the error correction feedback where teachers address a misconception so that students can learn from their mistakes.

HLP's for Assessment

The next group of HLPs are grouped together by the category of assessment. The first HLP strategy that teachers can use is number 4 the use of multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). Each student has their

own unique learning style and each of these learning styles should be incorporated into the lesson. Students can be visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or tactile learners. If a teacher only writes lessons that are visual, then three fourths of the class are going to struggle to learn the material. UDL also uses this same principle so that all learners can learn the material. By providing options of ways that students can learn the material allows them to learn in the most effective way for them. This also allows the student to take ownership of their learning which makes their probability of success higher.

The next HLP we will discuss is number 5 which says Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs (McLeskey et al., 2017). This strategy is connected to the use of collaboration between teachers whether they are general education teachers or a general education teacher and a special education teacher. By sharing data that is collected in the classroom allows the other professionals in the building to see how the students are doing. This is not meant to be scary for teachers because it is meant to show the support that they have from the other professionals. All of the professionals in the building are going to work together to best support the students so it should not be intimidating for the teacher. Collectively the school is working together to support the student however they might need, and this data collection and distribution is one way that school personnel can guide resources to the most appropriate places. HLP 6 works together with number 5. HLP 6 says Use student Assessment data, analyze instructional practices and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). This HLP builds upon number 5 by saying that whenever there is a deficit in achievement there needs to be some change in the

instruction so that student outcomes can improve. Together these strategies are working for the betterment of the student which should be every teacher's ultimate goal.

HLP's for Collaboration

Now that we have discussed all the Assessment related HLP's we will now cover the HLP's that are under the final category of collaboration. There are only 3 HLP's in this category but they all go hand in hand to improve student performance both inside and outside of school. The first one is HLP 1: Collaborate with Professionals to Increase Student Success. HLP 2 is Organize and Facilitate Effective meetings with professionals and families. The final HLP is number 3: Collaborate with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services (McLeskey et al., 2017). Teaching is a collaborative profession; it requires communication between individuals. Communication occurs between teachers, school personnel, parents, paraprofessionals, special educators, professionals in other fields, and many other individuals. Every time communication occurs it is unique, and it comes with its own challenges and benefits which is why it is so crucial that teachers engage and collaborate with all these other professionals so that the student is receiving the best possible education. Communication can occur in meeting formats like discussed in HLP 2 (High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021). A common example of this meeting format in the special education field are the IEP meetings that are conducted for every student with an IEP. These meetings include all different types of individuals including parents, teachers both general and special education teachers along with other school personnel and any related service providers that the student might require. Special education teachers are also going to be working

closely with the parents of the children they serve so that they can provide them with resources to support the child at home. This is another way that teachers can improve a student's maintenance and generalization of skills that are learned in the classroom because by sharing them with their parents the child will then be practicing the skill in another setting which is the goal of generalization and will improve the student's memory so it will also improve their maintenance.

All these HLP's contain effective strategies that both general education and special education teachers can implement into their curriculum and lesson plans by implementing these strategies teachers are able to support their students' learning. One of the main goals that teachers have is to create successful students both in and out of the classroom. With that in mind all teachers should be incorporating these strategies that support social emotional learning as well as the other high leverage practices that support the other areas of learning (McLeskey et al., 2017). Social emotional learning is an underutilized category in the classroom, but it is something that more teachers should be teaching and discussing in the classroom. Since teachers are wanting to develop well rounded individuals who are successful outside of the classroom as well, teaching social skills associated with social emotional learning is critical to that development. Students with disabilities can face a lot of problems when trying to fit into the real world. Students with disabilities can struggle with their social skills if they are never explicitly taught about how to deal with their emotions and some coping mechanisms for dealing with those situations. Since they are facing daily struggles it can lower their quality of life making them believe that they are less than others. However, if students are taught these social skills in the classroom, they are then able to apply them to the real world which

makes their quality of life improve. When they are taught these coping mechanisms, it allows the child to participate in more real-world situations because they have the confidence to. If a child had struggled with emotional outbursts, they might avoid situations that could cause their outburst such as social interaction, but if they learn ways to control their emotions then they would feel more confident going into those situations. Overall social emotional learning and social skill practice within the classroom not only improves the classroom behavior but it also improves the students' abilities to perform outside of the classroom as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, special education has transformed over the years to create a more inclusive environment. After years of corrupt destructive behaviors such as neglect, restraint, and seclusion the system began to change. While there have been leaps and bounds being made in the special education field there is still much more room for growth. One of the ways that we can ensure that progress is still being made is the use of inclusion in the classroom. Inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom plays a major role in the child's development of different skills. Some of these skills are social skills, coping mechanisms, educational strategies, and real-world strategies. Students with disabilities are no different than the rest of the students in the classroom; they might just need a few extra supports in order to be successful. A few strategies and supports were included and discussed in this paper that are beneficial for students with disabilities while they are in the general education classroom. However, those HLP's are also very beneficial for all students and their learning (i.e., High

Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities, 2021; Mclesky et al., 2017). These same strategies that special education teachers are using to support their students with disabilities can also be used by their general education counterparts. Small adaptations in the curriculum and ways that students are taught in the classroom makes a major difference in their rate of success. Inclusion plays a major role in student success both in and out of the classroom and this is the ultimate goal of educators. In conclusion individuals with disabilities rely on everyone else around them to support them and advocate for equal rights which makes the world a better place for everyone living in it because we are all wonderfully made.

References

- ABC News Network (n.d.). *Kids Hurt, Killed at School*. ABC news. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/photos/kids-hurt-killed-school-17830717/image-17831178>.
- ADA National Network (2018). *Disability Rights Laws in Public Primary and Secondary Education: How Do They Relate?* Retrieved November 22, 2021, <https://adata.org/factsheet/disability-rights-laws-public-primary-and-secondary-education-how-do-they-relate>
- Allen, G. (2012, October 15). *Florida's Dozier School for Boys: A true horror story*. NPR. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://www.npr.org/2012/10/15/162941770/floridas-dozier-school-for-boys-a-true-horror-story>.
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Pub. L. No. 101-336, § 2, 104 Stat. 328 (1991).
- Artiles, A. J., Kozleski, E. B., Trent, S. C., Osher, D., & Ortiz, A. (2010). Justifying and Explaining Disproportionality, 1968-2008: A Critique of Underlying Views of Culture. *Exceptional Children*, 76(3), 279–299.
- Bakken, J. P. (2016). General and Special Education Inclusion in an Age of Change: An Introduction. *Advances in Special Education*, 31, 1–12. <https://doi-org.libproxy.eku.edu/10.1108/S0270-401320160000031001>
- Calabrese, R., Patterson, J., Fuchang Liu, Goodvin, S., Hummel, C., & Nance, E. (2008). An Appreciative Inquiry into the Circle of Friends Program: The Benefits of

Social Inclusion of Students with Disabilities. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 4(2), 20–48.

CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education, (n.d.). *IDEA special education due process complaints/hearing requests: A guide for parents of children and youth (ages 3-21)*.

https://www.cadeworks.org/sites/default/files/resources/Due%20Process%20Parent%20Guide%202014_1.pdf

Council for Exceptional Children: The Premier Association for special education professionals. (2021, March 27). Retrieved March 30, 2021, from

<https://exceptionalchildren.org/>

Da Fonte, M. A., & Barton-Arwood, S. M. (2017). Collaboration of General and Special Education Teachers: Perspectives and Strategies. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 53(2), 99–106.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Pub. L. No. 94-142, § 89, Stat. 773.

Francisco, M. P. B., Hartman, M., & Wang, Y. (2020). Inclusion and Special Education. *Education Sciences*, 10(9), 238. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10090238>

Florida Department of Law Enforcement (2010). Office of executive investigations: Author G. Dozier school for boys abuse investigation.

<http://thewhitehouseboys.com/abusereport.pdf>

- Grant, P. A. (2005). Restrictiveness and Race in Special Education: Educating All Learners. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 3(1), 70–74.
- Hallahan, D. P., Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen, P. C. (2019). *Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education*. New York, NY: Pearson.
- Handler, B. R. (2007). Who's in the Classroom Down the Hall?: An Examination of Demographic Shifts within Segregated Special Education Classrooms, 1975-2005. *American Educational History Journal*, 34(2), 379–393.
- Herman, E. (2019). *The autism history project: Bruno Bettelheim, 1903-1990*.
<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/autismhistoryproject/people/312-2/>
- High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities (2021).
Social/emotional/behavioral. Council for Exceptional Children. Retrieved November 22, 2021, <https://highleveragepractices.org/four-areas-practice-k-12/social-emotional-behavioral>
- Hoffman, H., Hengesbach, M., & Trotter, S. (2020). Perspectives on Person-First Language: A Focus on College Students. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 33(1), 39–48.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).
- Jewell, B., Fraser, E., & Hendricks, R. (2017). Restraints and Seclusion in US Public Schools: A review of existing law, policy, and litigation. *JEP: EJournal of Education Policy*, 1–11.
- Kimmerle, E. H., Estabrook, R., Wells, E. C., & Jackson, A. T. (2012). *Documentation of the Boot Hill Cemetery (8JA1860) at the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys*.

Interim Report, Division of Historical Resources. Permit 1112.032. December 10, 2012. <https://digital.lib.usf.edu/content/SF/S0/04/93/48/00001/D23-00001.pdf>

Lenhart, J. (2021, April 16). *Restraint & seclusion: Federal data highlights continued impact on students with disabilities*. Advo Kids. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from <https://www.advo-kids.com/post/restraint-seclusion-federal-data-confirms-continued-impact-on-students-with-disabilities>.

MacDonnell, M., McClain, K., Ganguli, A., & Elias, M. J. (2021). It's Not All or Nothing: Exploring the Impact of a Social-Emotional and Character Development Intervention in the Middle Grades. *Research in Middle Level Education Online*, 44(2), 1–15. <https://doi-org.libproxy.eku.edu/10.1080/19404476.2020.1868226>

Maxwell, P. (2019, October 3). "Room clear:" A method teachers use for students that are disruptive. KHQ Right Now "Room Clears". Retrieved October 11, 2021, from https://www.khq.com/news/room-clear-a-method-teachers-use-for-students-that-are-disruptive/article_75d7598c-e628-11e9-9782-8f658fe08571.html#:~:text=Room%20clears%20are%20when%20the,teacher%20alone%20in%20the%20classroom.&text=The%20special%20education%20program%20starts,supports%20to%20access%20their%20education.

McLeskey, J., Barringer, M-D., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M., Jackson, D., Kennedy, M., Lewis, T., Maheady, L., Rodriguez, J., Scheeler, M. C., Winn, J., & Ziegler, D. (2017, January). High-leverage *practices in special education. Arlington, VA: Maheady, L., Rodriguez, J., Scheeler, M. C., Winn, J., & Ziegler, D. (2017, January). High-leverage practices in special education. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center.

- Nave, L. (2020). Universal Design for Learning: UDL in Online Environments: The WHY of Learning. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 44(1), 30–31.
- National Parent Center on Transition and Employment (2019). Understanding academic accommodations. Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center. Retrieved November 22, 2021, <https://www.pacer.org/transition/learning-center/postsecondary/academic-accommodations.asp>
- ProjectIDEAL (2013). *Definition/Types of Assessment*. Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. <http://www.projectidealonline.org/v/definition-type-assessment/>
- Rosa's Law (2010). Pub. L. No. 111 - 256, § 124 Stat. 2643, 2644 and 2645.
- Samuels, C. A. (2020, December 14). *70,000 students with DISABILITIES Secluded, restrained in school*. Education Week. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/70-000-students-with-disabilities-secluded-restrained-in-school/2017/05>.
- Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended, 29 U.S.C. 794.
- Spaulding, L. S., & Pratt, S. M. (2015). A Review and Analysis of the History of Special Education and Disability Advocacy in the United States. *American Educational History Journal*, 42(1), 91–109.
- New York State of Education Department (2011, May), *Use of Time out rooms*. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/topicalbriefs/timeoutroom.htm>
- Villani, V., Parsons, A., Church, R., & Beetar, J. (2012). A Descriptive Study of the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in a Special Education School. *Child & Youth Care Forum*, 41(3), 295–309. <https://doi-org.libproxy.eku.edu/10.1007/s10566-011-9165-3>

Weiser, B. (2020, February 21). *Beatings, Burns and Betrayal: The Willowbrook Scandal's Legacy*. The New York Times. Retrieved November 22, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/21/nyregion/willowbrook-state-school-staten-island.html>.