Who Is Jack Steinberg?

Jack is a combination of many characteristics, as all children are. Some of his, however, are more obvious.

He wears eyeglasses for protection because he has a visual impairment. The glasses, however, are “cool”—they have tinted lenses and red temples, and they wrap nearly all the way around his head. He also uses a specialized desk. He stands at his desk, secured by Velcro straps to arms that extend from the desk so he won’t fall. When he tires of standing, he can sit on a chair raised high enough that he will still have access to his desk even while sitting. He also has a full-sized and a miniaturized wheelchair, a “KidWalk,” so he can get around his school. And he has a significant communication disability; his friends and teachers usually understand what he is saying, but a person newly introduced to Jack will strain to understand him. To make sure he can take notes in his general education class, he uses computers, whereas his classmates do not. So much for the obvious.
What is not obvious is that Jack is one of the most outstanding students of mathematics. When other students are puzzled by a math problem and do not know the process for solving it, Jack tells them.

What also is not obvious is that the way his teachers instruct his class benefits him and his peers. They use universal design for learning. If you were to visit Jack's class and not see his desk, chair, and computers, you would think he is just another student.

And that is precisely what his principal Shawna Draxton, teacher Pilar Chavez, special educator Sami Gross, and paraeducator Phil Lewis want: for Jack to have maximum access—full inclusion.

Jack attends an elementary charter school in a suburb of Los Angeles. Its co-founders included Suzanne Goldstein, the mother of another student who has autism, and three other mothers of children with disabilities. After three years of planning and securing a charter from the Los Angeles school district, they and the school’s newly hired principal and staff opened a school committed to including students with disabilities in all aspects of school life, to innovation in education for all children, to educating the whole child, and to reaching out to all families, in partnership.

This was not to be just any other school, not even any other charter school. It was not even to be known by its official name, Westchester Innovative School House. No, this was to be the culmination of a collective aspiration: WISH.

Here, then, is a combination of extraordinary talents: committed parents, a visionary principal, talented teachers, peers who regard each other as just another kid, and a contagious culture of being in a community with each other.

So, let’s go back to the basic question: Who is Jack Steinberg? Put what you just read about him alongside what you just read about WISH. Now answer the question. If you answered that Jack is “just another student,” you would be correct. Yes, he has disabilities. But, no, he is not separated from his teachers and peers by them.

What makes the difference is not just the founders’ and staff’s commitment to a vision of inclusive education or the careful development of a community culture. There’s more. There’s the deliberate use of evidence-based strategies for teaching and learning.

These include universal design for learning (UDL). His teachers use extra-large letters when writing on a whiteboard, and they enlarge printed materials by using photocopiers, pictures on Jack’s iPad, or optical character recognition (OCR) software that turns written text into editable Word documents, so that Jack can record his answers and then transmit them to his teachers. To help Jack communicate about his schoolwork, they reduce the number of questions he must answer on in-class tests and, to make sure he does all of his work, they assign the rest of the questions to him for homework. In a word, UDL makes learning easier for all students (large print on whiteboards), not just Jack. For him, however, there is less “brain drain.”

Inclusion does not happen simply because of UDL. There are also supplementary aids and services. The aids include the computers Jack uses in class to take notes. Sometimes, Jack uses an iPad and a computer, or sometimes just a single computer. One displays the written material that Pilar has on the class Smart Board, and the
other is open to a blank Google Doc onto which Jack is expected to transcribe the notes Pilar writes on the whiteboard. When a second device is not needed to display class materials, Jack has only one computer on his desk.

As to supplementary services, his paraeducator, Phil, or Sami Gross, one of the school’s special educators, has another iPad or computer open to the same Google Doc so they can type in notes that Jack has not entered before the class moves to another lesson. Phil has devised another, simple, low-cost form of universal design: When Pilar draws pictures or diagrams on the whiteboard, Phil takes a photo of them, using his smartphone, and then embeds them into Jack’s digital notes.

Jack wants to communicate by speaking, so he answers verbally in class. Neither Pilar nor Sami see his Google Doc notes while they are teaching, usually in front of the entire class. Jack raises his hand to be called on and speaks his answers. That’s how it usually goes. When, however, he does math, or teaches how to solve a problem by demonstrating it in front of his peers, a “scribe” writes what Jack says, such as “multiply the numerator” or “split it five times.”

On the playground, Jack has decided to abandon his KidWalk and instead to play kickball by having an adult hold him erect. At recess, Jack is socially independent with his peers. More often than not, he will play with one or more students. Conversations between him and his peers occur with very little to no conversation between the students and the adult who supports Jack, usually Phil. In the school garden, Jack kneels alongside his classmates to turn the soil and plant a vegetable. On field trips, Phil or another adult accompanies Jack.

Note the “Jack and Phil” combination. Last year, Jack’s aide was a woman; she had to assist him in the rest room. Jack made it clear he was uncomfortable with that arrangement. WISH’s response? Hire Phil.

To understand the culture at WISH, ask Jack’s teachers: “What winds you up each day at WISH?”

- For Shawna, it’s the kids, their families, educators growing with each other, and the application of the science of learning.
- For Pilar, it’s understanding that treating students equally means individualizing for each, and then bringing her passion for teaching into every encounter with her students.
- For Sami, it’s not making stigmatizing distinctions among the students who have and those who do not have disabilities, and collaborating with other faculty and students’ families.
- For Phil, it’s recognizing the value of compassion, the power of love, and the urgency of the present moment.
Let’s return to the “fit” between Jack and WISH. It’s not just a matter of inclusion, UDL, and supplementary aids and services. It’s that matter of culture, again. It begins with visionary co-founders. It continues through a principal, Shawna, committed to having students in school in natural proportion to the percentage of people with disabilities in the entire American population.

It includes schoolwide positive behavior support that seeks prosocial behaviors. In every classroom, there is a “CHAMPS” sign that teachers complete during class, marking each letter every time a student demonstrates Conversation with others, Help for others, Activities that include others, Movements that accommodate others, Participation that involves others, and Success that celebrates what everyone does. Now we are getting at the matter of culture plus science.

Science plus a value-driven culture: That’s WISH, the inclusive school. And it’s where Jack fits.

So who is Jack Steinberg? He’s a student, first and foremost. And in some ways, he is the heart of WISH itself, the young man who teaches others how to teach and learn, and in this chapter you will learn strategies to teach and learn from the students you work with.

• You will learn about progress in the general education curriculum, and how IDEA requires that students like Jack both have access to and progress in the curriculum like their age peers.

• You will learn the definitions of supplementary aids and services and universal design for learning and how they benefit Jack and other students.

• You will learn the meaning of inclusion and how it supports student progress as well as what is meant by multi-tiered systems of supports and how schoolwide efforts to reform schools can enhance progress.

• You will learn how a student’s IEP makes it possible for students such as Jack to participate and make progress in the general curriculum.

• Finally, you will learn what you and your colleagues in general and special education can teach students so that they will make the progress that IDEA wants and that Jack, his teachers, and his parents want for him as well.

What is “Progress in the General Education Curriculum”?

In this chapter, we address universal design and inclusion as foundations for progress in the general education curriculum. In Chapter 3 we discuss multiculturalism, and in Chapter 4 we discuss partnerships. Universal design and inclusion are means to an end: The goal is that students like Jack will receive an appropriate education by being involved with and making progress in the general education curriculum. And that end is a means to four other ends: equal opportunity, independent living, full participation, and economic self-sufficiency. When you read Chapter 1, you learned about those four national goals, and when you read what Ivey and Eric have to say about Jack in My Voice Box 2.1, later in this chapter, you will get an idea of what those four ends mean for him. So universal design and inclusion are means to an appropriate education and progress in the general education curriculum, which, in turn, are a means to those four overarching goals. Before we talk about the means, then, we should think more about the end. What does “progress in the general education curriculum” mean?

First, progress is what federal law promotes and requires. As you learned from reading Chapter 1, IDEA requires each student’s IEP to state how the student will be involved with and progress in the general education curriculum, how the student’s progress will be assessed, and how state- and districtwide assessments will be modified (as appropriate) for the student. As you also learned in Chapter 1, one of the six principles of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is accountability for results. Accordingly, ESEA requires assessment of students’ proficiency and exempts no students from assessment. ESEA covers students with disabilities, but like IDEA, it allows for appropriate individualized modifications as set out in a student’s IEP. Jack takes part in state assessments with accommodations, namely, the use of a computer and an aide to help him respond. This is exactly what he does in class, so he does it on the assessments, too.

Second, progress in the general education curriculum is achieved by standards-based reform. This process identifies the academic content (reading, mathematics, science,
that students must master, the standards for students’ achievement of content proficiency, a general education curriculum aligned with these standards, assessment of student progress in meeting the standards, and information from the assessments to improve instruction and to demonstrate that the schools are indeed accountable to students, their families, and the public. Increasingly, the English Language and Mathematics standards being adopted by state education agencies (SEAs) are the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS process was initiated by governors and education leaders in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and two U.S. territories through the National Governors Association in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards were developed to provide real-world learning goals (what students should know and be able to do at each grade level) to ensure that K–12 students across the United States graduate from high school ready for college and career. In addition, teachers were involved in the development of the CCSS throughout the process, serving on work groups and providing feedback and input. Students can benefit from the CCSS by being held to high expectations to achieve clear, consistent learning goals at each grade level in math and English language arts that will prepare them for success in college and careers. Teachers benefit by having consistent goals and benchmarks from which to design instruction and ensuring that students who move from state to state or from district to district receive the same level of instruction based on high expectations.

Third, ESEA requires states to establish challenging academic content and student achievement standards that apply to all students, including students with disabilities. Academic content standards define the knowledge, skills, and understanding that students should attain in academic subjects. Student achievement standards define the levels of achievement that students must meet to demonstrate their proficiency in the subjects. States may establish alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, which ESEA identifies as the 1 percent of the lowest performing students. But, even so, those alternate standards must align with the same academic content standards for all students so that these students will be able to make progress in the general education curriculum (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

Finally, a student’s IEP team must consider what accommodations in the assessment process the student might need to ensure that his or her achievement is fairly evaluated. Accommodations do not change the content of the assessment; rather, they change teachers’ ways of presenting information (for example, changing the order of taking subtests), students’ ways of responding (for example, using a computer or dictating answers as Jack does), assessment timing (for example, having extended time or frequent breaks), and assessment settings (for example, taking the test in a quiet room or a small group away from the larger class) (Perie, 2010).

How Does the General Education Curriculum Benefit Students with Disabilities?

Connecting the Curriculum to Standards

As we just pointed out, the general education curriculum for students without disabilities is aligned with academic content and student achievement standards set by each
Ensuring Progress in the General Education Curriculum: Universal Design for Learning and Inclusion

State education agency for students at various grade levels. Alignment, however, does not mean that educators should overlook the individual needs of each student with a disability. Indeed, they should not. If they were to overlook Jack’s needs, they would be unable to provide him with an appropriate education, one that occurs in the general education classroom. IDEA requires school districts to provide an appropriate education based on each student’s strengths and needs and to do so by including the student (to the maximum extent appropriate) in the general academic curriculum. Further, IDEA requires educators to assess the student’s progress toward stated goals. Educators often do this by determining how well a student with a disability performs on the state- or districtwide assessments of all students, with and without disabilities.

Typically, states use three approaches to assessments. First, they define standards. These are general statements of what a student should know and be able to do in any given academic subject. Then they define benchmarks, specific statements of what the student should know and be able to do in that subject. Finally, they define indicators. These are statements of knowledge or skills that a student must demonstrate in order to meet a benchmark. Some students with disabilities will be expected to meet the same standards and benchmarks as students without disabilities; they will be assessed by the same indicators as students without disabilities. Other students with disabilities will have different standards, benchmarks, and indicators, depending on the extent of their disability. They benefit from these accommodations because, although their curriculum is aligned with that of students without disabilities, they are receiving individualized education specially tailored to them. It is reasonable to assess their progress according to their individualized education even while that education aligns with that of students without disabilities. Figure 2.1 provides an example of one state’s standards, benchmarks, and grade-level indicators for students in fifth grade.

**MAKING ACCOMMODATIONS IN ASSESSMENTS**

Many students with disabilities will require modifications in the methods of assessment to provide evidence of their knowledge. States that administer state-level assessments have written policies or guidelines concerning accommodations in assessments. Studies of frequent test accommodations, such as dictated responses, extended time, large print, read-aloud, and computer-based assessment (which works for Jack), have produced mixed results about their effectiveness (Cormier, Altman, Shyyan, & Thurlow, 2010). For example, studies of read-aloud accommodations for testing have found either the accommodation resulted in a boost for students with disabilities or that it provided a boost for students without disabilities. Other studies of read-aloud accommodation have suggested that that accommodation simplified the test, whereas still others have indicated that read-aloud accommodations do not produce increased student performance for students with disabilities (Cormier et al., 2010). The growing use of computer technology to administer tests is, however, beginning to make the provision of accommodations more equitable. Still, there continues to be the need to study the effect of accommodations for students with and without disabilities to ensure equity.

Under IDEA, a student who (according to the IEP team) cannot learn the same content as same-age peers who do not have disabilities and who cannot take the state assessment even if modified may provide evidence of progress through an alternate assessment. ESEA provides a number of options, but any such assessment must be linked or aligned with the general education curriculum. Alternate assessments based on grade-level achievement standards (AA-GLAS) enable students to demonstrate skills and knowledge on grade-level assessments, but the assessments are modified versions of the general assessment. Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) refer to assessment for use with students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that involve multiple accommodations and links to alternate achievement standards. Finally, alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) are used for students across disability categories (other than primarily students with the
most significant cognitive disabilities) who need both accommodations and some
modifications to the grade-level standards (National Center on Educational Out-
comes, n.d.). The traditional alternate assessment was the AA-AAS version. The
AA-GLAS version is the least frequently offered, whereas the AA-MAS is the newest
option and is gaining in use.

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education funded two consortia of states to
develop next-generation assessments for students with the most significant cognitive
disabilities linked to the Common Core State Standards in English Language and Math-
ematics. These consortia (the Dynamic Learning Maps, or DLM, Consortium at the Uni-
versity of Kansas and the National Center and State Collaborative at the University of
Minnesota) are rethinking approaches to alternate assessment in the age of technology
and universal design for learning.

As you will learn in Chapter 4, students from diverse racial and ethnic back-
grounds disproportionately receive special education services, and there have been
disproportional results for many students from diverse backgrounds in terms of
educational outcomes. Further, many students from diverse backgrounds are disad-
vantaged in the processes of referral and eligibility for special education services and
for test taking.

On a global basis, the question has to be “do assessments disadvantage students
from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds?” Data from the U.S. Department of
Education’s National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) testing seem to suggest
so. Congress requires the U.S. Department of Education to collect data for the NAEP on student achievement across ages, grades, and subjects, and it is one of the largest and most representative datasets available to determine education-related outcomes for American students. For example, data from the NAEP have shown that children with more highly educated parents earned higher average reading and math scores on the NAEP than did children with less well-educated parents. Given that the NAEP shows that in 2012 African American, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native 25- to 29-year-olds had the lowest levels of educational attainment among all groups, one can surmise that children from certain ethnic groups are disadvantaged in large-scale assessments (Aud et al., 2013).

Of course, lower educational levels result in lower income. The NAEP also showed that in 2011 39 percent of African American children under the age of 18, 34 percent of Hispanic children under the age of 18, and 36 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native children under the age of 18 were living in poverty, compared with just 13 percent of white children under the age of 18 (Aud et al., 2013). There is little question that issues such as poverty, education, and race and ethnicity impact test scores.

**Why Is Progress in the General Education Curriculum Valued?**

Jack’s parents, Ivey and Eric, are adamant that Jack will participate in the general education curriculum. They accept no arguments to the contrary; both are well-educated professionals, and both have high expectations for Jack and believe that his inclusion in the general education curriculum and classroom is the route to achieving those expectations. Jack himself wants to be with his age-similar peers in general education, and his educators at WISH—principal Shawna Draxton and teachers Pilar Chavez, Sami Gross, and Phil Lewis—are equally committed to inclusion for Jack. Still, there is the global question: Is it good to hold students with disabilities accountable for progress in the general education curriculum? Is it fair to determine those students’ accountability for progress toward the same standards? There are two reasons to answer “yes” to each question (Wehmeyer, 2011):

- Holding schools accountable for the progress of all students when compared on identical standards may result in higher expectations and higher achievement for students with disabilities.
- By being part of the standard process for assessment, students with disabilities will be part of the reform movement of education.

Of course, there are legitimate concerns that an identical-standards approach will conflict with the individualized needs of students as set out in their IEPs, limiting needed instruction in important areas such as vocational education and basic life skills, or that students may be frustrated, discouraged, and drop out. Yet despite the difficulties of involving students with disabilities in standards-based reform, evidence shows that it is important to hold them to high expectations and provide them with access to a challenging curriculum while being vigilant to ensure that any negative impact on other instructional areas or student motivation are minimized. Read what Ivey and Eric have to say about Jack and their high expectations for him in My Voice Box 2.1. Underlying high expectations is the value of full citizenship: To deny students the opportunity to benefit from the general education curriculum may actually limit their education and post-school opportunities. That certainly reflects the Steinberg family’s perspectives. Research backs up their beliefs and shows that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can benefit from instruction in core content areas (Wehmeyer, 2011).

How do you provide standards-based education for all students? We will answer that question throughout all chapters in this book. We begin by describing how you can design curriculum, instruction, and assessment to enable students with exceptions to progress in the general education curriculum.
As a member of the IEP team, you and your colleagues must identify the supplementary aids and services the student needs to be involved and make progress in the general education curriculum.

**How do Supplementary Aids and Services and Universal Design for Learning Support Progress?**

As you learned in Chapter 1, a student has a right to special education, necessary related services, and supplementary aids and services. You also learned that IDEA defines special education as *specially designed instruction* and that related services involve a wide array of services that are necessary if a student is to benefit from special education. But what are supplementary aids and services?

**What Are Supplementary Aids and Services?**

IDEA defines *supplementary aids and services* as “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in
Ensuring Progress in the General Education Curriculum: Universal Design for Learning and Inclusion

Extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.” These services and aids supplement the student’s specially designed instruction and related services and, like that instruction and those related services, ensure that a student receives an appropriate education, especially to ensure participation and progress in the general education curriculum. For Jack Steinberg, supplementary aids include his computers and iPad, adapted desk and chair, and KidWalk and wheelchair; and supplementary aids include Sami Gross, the special educator, and Phil Lewis, the paraeducator.

Supplementary aids and services are noninstructional modifications and supports (NICHCY, 2013). As Figure 2.2 shows, they include modifications to ensure physical and cognitive access to the environment, classroom ecological variables such as seating arrangements and classroom acoustics, educational and assistive technology, assessment and task modifications, and support from other persons. Although all of these aids and services are important, we will focus on the role of universal design in promoting progress in the general education curriculum.

**FIGURE 2.2 Supplementary Aids and Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universal design for learning</td>
<td>Modifications to how the curriculum is presented or represented or to the ways in which students respond to the curriculum</td>
<td>Digital Talking Book formats, advance organizers, video or audio input/output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Modifications to the community, campus building, or classroom to ensure physical and cognitive access</td>
<td>Curb cuts, wide doors, clear aisles, nonprint signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom ecology</td>
<td>Modifications to and arrangements of features of the classroom environment that impact learning</td>
<td>Seating arrangement, types of seating, acoustics, lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and assistive technology</td>
<td>Technology that reduces the impact of a person’s impairment on his or her capacity</td>
<td>Calculator, augmentative communication device, computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and task modifications</td>
<td>Modifications to time or task requirements (but not content or material) to assist in participation in assessment or educational task</td>
<td>Extended time, scribe, note taker, oral presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher, paraprofessional, or peer support</td>
<td>Support from another person to participate in instructional activities</td>
<td>Peer buddy, paraeducator, teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supplementary aids and services are noninstructional modifications and supports (NICHCY, 2013). As Figure 2.2 shows, they include modifications to ensure physical and cognitive access to the environment, classroom ecological variables such as seating arrangements and classroom acoustics, educational and assistive technology, assessment and task modifications, and support from other persons. Although all of these aids and services are important, we will focus on the role of universal design in promoting progress in the general education curriculum.

**APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 2.1**

**What Is Universal Design?**

*Universal design (UD) refers to the design of buildings, environments, and products with features that ensure that all people can access the building or environment or use the product (Null, 2013). This is an important point: UD features ensure accessibility for all people, not just people with disabilities. For example, the designs of most scissors*
limit people who have fine-motor difficulties from using them easily. Did you know, however, that most such scissors are also designed for people who are right-handed? People who are left-handed must purchase specially designed scissors. However, universally designed scissors can be used by people with limited hand strength or fine-motor difficulties as well as by people who are left-handed or right-handed.

So what does universal design have to do with special education services? As schools began to implement standards-based reforms, it became obvious that instructional materials impeded many students’ progress in the general education curriculum. Students who could not read because of their visual impairments did not have access to the information they needed to learn content. Likewise, students who spoke a language other than English experienced barriers. In fact, traditional ways of representing content (written formats such as textbooks), presenting information (whole-class lectures), and having students demonstrate their knowledge and skills (through written papers and examinations) were barriers for a lot of children, not only students with disabilities. That’s where IDEA and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) come in. UDL refers to the design of instructional materials and activities to make the content information accessible to all children (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014).

Basically, UDL ensures that students with disabilities can access the general education curriculum via curriculum modifications achieved through technology and instruction (that is, pedagogy).

**How Does Universal Design for Learning Facilitate Progress?**

Universal design for learning contributes to progress in the general education curriculum by ensuring that all students can access academic content information and provide evidence of their learning through more than one means. Notice the words *all students.*

There are three principles of universal design for learning articulated by CAST. The first, *provide multiple means of representation,* relates to the materials that teachers use to represent the content they are asking their students to learn. The second, *provide multiple means of action and expression,* concerns how the materials provide alternative ways for students to demonstrate knowledge. The third, *provide multiple means of engagement,* deals with how the materials take advantage of student interests and motivations to engage them in learning (Meyer et al., 2014).

Figure 2.3 provides a graphic organizer for these UDL principles and identifies helpful guidelines for their implementation. You can see, for example, that as a means to provide multiple means of representation (Principle 1), you can consider providing students with auditory information, make sure that vocabulary is clear and understandable, or highlight big ideas in the text or on a whiteboard or blackboard. All of these work to ensure that content information is represented for students in ways that are as understandable as possible for as many students as possible. In Chapters 5 and on, you will learn about very specific strategies to achieve UDL, including, for example, using graphic organizers (like the UDL Guidelines!) to present big ideas. Teachers achieve universal design in representing content when they use multiple formats, such as text, graphics or pictures, digital and other media formats (audio or video), and performance formats (plays, skits) and when they use different means to deliver content information, including lectures, computerized visual presentations such as PowerPoint, role playing, and computer-mediated instruction. Similarly, students can provide evidence of their learning through reports, exams, portfolios, drawings, performances, oral reports, videotaped reports, and other alternative means. Look at the guidelines provided in Figure 2.3 and think about how you could implement the guidelines to include all students.

Instructional materials also must be universally designed. In fact, the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS), which was included in IDEA 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.), requires that publishers provide electronic formats of all instructional materials to ensure that students who have print-related disabilities can access written content.
In the “Planning for Universal Design for Learning” sections in Chapters 5 through 16, you will learn how UDL principles apply to students with disabilities and how technology and pedagogy enable them to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum, from digital talking books and e-readers to the use of pedagogical means of achieving access, such as advance organizers and concept maps. The bottom line is simply this: Universal design for learning configures instructional materials to meet the needs of each student. It focuses on a student’s strengths, takes the student’s learning capacities into account, and offers each student a full opportunity to benefit from the general education curriculum.

How Does Inclusion Support Progress?

You already know that progress in the general education curriculum is one of IDEA’s requirements, and you know why it is important for students. You have just started to learn about one way to advance that goal: universal design for learning. There is a second important way. It is called inclusion. You learned, while reading Chapter 1, that IDEA has a principle called the least restrictive environment. This principle underlies
inclusion: Students with disabilities should participate in the school’s academic, extracurricular, and other activities with students without disabilities. Remember the vignette about Jack and WISH? The vignette explained inclusion as it affected not just Jack but as it was embedded throughout that school. We introduce you to this essential concept here and then elaborate on it in Chapters 5 through 16.

**What Is Inclusion?**

As you’ll learn about soon, students in particular disability categories may be more likely to be served outside of the general education classroom. It is important, though, that you understand that a disability label is not destiny when it comes to placement. There are examples of successful inclusion across age and disability categories, and it is IDEA’s presumption that students with disabilities, independent of category, be educated with their nondisabled peers. So what exactly is meant by inclusion? As we said at the beginning of this section, inclusion is based on IDEA’s principle of the least restrictive environment. IDEA’s presumption in favor of inclusion declares that “each state must establish procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular education with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.” Nothing requires Jack Steinberg to be removed; instead, supplementary aids and services make it possible for him to learn in a general education classroom with students who do not have disabilities and are of the same age as he.

Inclusion, then, refers to the participation of students with disabilities alongside their nondisabled peers in academic, extracurricular, and other school activities. The provision of supplementary aids and services is important to IDEA’s emphasis. As you learned previously in this chapter, supplementary aids and services are defined as “aids, services, and other supports that are provided in general education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.” These aids and services facilitate placement in and compliance with the regulations for the least restrictive environment: “To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities... are educated with children who are nondisabled.” IDEA allows placements other than the general education classroom, but it presumes that the setting of choice for students is the general education classroom and that students will not be removed from that setting unless inclusion in the general education classroom cannot be achieved satisfactorily with the use of supplementary aids and services and specially designed instruction. Do you need to review the text about Jack? Hardly: You already know that WISH includes him fully, with supplementary aids and services.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF INCLUSION**

Inclusion has four key characteristics: home-school placement, the principle of natural proportions, restructuring teaching and learning, and age- and grade-appropriate placements.

**Home-School Placement.** Within an inclusive model, students attend the same school they would have attended if they did not have a disability. This is the same school other children in the student’s neighborhood attend, as Jack does, contributing thereby to the education of other students (Munk & Dempsey, 2010).

**Principle of Natural Proportions.** The principle of natural proportions—to which WISH’s principal, Shawna Draxton, is fully committed—holds that students with exceptionalities should be placed in schools and classrooms in natural proportion to the occurrence of exceptionality within the general population (Brown et al., 1991). If, for example, 10 percent of students in a school district receive special education...
services, the principle of natural proportions holds that, if a classroom has thirty students, not more than three should have a disability. Indeed, Shawna wants even more students with disabilities to attend WISH, to create the perfect natural proportion that the ideal seeks.

Restructuring Teaching and Learning. Inclusion through restructuring requires general and special educators to work in partnership with related service providers, families, and students to provide supplementary aids and services and special education and related services. You will recall from the vignette how closely Jack’s team works together. Tremendous variability exists in how teachers provide special education services within general education classrooms. What Sami does for Jack is not what she does for other students; they have different needs than Jack. But in schools like WISH, which implements inclusion through restructuring, pooling the strengths and talents of educators who have different types of training and capacities allows all students to be successful in the general education classroom.

Age- and Grade-Appropriate Placements. Finally, inclusion favors educating all students in age- and grade-appropriate placements. Therefore, Jack spends all of his time at school with students in the same grade he is in.

Two major issues are at the heart of the inclusion debate: (1) eliminating the continuum of placements and (2) increasing the amount of time students spend in the general education classroom.

Eliminating the Continuum of Placements. The concept of a continuum of services has been part of special education ever since Congress enacted IDEA in 1975. The continuum refers to services that range from the most typical and most inclusive settings to the most atypical and most segregated settings.

There was a time when accommodating students with disabilities in general education classrooms through supplementary aids and services was not considered an option. That limited perspective caused Taylor (1988) to observe that students with disabilities were caught in the continuum of services. Unfortunately, once students were placed in more restrictive settings, few ever left them for general education classrooms.

The inclusion movement has tried to limit the need for more restrictive settings by creating a new partnership between special and general educators. This partnership seeks to provide individualized instruction to students in general education classrooms through a universally designed general education curriculum (Jackson, Ryndak, & Wehmeyer, 2010). The priority for inclusion in the general education classroom is now predicated on the premise that it is not often appropriate or even necessary to remove some students from the general education classroom and place them in a more specialized and restrictive setting to provide individualized and appropriate education; that in order to gain access to the general education curriculum, students must be in the general education classroom (Wehmeyer, 2011); and that there is now sufficient evidence to support inclusion as a research-based practice (Jackson et al., 2010).

Increasing the Amount of Time in General Education Classrooms. Research confirms that students with disabilities can be successfully educated in the general education classroom, given adequate support and instruction (Jackson et al., 2010), and IDEA expresses a preference for inclusion. So how can teachers increase the amount of time students with disabilities are served in the general education classroom? In Chapters 5
Chapter Two

What Are Student Placement Trends?

Given that inclusion is the “placement of choice” in IDEA, where are students with disabilities receiving their education? The U.S. Department of Education reports annually on students with disabilities who receive special education and related services in different educational settings. Figure 2.4 shows the department’s categories of educational placement (also called environment) and defines each one.

Figure 2.5 shows the percentage of students with disabilities who are educated in each placement category, according to the most recent U.S. Department of Education (2013) report. If you were to graph changes in these percentages over time, you would observe that more students with disabilities are being served in regular classrooms for most of their school day, that fewer students with disabilities are being served outside the general education classroom, and that the amount of time they spend outside the general education classroom has decreased. In addition, the number of students in self-contained and separate facilities has gradually decreased. The number of students in residential facilities and in homebound or hospital placements has remained at a low level over this entire time period.

Not surprisingly, the percentage of students with disabilities in the different placement categories varies according to the age of students and their type of disability. More elementary students than secondary students are served in typical schools with peers who do not have disabilities. Students with less intensive support needs (for example, speech or language impairments and learning disabilities) are more likely to be in general education classrooms for the largest percentage of time compared with students with more intensive support needs (for example, students with intellectual disability or multiple disabilities). In Chapters 5 through 15 you will learn what percentage of students, by disability category, are in general education. In Chapter 3, you will learn that placement category also varies based on students’ racial or ethnic background.

What Student Outcomes Are Associated with Inclusion?

By now, most stakeholders in the education of students with disabilities have accepted the importance of including students. For many parents of younger children with disabilities, inclusion is an expectation (Khetani, Cohn, Orsmond, Law, & Coster, 2013). So what benefits accrue when students are included?
First, there is almost universal agreement that students with disabilities gain social and communication benefits from their involvement in inclusive settings (Jackson et al., 2010). Jack’s experiences at WISH underscore this finding: he’s in class, in the school assembly, and on the playground and at the garden with his classmates who do not have disabilities and he’s building relationships. Second, and particularly important in the light of current trends in standards-based reform, research shows that students with disabilities can and do benefit academically from involvement in the general education classroom. Rojewski, Lee, and Gregg (2013), for example, found that students with learning disabilities or emotional behavior disorders who were educated in more inclusive settings enrolled in postsecondary education at more than twice the rate of their peers who were not included. Cole, Waldron, and Majd (2004) found that students without disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms made significantly greater academic progress in mathematics and reading than did students without disabilities who did not have students with disabilities in their classroom. Cole and colleagues offer an explanation: The additional supports provided in the general education classroom that are intended to support the students with disabilities benefit all students. Now that’s putting the “universal” in universal design for learning! More recently, Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, and Theoharis (2013) conducted an analysis of the Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS, another U.S. Department of Education dataset, following children with disabilities through preschool and into early elementary) and found a strong, positive relationship between the number of hours students with disabilities spent in general education classrooms and math and reading achievement, confirming earlier findings.

In particular, research shows that students with disabilities receiving their education in the general education classroom are significantly more likely to have access to the general education curriculum. Students being educated in the general education curriculum are more likely to be working on activities linked to grade-level standards in the general education classroom (Wehmeyer, 2011). Clearly, inclusion with support (through individually designed instruction, related services, supplementary aids and services, and universal design in learning) is feasible.
and important. You will learn more about the positive outcomes of inclusion in Chapters 5 through 15. Box 2.2 has tips for inclusion.

### How Does Inclusion Facilitate Progress?

Until the last decade, the inclusion movement consisted of two generations of different practices. The first generation focused on moving students with disabilities from segregated settings into the general education classroom. The second focused on developing and evaluating practices to support the presence of students with disabilities in the general classroom. Both phases focused primarily on the place in which students were educated.

Now, however, ESEA’s standards-based reforms and IDEA’s command for access to the general education curriculum have created conditions for a third generation of

#### Box 2.2 • Inclusion Tips

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What You Might See</th>
<th>What You Might Be Tempted to Do</th>
<th>Alternate Responses</th>
<th>Ways to Include Peers in the Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td>The student shows an apparently poor attitude toward other students and does not easily cooperate with them during instructional activities.</td>
<td>Discipline him for his poor behavior and separate him from the rest of the class.</td>
<td>Identify his strengths and work together on a list of positive things he can say when responding to other students during instructional activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social interactions</strong></td>
<td>He has few friends and doesn’t appear to want any.</td>
<td>Encourage him to take the initiative toward others but also allow him to be by himself whenever he chooses.</td>
<td>Collaborate with the school counselor to plan ways to teach him specific social skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educational performance</strong></td>
<td>His work is acceptable, but he needs constant supervision.</td>
<td>Assign an aide to work with him and allow him to complete unfinished work at home.</td>
<td>Collaborate with the special education teacher to create step-by-step assignments that he can do on his own. Set up a reward system for each step successfully completed without supervision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Classroom attitudes</strong></td>
<td>He never volunteers answers and is reluctant to participate in class activities.</td>
<td>Carefully choose activities that allow him to work alone.</td>
<td>Together with the special education teacher, work with him ahead of time on content to be covered and plan specific things for him to contribute.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
inclusive practices. Today, the focus is no longer exclusively on where a student is taught. It also includes (1) “what”—curriculum mastery, or what a student is taught and learns—and (2) “how”—the methods and pedagogy that teachers use. Nothing about the first two generations of inclusive practices is obsolete or unimportant. In fact, as we describe in Chapters 5 through 15, efforts to achieve outcomes associated with first- and second-generation inclusive practices (inclusion in the general education classroom and implementation of high-quality instructional strategies to support students in the general education classroom) continue but with new emphasis on “what” and “how.”

Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports

In subsequent chapters you will learn more about high-quality, schoolwide instructional strategies, increasingly referred to as multi-tiered systems of supports (MTSS), that promote students’ progress in the general education curriculum. Multi-tiered systems of supports refer to schoolwide interventions to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for all students in which they receive high-quality instruction and supports and, as needed, some students receive increasingly intensive intervention supports to ensure success. MTSS models have resulted from the merger of two innovative schoolwide procedures, response to intervention (RtI) and positive behavior supports (PBS), both of which promote progress and success in academics (RtI) and behavior (PBS) by implementing “tiers” of interventions. In the first tier, all students receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction and supports. Students who have difficulty succeeding with these first-tier interventions and supports are provided more intensive (often group-based) instruction or supports to promote academic or behavioral progress. Finally, students who are still not successful receive more highly specialized (often individualized) instruction or supports.

As you can see in Figure 2.6, the key to MTSS is that the intensity of supports provided to students, either behavioral supports or academic supports and instruction, increases based on student need. All students receive high-quality, evidence-based instruction in academic content areas as well as high-quality behavioral supports, but students who have difficulty academically or behaviorally then receive higher levels (often called tiers) of supports. Instead of moving the child out of the classroom or school, the intensity of the instructional and behavioral supports increases.

**APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE 2.2**

The U.S. Department of Education has invested significantly in the implementation of an MTSS model called SWIFT (Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation, a project within the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas, where the authors of this book work).

**How Does a Student’s IEP Support Progress?**

You have learned about universal design for learning, inclusion, and multi-tiered systems of supports that promote students’ progress in the general education curriculum. We discuss other practices in future chapters. To lay the foundation for those chapters, however, we turn your attention to other important practices, beginning with students’ individualized education programs (IEPs). We discussed the IEP in Chapter 1, but we add to that discussion here because the IEP ties all of these elements together to create a high-quality educational program for students with disabilities.
In developing a student’s IEP, you should remember two basic propositions of special education practices. First, individualization is a hallmark of these practices (Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). Second, IDEA requires a student’s IEP to ensure involvement with and progress in the general education curriculum and also to address his or her unique learning needs.

Who Designs an IEP and What Are Their Duties?

In Chapter 1, you learned that the individualized education program (IEP) is the plan for an education program for each student ages three through twenty-one. For children from birth through age two, that plan is called the individualized family services plan (IFSP). You also learned who participates in an IEP meeting and how the IEP process aligns with the priorities of the six principles of IDEA. To refresh your memory, we’ll restate who must be involved in writing an IEP: the student’s parents, a general educator, a special educator, a school representative who supervises or provides special education and knows about general education and school resources, a person who interprets the results of the student’s nondiscriminatory evaluation, any other person with expertise about the student’s educational needs (at the parents’ discretion), and, when appropriate, the student.

The members of Jack’s IEP team are his parents, Ivey and Eric; his teachers, Pilar, Sami, and Phil; and Jack himself, because, for him and other students with disabilities, the following maxim applies: “Nothing about me without me.” One of his memorable contributions was to say that he wanted a male aide to assist him when he uses a restroom; now that’s an important contribution, for it advances Jack’s dignity. And, because a general and special educator were on his team, Jack’s specialized instruction under
IDEA is aligned with ESEA. As you learned in Chapter 1, IDEA and ESEA align with each other; so does Jack’s IEP.

Now let’s consider these participants’ duties when writing the IEP. They must do all of the following:

• Ensure that all of the individuals identified by IDEA as mandatory members of the team participate.
• Follow IDEA’s process for developing an IEP by considering the student’s strengths; the parents’ concerns about how to enhance their child’s education; the results of the nondiscriminatory evaluations; the student’s academic, developmental, and functional needs; and five “special factors.” In Chapters 5 through 16, you’ll learn how to conduct a nondiscriminatory evaluation for a student with a particular disability label and how to assess the student’s progress in the general education curriculum and other educational needs.
• Include all of the required components of an IEP discussed in Chapter 1.
• Specify the student’s educational placement, consistent with the principle of the least restrictive environment (which you read about in Chapter 1 and have learned more about in this chapter).

Knowlton (2007) recommends that well-written annual goals should be clear and concise; expressed in terms of observable behavior and the conditions under which it will occur; logically derived from one or more present levels of educational performance; related to relevant academic, social, vocational, and/or community-referenced skills appropriate to the age of and expectations for the student; and readily accomplished in one year’s time. Heinich, Molen, Russell, and Smaldino (1999) recommend that well-written goals address the ABCDs of goal writing:

(A)udience. Who is the target of the goal?
(B)ehavior. What do you expect the target for the goal to be able to do? This should be an overt, observable behavior, even if the actual behavior is covert or mental in nature. Otherwise, it is not measurable.
(C)ondition. Under what conditions or circumstances do you expect the student to perform the behavior?
(D)egree of proficiency. What criteria will you use to determine if the student has met the goal?

Addressing Progress through the IEP

It is worthwhile to repeat that one of IDEA’s purposes is to ensure that the student has equal opportunities in education and that those opportunities will lead to economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and full participation. To secure these outcomes, educators must address the student’s progress in school. Because the IEP is the linchpin to the student’s education and progress, they have to take into account the supplementary aids and services the student will need and how special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services shape annual goals and progress toward those goals.

DETERMINE SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES

Relying on the student’s nondiscriminatory evaluation and IEP, the IEP team should ask what supplementary aids and services the student needs to be educated with his non-disabled peers and to progress in the general education curriculum. There is a connection between supplementary aids and services and the five special considerations that a student’s IEP team must take into account. To repeat, those five considerations are (1) strategies to address a student’s behavior that impedes his or other students’ learning; (2) language needs of students with limited English proficiency; (3) instruction in braille for students who are blind; (4) communication needs, especially when the student is deaf or hard of hearing; and (5) use of assistive technology devices and
services. Jack Steinberg is held to the same standards as all other students at WISH, but his IEP team considers the accommodations he needs for communication and the importance of assistive technology.

Each factor can guide the IEP team as it considers what supplementary aids and services a student needs. Does a student need to be seated near the teacher to see or hear the lesson? Does the student work best when seated individually or with other students around a table? What is the role of the paraprofessional in providing supports? What assistive technologies might promote access? Does the student need certain assessment or task modifications to succeed? These are all part of determining needed supplementary aids and supports.

**DETERMINE ANNUAL GOALS**

As you know, the IEP must state the student's annual goals and how educators will measure progress toward those goals, especially as the student participates in the general curriculum. The goals must relate to both the student's educational goals and her other educational needs.

With regard to goals addressing the student’s other educational needs, students with severe disabilities need functional or life-skills content that other students acquire outside of school or at a younger age and that may not be part of the general education curriculum, particularly for older students. Most students, whether receiving special education services or not, need instruction related to making the transition from school to the adult world, including instruction in employment and community living, yet this is often lacking in general curriculum standards. Further, some students with disabilities (especially those who have visual impairments) need specialized instruction in areas such as orientation and mobility—namely, how to get from place to place—that other students do not need. Let’s return to the Steinbergs. Ivey and Eric expect that there may be some issues for Jack when he goes into middle school or high school; a transition plan will be useful for him.

The IEP team should take into account the content of the general education curriculum and how it will fail to provide the student with the skills and knowledge he needs to be a productive, independent adult, as Ivey and Eric expect Jack to be. Then the team should develop goals and objectives to address those areas. Historically, the IEPs of students with disabilities began with these alternative or functional curricular content areas. That practice, however, limited students to instruction in only those areas that the IEP team believed were important or possible. In the end, those IEPs failed to hold students to the high expectations of the general education curriculum.

Remember that IDEA does not limit a student’s educational program to content in the general education curriculum. IDEA allows educators to address students’ other educational needs, but it requires them to begin by considering how a student can participate and make progress in the general education curriculum. Thus, the team will consider the other educational needs of a student with disabilities, but it will start by asking how the student can participate and make progress in the general education curriculum.

**DETERMINE SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION**

Having considered supplementary aids and services (that is, noninstructional modifications and supports needed for students to be educated with their nondisabled peers) and written goals, the IEP team should identify the specially designed instruction the student needs to ensure participation and progress in the general education curriculum. Ordinarily, the IEP team does not have to identify all possible instructional techniques and strategies a student might need; that is the role of the student’s teachers for each course. Jack’s IEP provides for the accommodations with which you are now familiar. Consistent with IDEA’s requirement that the IEP must identify a student’s strengths, Jack’s identifies his math abilities. In Chapters 5 through 16, you will learn about an array of specially designed instruction across all age and grade levels and about how students’ IEPs can reflect strengths as well as educational needs.
SPECIFY RELATED SERVICES

Next, the IEP team should consider related services (identified in Chapter 1) that are necessary to enable a student to benefit from special education and to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum.

DETERMINE TEST ACCOMMODATIONS OR ALTERATIONS

Finally, the IEP team should consider whether the student can take the state or district assessments without modification, needs a modified test or other accommodations, or needs to take an alternate assessment. The IEP team cannot completely exempt the student from assessments. That is not an option.

What Should Educators do to Support Progress?

Promoting access begins with inclusive practices, UDL, and effective planning, but the heavy lifting occurs day in and day out in the classroom. You will learn about innovative and research-based practices in subsequent chapters, but effective instruction begins with planning, and to ensure progress for all students, educators need to create learning communities that value and support all students and design lessons and units in which all students can show progress.

Create Learning Communities

Effective instruction begins when educators intentionally create learning environments in which students learn to respect and value each other and everyone’s individual differences, understand their roles and responsibilities, work in a self-directed manner, and participate in setting classroom rules. Review, for a minute, the vignette about Jack and WISH, with special attention to the “CHAMPS” program. You can create an effective learning community by discovering the abilities of all your students, developing systematic ways to collect information on student progress for use in planning future lessons, and using specially designed instructional strategies to individualize student educational experiences. In Chapters 3 and 4 you will learn more about the community, about respecting and valuing diversity, and about creating partnerships with families.

Design Units and Lessons

Think of units of study as the maps teachers create to organize and plan content and to support student learning and achievement in the general education curriculum. Units of study identify end-of-school-year goals, standards for determining whether the goals are met, and knowledge that students will acquire. Once you as a teacher understand the big picture for the school year, you must map backward to determine what your students will need to know and do at the middle of the school year and then plan for manageable instructional units. When you have an overall idea of what you need to accomplish by the end of the school year and have chunked the content, skills, and knowledge into midyear and quarterly components, you are ready to plan specific units of instruction.

Having identified the learning targets, you can plan day-to-day activities to support students in achieving the outcomes of each unit of instruction. Generally, lesson plans identify the theme of a lesson, the purpose of the lesson, how the lesson will be conducted, what students are expected to accomplish, and how those accomplishments will be measured.

At both the unit- and lesson-planning level, you should identify the skills, processes, or knowledge that all students, including students with disabilities, should master and how the teacher and other educators will support all students in doing so.
One such strategy is to identify the big ideas that all students should learn from the lesson or unit. Once you know what you want all students to know, you can develop lesson objectives that allow students to demonstrate, through different means, that they grasp the big ideas.

One way to create those objectives is to use cognitive taxonomies. Cognitive taxonomies classify the cognitive demands of learning targets. Perhaps the most familiar cognitive taxonomy is the one developed by Bloom and associates. Bloom’s taxonomy is a means of categorizing the cognitive skills that students use when achieving learning targets. As one ascends Bloom’s taxonomy, the cognitive demands on students are more complex. By developing lesson objectives that range from less to more complex cognitive demands, you can ensure that all of your students acquire knowledge about the content and have flexible options for providing evidence of that knowledge.
HOW DOES A STUDENT'S IEP SUPPORT PROGRESS?

- A student’s IEP must be based on both the general education curriculum and the student’s unique learning needs.
- There are required members of the IEP team.
- The team must develop the IEP based on the student’s strengths, the parents’ concerns, the nondiscriminatory evaluation, the student’s needs, and five special factors.
- There are eight required components of an IEP; the team must address each component.

WHAT SHOULD EDUCATORS DO TO SUPPORT PROGRESS?

- Educators should create learning communities that enable students with disabilities to become integrated into their classrooms.
- Educators should create unit and lesson plans that incorporate universal design features and include goals and objectives that vary in complexity, thereby ensuring that all students can show progress.

ADDRESSING THE PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards: Chapter 2—1.0, 1.2, 2.1, 4.3, 4.4, 5.1, 6.1, 6.5, 6.6, 7.1

Appendix: Provides a full listing of the CEC Standards with description and supporting explanation.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING QUIZ