Chapter 4
Planning Individualized Differentiation
Interventions For Students with Special Needs

Chapter Goal

Understand strategies, tools, and services for planning differentiation of instruction and interventions for students with special needs.

Chapter Objectives

1. Use tools for developing individualized differentiation and interventions for students with special needs.
2. Know how to access formal services for students with different types of special needs.
3. Know the procedures for referral and for developing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities in special education.
4. Develop an awareness of related planning processes for human service agencies that may collaborate with schools and teachers.

A Peak at Collaborative Consultation: *Getting Help and Support*

Today we are visiting Halloway Elementary School and will sit in on a collaborative consultation meeting that has been called to discuss the needs of a student who has medical issues. Sherie is a first grade elementary teacher who works very hard to be a successful inclusive teacher. She has 25 students in her class. Her students include Kyle who has autism and Brent who has juvenile diabetes and a learning disability. Brent's blood sugar levels must be monitored and actions taken if they are problematic. Sandy feels she needs help and asked for a meeting with the building support team.

The support team typically meets every Wednesday at 2:00 in the afternoon for an hour and a half. Two teams met simultaneously. They meet with every teacher each month. The art and physical education teachers conduct special programs with students during this time so teachers can attend.

At this meeting, some additional professionals are present. They include: Brandy, the special education teacher who will facilitate the meeting; Barbara, the principal; Rachel, a

paraprofessional; Linda, the school secretary; Kris, the speech therapist; and Jo Ann Hardy, a nurse.

After welcome and introductions, Brandy asks Sherie. "How can we help you?" Sherie described the situation saying, "I am just overwhelmed. He has to be monitored constantly. He knows how to do the measurements himself, but I need to check him. His sugar sometimes drops low and I don't know how much of that has impacted on his work. I have a lot of wonderful support from you Jo Ann giving him insulin but I know he is brittle. I need more help making decisions, monitoring him, and giving him assistance. Right now that is all up to me. Last week medical directions changed 3 times. I am in the situation of trying to make a medical decision while attending to the rest of my class, particularly Kyle, my first grader with autism."

They discuss ideas. The nurse indicates that she could train Rachel, the paraprofessional who works with Kyle, in understanding what to do so that she could also provide help. "I would like to receive that training as well," said Brandy, "because I co-teach with Sherie and am in her room often." "I would like that," said Sherie. "I also think I could do two other things," said Jo Ann, the nurse. "I could come by your class every few days to check on how things are going so you have some regular medical help available. I could also give you my cell phone number so that if any question comes up you could call me immediately".

Brandy wonders out loud, "Does he need to be placed in the POHI class?" (This is a class for students with physical and other health impairments. While this school has been working towards inclusive teaching, they still have segregated classes for some students, a fact that has caused great concern among some of the teachers). Sherie immediately says, "No. No. Brent is exactly where he needs to be. I am just feeling the need for some support to make sure that I don't make a mistake." Several others concur.

Sherie asks, "Could he be classified as a Section 504 student?" Barbara, the principal said, "Well, that doesn't guarantee any help for him". Jo Ann disagrees, "Actually, if the 504 plan specifies what is needed that is covered by law. I think this is a good idea. Brent is exactly the type of student for which 504 plans are intended".

"Well, thank you all very much," said Sherie. "This makes me feel much more comfortable. Jo Ann could you come down and talk to Brent before you leave?" "Absolutely," said Jo Ann.

As we walk out we talk about the meeting. We've been aware of meetings like this in other schools where the adults in the room simply complained a lot about students and their parents. In this meeting, however, everyone was intent on both helping the child and the teacher in the

situation. They brought ideas together and were awesome in the way that they listened to and stimulated one another in coming up with good ideas. We understand that this process of collaboration is a centerpiece in this school. Not only are there formal meetings as this one but all teacher have been trained in collaborative consultation and often consult with one another on an informal basis. But even in these sessions the teachers document the plans they are going to try.

Sights to See
Including Students with Autism and Multiple Disabilities

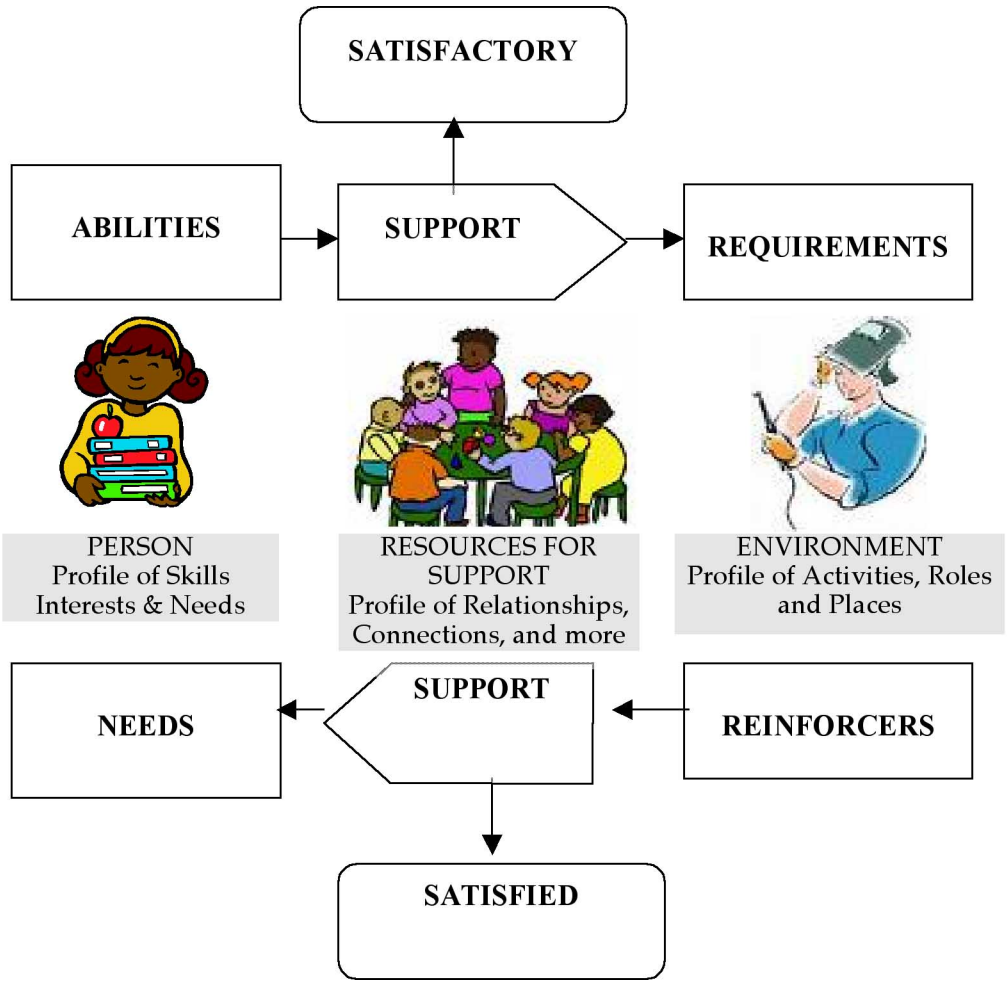
Student with autism included. Story about a child with autism being included in a general education class on YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwBvfyVpWUc

Aaron, a 13 year old boy who has multiple disabilities, is assisted by a range of assistive technology tools. From the I Can Soar video of the National Center for Technology Innovation. www.nationaltechcenter.org/index.php/2007/03/04/aaron/

Individual Differentiation and Interventions For Students with Learning Challenges

As we identify challenges that students are experiencing, we will want to seek to understand their needs and identify strategies to assist them. Problems typically fall into the three key domains: (1) academic performance, (2) social and emotional needs, and (3) physical well-being and health. The *hypothesis testing* model is a helpful way to consider identifying strategies. In this model we work through several steps:

1. Develop a profile of the strengths and needs of the student
2. Gather information that helps us understand the needs of the student through student-centered observations, student work, and input from parents and others
3. Articulate a theory regarding the student's challenges and needs
4. Identify strategies that have potential to assist the student
5. Use these strategies while collecting information and data to see how well they are working
6. Review the information and make needed changes.



Ecological Framework for Individualized
Differentiation and Interventions

Too often, as a student is having difficulty, we only attend to the problems we see inherent in the student. This approach, however, is very limiting and often leads to strategies that may deepen rather than help the student's problems. We need to understand the people and environments are mutually interactive. We also need to be clear that keeping a student in a typical environment is key to their growth in learning. Thus, we need a way of thinking that accounts for the interaction of student characteristics and the environment, particularly our class. The *ecological model of differentiation and interventions* (figure above) helps us do this. (This model has been adapted from the work of Lofkuist & Dawes (1980) who used it to develop matches between individuals and jobs).

Let's explore how this model can help us think about differentiation for individual students and how we can use it to think about helping students be more successful in our classes. First, if the needs of a person match the resources provided by an environment, we say the person is "satisfied" and will *prefer to stay* in that setting. Relatedly, if the abilities of the individual meet the minimum "requirements," the person is considered "satisfactory" and is *allowed to stay*. For a person to fit well into a setting, both conditions must be in place: others must consider the individual to be satisfactory and the person must be reasonably satisfied.

Let's consider two examples:

1. The assignment is to read a book and write a play based on it. I am teaching in a seventh-grade language arts class. However, one student does not read or write well enough to complete this assignment. What do I do?
2. I am a band instructor in high school. A student with a severe physical disability comes to my class. She has very little motor control in her upper arms, is in a wheelchair, and has little language. She cannot play a typical instrument or read music. Yet she is excited about being in my class, the other students think it is neat that she is there, and I would like to involve her. What to do?

In each situation the student's abilities do not meet typical expectations. Traditionally, two strategies are used: (1) Try to change the skills of the person; (2) if this does not work, remove the person. In the first example, the teacher might try to improve the student's writing skills. Yet let us look again at the person (needs and abilities) and the classroom environment (requirements and resources). What could change to improve the student–lesson match? True, we can try to change the student—but we can also change the environment. We can differentiate expectations making adjustments in what is to be done, how a task is performed, or the level of performance expected. We can adjust the resources an environment provides. Perhaps our class is very competitive and this many students difficulty. We can work to change our classroom to focus on cooperation and caring.

However, there is another major strategy. Looking again at the figure on page 134, you will see that we have a mediating component between the person and the environment: *support*. What does this mean? If a person's skills do not match expectations, various types of help or support may help bridge the gap. If a student needs to read aloud but has difficulty, a "reading buddy" can be helpful. If a child can't climb the stairs because

she is a wheelchair, someone can help navigate the wheelchair up the stairs. (Of course, an elevator or ramp ought to be available.)

We hope this ecological model establishes a fundamental concept in your mind: If people don't "fit" in our classes, we can differentiate and provide support. This is not about changing people to fit our classrooms. It is about how we design, differentiate, and provide supports to include everyone. Using this model, how might we deal with the situations we describe above?

The assignment is to read a book and write a play based on the book but the student can do this. We could change the requirement so that the student is asked to "read" a book on tape and then to "create" a play drawing pictures, recording on the tape recorder, and so on. We involve the student in developing these strategies.

Concerning the student who can't play an instrument but is in the band, we can involve the student and the class. Maybe one of the drummers and this student can work together; he could hold her hand and together they could carry the bass percussion with a simple rhythm. Maybe several students can trade off helping. If the student can use a head-directed signaling device, maybe she could direct a computerized music synthesizer.

The figure below provides us with an example of individualized differentiation. A high school history class is studying the U.S. Constitution. However, one student reads only at a third-grade level. The three-part form shown here can help us organize our thoughts as we consider individualized differentiation.

Steps for Differentiating for an Individual Student and an Example

1) Understand student profile and needs—abilities, interests, fears, resources, supports.
2) Analyze our classroom and lesson(s).
3) Determine problems in the student participating and learning due to mismatches between the student and the environment and lesson requirements.
4) Develop solutions — manageable strategies to help the student participate meaningfully, learning at his or her own level.

Here's an example that illustrates steps 2 and 3.

LEARNING ACTIVITY	PROBLEM	SOLUTION
High school history class is to read about the U.S. Constitution and complete a worksheet of questions and answers for comprehension.	Student reads at third-grade level and can't read the text. She also has difficulty writing answers and understanding complex material.	■ Student is given simplified material about the Constitution at her reading level. ■ A peer buddy summarizes key points and explains ■ The student works with a group illustrating some key points.

Building on the ecological model we discussed above, we can develop individualized differentiation using the four steps outlined. When we are learning, we may use these steps sequentially, overtly, and consciously. As with learning to ride a bicycle, however, these strategies will become much more intuitive as they become an integral part of our teaching practice. Note that we will use these steps to help us identify strategies for working with students that may be part of the 3 step response to intervention process we discussed in Chapter 2. We may discuss these ideas with other team members in collaborative consultation and/or the development of Individual Education Plans.

Step 1: Understand Student Needs As we work with students, we constantly ask the question, "Why does this student act and perform in these particular ways?" When we phrase the question this way, we move towards positive strategies as opposed to asking: "What is wrong with this child?" Notice how we frame the issue. We do not identify a problem as "not keeping up with grade 3 or grade 8 work." Rather, we ask, "How do we help the student participate and learn at his or her own level?" This moves us away from the one-size-fits-all curriculum.

We must focus on both student strengths and needs. All students have important strengths, even those with severe disabilities. The danger is that we literally can see only a student's problems. Teachers often send negative notes home. When parents receive only negative feedback, they begin to be defensive and wary. Increasingly, a teacher may see a student as a problem and the student may react by withdrawing or acting out. In turn, the teacher is frustrated and parents are angry and afraid. In effective inclusive classes we communicate about both student strengths and challenges and ask for input from students and their parents.

PROFILE FOR Jonathan

What are dreams (for this child)	Needs For Support & Assistance
He is happy, gets a job that can support him. He lives near us. He has many friends and has many things he enjoys doing.	He needs encouragement when he is frustrated. Sometimes he gets angry and throws things. He needs help learning alternative ways to express frustration. He needs help in learning to read and write. Help him develop his abilities in art.
Strengths of the student?	Successes?
Great sense of humor. Really likes to draw and is good at it for his age. Good in math.	He was recognized for his drawing ability in an art contest last year.
Likes? Dislikes?	Greatest challenges?
Likes computers, snakes, doing hands-on activities. Doesn't like group activities often. Loves to draw and likes math and science.	He gets frustrated when he does not do well. He doesn't know how to deal with conflict with other kids and either runs off or gets in a fight.

Reading	Writing	Math
Limited. Doesn't like to read. Feels like he can't so doesn't.	Very limited. Can write his name. Does like to tell stories with drawn pictures.	Excellent math skills. Best in the class.
Work Habits	**Communication**	**Social**
Most of the times he attends to work and will turn in homework. When he is frustrated he may lose materials or just not do	Poor verbal skills and difficulties getting ideas in writing.	He has two friends. Has difficulty sometimes interacting with kids.
Behavior	**Motor**	**Other**
See comments about frustration.	Clumsy some, poor at sports. Is self-concious about this sometimes.	

We cannot progress by focusing only on problems. We can try to make problems go away, but this doesn't necessarily promote growth which can happen only if we *build on*

strengths (Falvey, Forest, Pearpoint, & Rosenberg, 1998). When we are concerned about a student, we ask, "What are the strengths of this student?" Then we ask, "How can I use this student's strengths to deal with problems? How can we build on those strengths in a way the student likes?" For example, Julie sometimes acts out and disrupts class, but she also has a talent for making her classmates laugh, and she has shown leadership skills. Perhaps she could be given a responsible role in an oral reading lesson.

This leads us to "needs." Need is a powerful word. Asking the question "What do I need?" requires that we also ask the related question "For what?" The needs of students are tied to goals they want to accomplish. For example, a student may need to learn math because he wants to own a bicycle repair shop. Another student may need to improve her reactions to criticism because she wants to have friends. However, the word need is often used to express adults' wishes for a student to be a certain way. We hear statements like "Mark, you *need* to do your homework. You *need* to sit in your seat." These things are more *our needs* than those of the student. As we talk with students, we need to own our needs—"Mark, I need you to sit down right now! I am very frustrated." You may find it helpful to write down notes about the strengths and needs of the child related to school as well as home and community. The figure above on page 138 provides an example of a student profile that can help us consider both the student strengths and needs.

Step 2: Analyze Our Classroom Environment When students are having difficulty, we should step back and look closely at our class and school. What do we expect of students? What are the rules? What flexibility is there? How does our class function? How supportive is it? The figure below illustrates a class profile that we can use to analyze our teaching and classroom (Ford, Fitzgerald, Glodoski, & Waterbury, 1997). The profile also provides menu of potential strategies. For example, under "General Approach to Curriculum" we note that our tenth-grade biology class is largely textbook driven, with some hands-on activities as part of the labs. We consider other options listed.

Step 3: Determine Discrepancy between Student and Our Classroom Environment What is the discrepancy between expectations and abilities of a student? Do we expect more than the student demonstrates? Does the student have needs that are unmet? These discrepancies will often be experienced as problems. Using the class profile, we can compare our class assessment with student characteristics and target discrepancies for individualized differentiation. Sometimes such detailed assessment and planning is useful. Many teachers find, however, that the forms are less important than the thinking

on which they are based. Such tools can be useful in developing and documenting IEPs and Section 504 plans.

Step 4: Differentiate Instruction to Solve Problem When there are discrepancies between student characteristics and our class, we can use several strategies

First, if the student does not have skills we typically expect of students, we can:

- Work to help the student *improve their skills*. This is the most traditional response. However, there are other options.
- Use a *different method of performing a task* or activity. Perhaps vision is typically required to read. The student might use software that reads aloud messages.
- *Modify the level of learning expectations and use adapted learning materials.*
- *Modify the tasks* required so that different skills are required.
- *Look for other roles* in lessons that have different skills requirements.
- We can also provide *support* as a teacher or get help from peers.
- *Partial participation* allows students to participate in the parts of learning activities of which they are capable.

If, on the other hand, our class does not meet the needs of the student, a related set of strategies can be used:

- The *class or assignments can be changed or adapted*. We can change expectations of classroom assignments or work to have other students be more accepting.
- The student might *reevaluate his or her interests and needs*. Care is need here, however, so that the students real needs are not ignored.
- We can also look at having a student *play a different role* in the class. Perhaps, for example we devise ways a student can help other students as well as getting help.
- Numerous ways of *providing students support* may also help meet student needs.

As we are considering strategies three guidelines are important. First, we seek to differentiate in ways that are the *least intrusive and most inclusive*, keeping students connected. For example, although we could adapt the curriculum by having a paraprofessional and student work on a different activity at the back of the class, this would separate the student. Second, we *challenge the at her zone of proximal development*, starting where she is and going to the next level. Finally, we select strategies that will *impact on instruction for all students*. For example, a boy is having difficulty reading but shows signs of athletic abilities. We could incorporate more movement into reading lessons. Perhaps he and other students could create and act out a play. Perhaps the

whole class could line up to spell words on the playground. Perhaps the student could stand while reading with the book on a podium. We decide to use these ideas for other students.

Tools for Individualized Differentiation and Interventions (Tiers II & III)

Let's discuss several tools useful in developing individualized differentiation and interventions in Tier II and III of response to intervention (see Chapter 2).

Collaborative Consultation

In effective inclusive schools specialized support staff (special education teachers, gifted consultants, bilingual teachers, and aides) provide ongoing assistance in the general education classroom (see Chapter 5) and all staff learn to collaborate in developing strategies to assist students. Thus, teachers in inclusive settings have daily opportunities to talk with staff about a special student, brainstorm ideas, and develop collaborative strategies. Specialists are often assigned a caseload of students who are being served through formal services but also work with students who have not been referred. Sometimes individual teachers and support staff talk one-on-one. However, effective schools have a team of of teachers and specialists that meets on a regular basis to discuss children's needs with us. We'll discuss such 'child study' teams in more detail in chapter five.

While consultation and discussion can be informal, the more serious are student concerns the more important that we develop an intentional, systematic approach with a written plan. The figure above page 138 provides an example of such a plan for an individual student. First, we identify the resources and strengths of the student. Next, we focus on barriers and problems, listing these so we can be specific. We want to break the problem down so we can see it in detail rather than making global statements. Is the student having trouble reading? If so, what specifically do we mean—is the problem understanding text (orally or via print), reading at a certain level, knowing certain types of letter combinations, not wanting to read? At this point, we prioritize issues, asking the question: "What one or two things could we do to make the most difference?" These become a plan of action, describing who will do what, when, and how progress will be assessed. This process provides a valuable base for developing an IEP (see below) if further referral and intervention is needed. However, special education referral rates

often decline in schools using collaborative consultation (Hiibner & Fracassi, 1999; Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Nevin, 1994).

Collaborative Consultation Plan for a Student

Student Name: Sasha Levine	Birthdate:	Date:
School: Bernard Middle School	Teacher: Horton	Grade: 7

Team members: Horton, Juanita (school psychologist), Barry (special education teacher), Beth (social worker), Jameson (general education teacher), Mona (grandmother).
Initial concern: Reading and behavioral problems

STRENGTHS/RESOURCES	**BARRIERS/PROBLEMS/NEEDS**
When knows she's being listened to will work hard.	Easily distracted.
Less impulsive lately.	*Textbook in social studies is too hard for her and she gets angry.
Likes hands-on activities.	*Has difficulty making friends.
Enjoys reading and learning about astronauts and astronomy.	Gets upset when someone talks about her.
Has a strong sense of family.	*Taking medications and seems to get worse when she does not take them.
Loves animals and small children.	

Target Goal(s)

(Select one or more barriers from above to identify a target goal and devise a plan of action that builds on strengths and resources of the student.)

Help Sasha get materials to read in areas of her interest on her own level that are still age appropriate.
Help her to connect with friends and deal with anger.
Evaluate her medication dosage.

PLAN OF ACTION

What	*Who*	*When*	*Assessment*
Circle of friends.	Social worker and parent help Sasha to get a meeting after school.	Within one month.	Sashas self-report about her feelings and observations of relationships
Get trade books regarding social studies and areas of interest to be included in the curriculum.	General and special education teacher.	This week. More throughout the year. Begin having these types of books for all students.	Record of books read. Observation of Sasha's reading behavior and skills.
New physician visit. Consider effect of medications, whether they are making the problem worse.	Grandmother contact Dr. Diller. Support from social worker if needed.	Within two weeks.	Whether contact was made. Evaluate impact of any changes on behavior and initiative.

MAPS—A Student-Centered Planning Process

In the early 1980s, allies of both adults and children with disabilities became concerned about the system-centered approaches used in planning for people with disabilities. These advocates recognized, however, that bringing people together could be an important source of support. They created a new form of gathering: the *circle of support,* a group that would engage in person-centered planning and harness the resources of the group to help an individual, a "focus person," achieve his or her dreams and goals. The approach used most often in schools is *Making Action Plans (MAPS)* (Falvey, Forest, Pearpoint, & Rosenberg, 1998; O'Brien & O'Brien, 1998; Snow, 1998b). (Many books, videos, and articles on this process are listed at www.inclusion.com.)

The MAPS process is simultaneously simple, complex, and powerful. MAPS can be conducted as a way to develop the IEP. MAPS includes the planning requirements of an IEP but goes much farther. Alternatively, a family or student may meet with a circle of support and develop a MAPS statement that identifies what they need from the school

and/or other human service organizations. A person or family might subsequently ask a member of their circle to attend the IEP meeting.

MAPS meetings include individuals invited by the student, such as family, friends, community members, educators and other professionals. While MAPS sessions can be conducted anywhere, they are most effective in informal, welcoming, and comfortable settings. MAPS have been held in homes, community centers, churches, and restaurants, as well as schools. At a MAPS gathering, as at an IEP meeting, one person acts as facilitator to help the group answer questions, ensure that all have a chance to talk, and keep the focus on the dreams of the individual. Another person acts as a graphics recorder and documents what individuals say through a combination of words and pictures on a flip chart or long piece of paper on the wall. This use of graphics and color in recording the session helps create a person-friendly dynamic and opens up the more creative, intuitive parts of people's brains. Recording all responses on the wall helps people vividly see ideas and words communicated all at once.
The figure below outlines the overall agenda for the MAPS meeting. The facilitator first introduces the group, saying something like "We are here to help Mary describe a dream for her life and develop an action plan to move toward that dream." She then leads the group through each of the questions shown in the figure below always allowing the focus person to speak first, followed by others who add to the question based on their own experience. "Mary, tell us your story. What has happened in your life?" the facilitator may begin. As Mary begins to talk, the facilitator summarizes. When Mary is finished, she asks others to add their perspectives.

The power of the MAPS process derives from the fact that as the group addresses each question, group members often bond over common understandings and deep feelings. Telling the story of the person from multiple perspectives brings the group together. We see the person, not just the disability.

The "nightmares" discussion allows the person and the group to name and identify what would happen if the worst occurred. In this very important part of the process, the unspoken is confronted directly. Naming nightmares allows the person, family, and circle to face their fears and removes some of those fear's destructiveness.
In a typical MAP, members of the circle give one-word answers to the question "Who is Mary?" This is an amazing time, because the group almost always describes the positive essences of the person. It's encouraging and strengthening.

Agenda Questions for a MAP

1. *Story:* What is your history and experience?
2. *Dreams:* What are your dreams?
3. *Nightmares:* What are your nightmares?
4. *Who:* Who are you?
5. *Strengths:* What are your strengths?
6. *Needs:* What are your needs (for reaching your dreams)?
7. *Action:* What is the action plan?

Then the group talks about strengths and needs. We ask, "What needs to happen for Mary to reach her goals?" The answer might involve Mary's improving skills or getting support and assistance from a peer or teacher. She might need to gain friends so as to feel comfortable in the classroom.

Finally, the circle articulates an action plan—steps toward the realization of Mary's dreams. This is the phase on which typical IEP meetings spend most of their time. What people discover in a MAP, however, is that often the action plan goes quickly, building on the previous discussion. During this phase, we prioritize needs. We can use additional tools such as the curriculum matrix shown in the figure on page 147 and the individual class schedule on page 148 to develop an action plan regarding what happens in our classes.

The information from the MAP can be translated into the formal documentation required by the IEP. Needs statements can easily be translated into more formal goals and objectives on a typical IEP form. Sometimes a separate short meeting is held to translate the MAP ideas into more specific plans within the school and classroom (Knowlton, 1998).

MAPS are often used in schools to plan for students with great life challenges. However, MAPS can be used in many other ways as well. One fifth-grade teacher in Wisconsin

divided her class into small groups as circles of support, and over the course of the year each circle did a MAP on each student. This was done as part of a required curriculum on career guidance. Another teacher used circles and MAPS when students were having problems in her class and needed help and support (Knowlton, 1998; Peterson, Tamor, Feen, & Silagy, 2002).

Curriculum Matrix: ***Connecting Individualized Plans to the Curriculum***

The *curriculum matrix* provides a useful tool that answers the question, "How do goals and objectives designated on an IEP relate to the work of the class?" The figure below illustrates a sample curriculum matrix for a high school student. Key goals for the student are listed in the left column. The curriculum units and school activities are listed across the top. For an elementary class a typical daily schedule might include beginning activities, math, centers time, and so forth. The curriculum matrix helps us plan how to maximize learning for the student in the existing curriculum and helps us identify gaps and appropriate adaptations. For example, if John is working on improving social interaction skills, we can target particular times when this area needs attention. In recording progress regarding each goal, the curriculum matrix again helps us focus: We can make notes on the matrix daily or weekly regarding specific progress. We may find a particular unit or class that has no goals or has a goal not adequately addressed. If this occurs we can revise our plans. The matrix can help identify such gaps (Ford, Fitzgerald, Glodoski, & Waterbury, 1997).

One of the key questions we must address in this part of the IEP or any Tier III planning process is: "How much assistance and of what type does the student need to be successful in the general education classroom?" In poorly planned sessions, there is an automatic assumption that a particular disability means a particular type of service. For example, teacher aides may be routinely assigned to every student with mental retardation. What is more helpful, however, is to consider the school day from start to finish and develop specific plans for supports and adaptations.

Curriculum Matrix: Fred Borden, Freshman, Hillsdale High SchooL

	SCHOOL DAY				
IEP GOALS	**Math**	**Social Studies**	**Physical Education**	**Language Arts**	**Machine Shop**
Read six books he enjoys over the semester.		X		X	X
Express himself in writing and through other tools, using his own life and other topics of interest.		X		X	
Learn to use math skills to make daily purchases, manage bank account, and pay bills.	X				
Increase ability to express himself orally.	X	X	X	X	X
Increase positive interactions with peers.	X	X	X	X	X
Improve stamina by walking two miles each week.			X		

Daily Schedule with Supports, Interventions, and Adaptations

We should ask, "What is going on at this hour? What problems are apparent? How will we solve these?" When we do this, we anticipate problems, work out satisfactory solutions, and clearly identify the specific types of assistance needed. The individual class schedule shown in the figure below can be a helpful tool for this purpose. Note

that we've included the schedule for home activities to help the team see the connection between school and home.

Individual Class Schedule with Accommodations and Supports

Linda Donatello's Schedule
7th grade, McConnell Middle School
Linda has mild cerebral palsy but can walk and speak understandably. She is very pleasant and well liked by her classmates. However, she also has learning disabilities. Her reading and math abilities are at a fifth-grade level, but she's had good instructors and she is enjoying learning.

TIME	ACTIVITY	SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS
7:30	Come to school	Assistance from bus driver in getting safely off bus.
8:00	World cultures	John, a classmate, will make a copy of his notes for her.
		She will use a tape recorder as well.
9:00	Social studies—literacy	She will use a computer with a typing guard to
	team	do her work.
		The special education support teacher, Janice, will be available for special assistance as needed.
10:30	Science—math team	Cooperative work groups on projects—take parts of the project she can do.
12:00	Lunch	None.
1:00	Physical education	Once a week the physical therapist will come and help the PE teacher include PT exercises for Linda in his class.
2:00	Technology studies	The class will explore various assistive technology devices, including talking software, as part of the curriculum.
		Meet with special education support teacher briefly before leaving school.
3:30	After school: Synchro	Randi will buddy with Linda.
	swimming club	

TIME	ACTIVITY	SUPPORTS AND ADAPTATIONS
4:30	Goes home	Randi and Linda's parents carpool
6:00	Dinner and family time	
8:00	School studies	John, Lisa, and Janeen will team study once per week.
		Self-monitoring checklist developed with special education support teacher Janice.
10:00	Bedtime	

When we work step by step as a problem-solving group, we often find multiple options to difficult challenges. Take the example of a student with multiple disabilities who uses a wheelchair. We want her to come to school like everyone else. However, neither the school bus nor the school is wheelchair accessible. What might we do? The team brainstorms solutions. In difficult situations like this, having the student and peers there can also make a huge difference. Often they are able to identify solutions not at first apparent (Ford, Fitzgerald, Glodoski, & Waterbury, 1997; LeRoy, England, & Osbeck, 1994). The figure below illustrates a similar planning tool – an overall semester planning format, showing possible differentiation for each subject and responsibilities of support staff.

Putting it All Together: ***An Example of Individual Differentiation***

Let's explore a plan for an actual student in the fifth grade whom we will call Kent.

Kent has a moderate cognitive disability. He is a very quiet student most of the time. Periodically, however, he gets frustrated and strikes out at other students. Both his parents are supportive, though they are divorcing and there has been much stress in the home in the last two years. Kent reads at about a first-grade level and began to write discernible sentences only last year. The plan for individualized differentiation adaptations for Kent is summarized in the figure below. Note how strategies related to academics, social–emotional needs, and physical–sensory needs are intermixed and interactive.

DIFFERENTIATION FOR AN INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AND SUPPORT IN SCHOOL SUBJECTS

Student: SHANE FRENCH, GRADE 9	**ADAPTATIONS**	**STAFF SUPPORT (if needed)**	**EVALUATION NOTES**
Literacy: Reading and writing workshop. Guided reading. Read alouds. Adele Smith, teacher	Books on same topic at grade 3 level. Focus on periods. Sit next to Christopher to model/ ask questions.	Visits Student Support Center during study hall to read orally and edit stories.	Keep daily log on progress toward goals.
Social studies: Group projects related to poverty in community. Russell Lee, teacher	Group asks him questions to draw into discussion. Shane draws picture to illustrate issue.	Supply Support Room with reading about topics so can support if needed.	Ask oral questions to test knowledge of issues. Make up rubric for group project.
Math: Manipulatives, interest groups based on curriculum goals. Sydney Blanning, teacher	Working on addition using real-life questions. Use calculator to subtract and multiply.	Works with whole class, checking in daily. Plans block with teacher.	Mark date on checklist when goals are achieved.
Music: Choral production of Fiddler on the Roof. Connie Bueller, teacher	Listens to songs on tape to memorize. Practices with partner.		Participation in class.
Art: Study impressionist paintings. Do own nature paintings. Self-portraits. Marjorie Sanchez, teacher	Shares work with buddies in other classes. Receives help on art he is doing for social studies.		Keep log of strengths seen. Positive aspects to boost moral. Self-evaluate progress.
Physical education: Daily calisthenics, volleyball, team running races. Harvey Stott, teacher	Gross motor development worked into curriculum. Cooperative, not individual, work stressed.	Therapist plans with teacher to incorporate goals. Works in class twice a week to assist.	Log of progress kept by teacher. Add notes from therapist in planning. Self-evaluate progress.

When we observe Kent in the classroom, it's not at all obvious that he is a student classified as having special needs. As we watch him work, it's clear he is functioning at a lower level than many students in the class. However, he participates in the full curriculum—most of which is designed in the first place to allow students to work at different levels. In many ways, differentiation for Kent simply fits within the teaching used in the class.

Michelle, his teacher, laughs as she tells us what happened yesterday in class. It's obvious that she likes and enjoys Kent. "It was wonderful. We were doing multiplication or column addition, depending on their working level, to find distance on a map. The students needed 640 times 4. I knew Kent would have problems even adding 640 four times, so I gave him a different strategy to use. I asked him to add 640 plus 640. He was able to do this fine. Then I had him add the resulting sum together again. I pulled all the students together and we talked about the different strategies they used to solve this problem. His peer buddy for this activity, Pedro, explained what they had done as Kent wrote it on the board. The other students loved this strategy. They decided to call it "Kent's invention"!

In many ways, Michelle's thinking about adaptations for Kent is not all that different from her thinking about any of her students. "They all are different," she says. "My job is to know where my students are and to design lessons and adjust as we go to help them grow and develop." She does have assistance and support from Sarah, a special education teacher, who comes in for forty-five minutes a day. Sarah does not work only with Kent, however, but provides support when the class does centers for math or reading and writing workshop. Sarah has been helpful in coming up with hands-on ways to teach subjects.

Accessing Formal Services

Developing More Intense Individualized Classroom Interventions for Students (Tier III)

If we need more assistance in working with a student and the student could benefit from formal program services in the school, we may want to initiate a referral. Some programs in the school may also provide assistance to our students that do not have individual eligibility requirements but are provided as teachers identify needs in their classrooms. These may include:

- Media center programs related to literacy and developing computer skills
- At-risk initiatives in which staff provide teachers support in dealing with social and emotional needs of students.

Individualized Differentiation for a Fifth Grader

Arrival
- Check in with Michelle and share backpack contents.
- Buddy reminds

Choice time.
- Works with buddies: reading out loud, listening center, math activities

Reading / Writing workshop
- ❑ Scaffolds writing with lines for each word.
- ❑ reads books read first with teacher

KENT

Science
- Gathers group materials
- Draws/ labels in journal.
- Books on tape.

Math
1. Buddy explains directions.
2. Manipulatives for concepts

Social studies
1. Pair for research and write 3 facts
2. Group act out historical events
3. Draw pictures

Art
- Buddy explains directions one step at time
- Sit with buddy

Physical education
1) Team games
2) Buddy Pair: build friends and directions

Support Staff
- In room 40 minutes a day
- Work with his math group

Relationships
- Circle of support
- Peer buddies
- Discuss feelings and how to

- Tutoring and mentoring programs using peer supports and/or community volunteers. These may be implemented during the school day or after school.
- Programs aimed at increasing skills of staff related to multicultural education, gay/lesbian issues, needs of students with disabilities, strategies for teaching gifted students and more.
- Supports by school staff including counselors and social workers.

Some programs in schools have eligibility requirements and may also have procedures for developing individualized service plans. These most often include the following:

- Programs for dominant language learners
- Gifted and talented
- Section 504
- Early intervention services
- Human service agencies including vocational rehabilitation and community mental health that provide collaborative services with educators
- Special education

Of these, the requirements for referral, eligibility determination, and service planning are very specific for special education.

Dominant Language Learners

As we discussed in chapter one, schools may operate very different types of services for students who are considered having limited proficiency in the dominant language. This term refers to students with "sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English" (Public Law 95-561). If we are fortunate, these programs will provide push-in, inclusive services rather than pull-out or separate classes. (We will discuss these in Chapter 5). When we become aware that a student may be having difficulty understanding or expressing themselves verbally or in writing due to language differences we will want to obtain assistance to assist these learners. Parents must be informed, however, and agree to proceed.

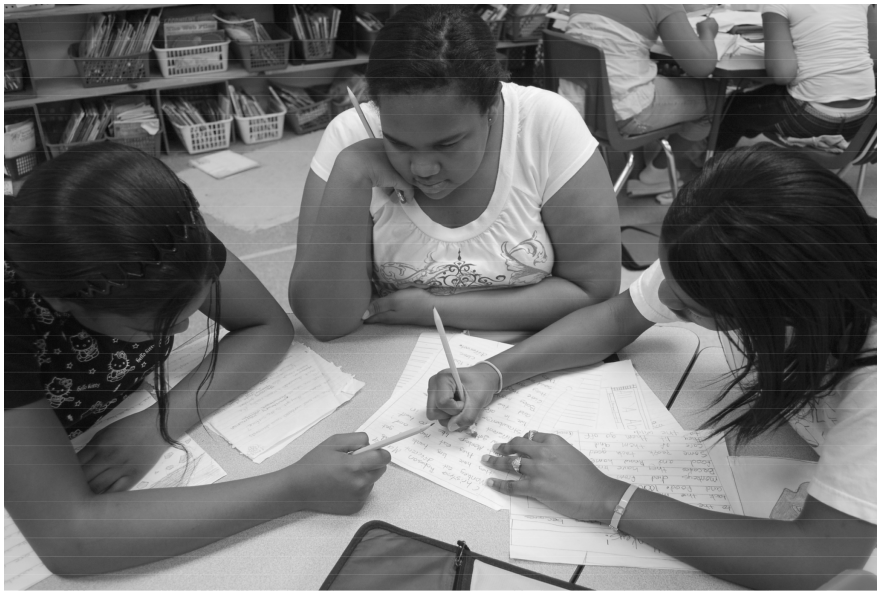
There are no uniform guidelines or definitions for assessing students as needing second language services so specifics will vary among different school districts. A variety of assessments are used to determine students' eligibility for specialized instruction in

English. These include: home language surveys which parents complete regarding languages used at home; standardized achievement tests; and oral language proficiency tests which most often include the Language Assessment Scales, Oral (LAS-O) and Reading and Writing (LAS-R/W) and the Woodcock-Muñoz Language Survey. Sometimes several tools are used. Most often, however, only one is used as a screening tool. Some schools use criteria other than assessment tool that include parent recommendations, teacher referrals, and oral interviews. Once eligibility is determined, we can work with specialists to develop a plan for students and how they may collaborate with us in the classroom to provide interventions and support (Hull, 2006; U.S. Department of Education, 1995).

Gifted and Talented

Schools and school districts also vary widely in how they determine whether students are eligible to receive services as part of the gifted and talented program. Typical procedures include the following:

Nomination or referral can be initiated by anyone who knows a student, most often the parent or teacher. Often schools will ask a teacher to submit an assessment of the student's ability in "verbal skills, thinking skills, learning behaviors, motivation, and social/emotional development and their potential for meeting eligibility criteria and benefiting from program participation". For the referral to proceed parents must provide their consent (Seattle Public Schools, 2008).



Three students work together providing peer editing assistance in Mishael Hittie's 5th grade class.

One student, Clarissa, has a cognitive disability and both gives and gets assistance from her peers

Assessment and eligibility determination can involve formal testing or tools to be completed by teachers and parents. Often schools use the results on state standardized tests to measure academic achievement. Teachers and parents can provide input regarding other qualities not conducive to standardized tests. Some districts will provide additional tests for students who are dominant language learners or who receive free and reduced lunches, a rough indicator of poverty. For students who are considered talented, information regarding their creative achievements may be obtained. An eligibility committee composed of gifted and talented specialists and other educators will review information and compare this to criteria established by the school or district. For example, the Seattle Public Schools expects a 98th percentile ranking in 2 of 3 domains on the tests that they use (Seattle Public Schools, 2008). *Enrollment* then occurs in services that the district offers. As we will discuss more in Chapter 5, in an inclusive school, specialists will provide in-class support for students and teachers helping us develop lessons that will be multilevel and differentiated to support these students (Cline, 1999; Kirschenbaum, Armstrong, Ciner, & Landrum, 1999; Seattle Public Schools, 2008; Winebrenner, 2001).

Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP): ***Parents of Young Children with Disabilities***

With the passage of Part H of PL 94-142, special education began to provide early intervention services for young children with identified disabilities or children at risk of having such disabilities. Such services coordinate multiple service agencies—education, welfare, medical, and others—in providing assistance to children and their families to reduce the impact of disabling conditions and to promote increased health and skills. Federal legislation requires an *Individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP)* that articulates how integrated services will assist families and their children with special needs. The IFSP seeks to provide family-centered assistance to children (McGonigel, Kaufmann, & Johnson, 1991). IFSPs include the following components:

1. A statement of the child's present level of functioning
2. A description of the status and needs of the family
3. Goals selected by the family and other professionals collaboratively
4. Services, including frequency and duration
5. Evaluation methods to determine whether goals were met

Section 504 Plans: ***Students with Disabilities Not Eligible for Special Education***

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in the United States requires that all organizations receiving public funds provide equal access to persons with disabilities. Section 504 requires that students have access to the least restrictive environment and be provided with accommodations to enable them to participate in the general education class or to engage in formal assessment programs, such as standardized tests. Schools are required to develop **504 plans** to document the accommodations that they provide. Unlike IDEA, however, Section 504 does not provide funding assistance or prescriptive guidelines for how these plans are developed or documented. Typically, schools develop 504 plans for students with ADHD, as well as for students with other disabilities that do not qualify them for special education services. The collaborative consultation plan we discussed above provides one format for documenting an effective Section 504 plan for a student.

Human Service Agencies: ***Students with Disabilities***

Many human service agencies provide specific services to adults and children with disabilities. Many students will receive services from these agencies. Each agency must, like schools, develop their own written plan of services. Agency and school services should be developed collaboratively and should work in concert. In each state a vocational rehabilitation agency employs counselors who coordinate services designed to help youth and adults with disabilities obtain employment or increase their ability to live independently. For each client vocational rehabilitation agencies are required to develop an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) that describes employment, independent living goals, services to be provided, and evaluation mechanisms. Mental health agencies also have individualized plans, most often governed by state law standards rather than by federal law. Plans associated with these agencies go by many names—Individual Program Plan (IPP), Individual Plan of Services (IPOS), and Individual Habilitation Plan (IHP), among others. It is particularly important to collaborate with these agencies in assisting students in high school develop a plan for making the transition from school to adult life.

Special Education: ***Services for Students with Disabilities***

We may decide to refer a student for special education services. In inclusive schools this is most often done to help the student qualify for specific assistance and resources not already provided. Given that in inclusive schools special education and other support

resources work effectively with all students, referral rates are much lower in such schools, often ranging from 2 to 5 percent rather than the 11 percent that is now the national average (Peterson, Tamor, Feen, & Silagy, 2002; Office of Special Education Programs, 2000). Of all the formal services, special education has very clear and extensive requirements that are governed by federal law and regulations. Consequently, we will describe methods of accessing and planning formal special education services in some detail.

Referral for Special Education Services Special education in a school can operate as a wonderful support for students, teachers, and families. Services that can be accessed through special education are numerous—essentially consisting of whatever a student needs to be successful in school. The specific procedures for referral vary across school districts and states. In some schools we complete a simple referral form and document strategies we have tried and the student's response. In other schools we may complete a comprehensive checklist of behaviors and other types of information (Parent Education Project, 1998a; Riester, 1998).

Interdisciplinary Evaluation Once a student is referred for special education, an interdisciplinary team of professionals conducts a formal assessment to determine if the student has a disability and needs special services. Typically, an evaluation will, at minimum, include an individualized intelligence test and a standardized test of academic achievement, teacher reports, and information from parents. Specialized evaluations from various professionals also may be included—speech and language evaluation, occupational and physical therapy assessments, psychiatric evaluation, and more. For students aged sixteen and above, assessment must also consider the transition needs of the student related to employment, independent living, and community participation (Procedures for Evaluation and Determination of Eligibility, 1999).

In most states professionals with special training in individualized assessment conduct and coordinate these evaluations. These individuals' professional titles vary by state—in Michigan, for example, school psychologists do evaluations; in Texas, educational diagnosticians. Evaluations must not discriminate against students from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Tests must be given in the primary language or other mode of communication, such as sign language, of the student.
The team develops a formal report describing the student's present levels of performance, the needs of the student for services and assistance, and the eligibility of the student for special education services. Eligibility is based on two factors: (1) whether the student has a disability in the categories identified in the federal law and (2)

whether the student needs special education services. Parents have the right to receive a copy of this evaluation report and to have input into the decision regarding student eligibility for services and must agree with the decision to provide special education services. Whether the multidisciplinary team actually meets depends on local and state procedures. If the team does meet, however, the parent must be invited to participate (Michigan Department of Education, 1999; Parent Education Project, 1998b; Riester, 1998).

Collaboration between General and Special Education Key in effective educational services to students with disabilities is collaboration between all parties involved, particularly between general education teachers, parents, and special educators. In inclusive schools, of course, such collaboration is built into the daily operation of the school as special education teachers, speech therapists, and other specialists co-teach and collaborate with general education teachers. Specialists will be an integral part of the building support team and collaborative consultation meetings we described above. They will be involved in both Tier I design of classroom instruction and Tier II design of individual interventions for students even prior to their involvement in formal special education services. The current version of IDEA particularly emphasizes the involvement of special educators in such early intervention efforts to increase student success and reduce the number of referrals to special education.

Individualized Education Plan Once the evaluation team declares the student eligible for special education services, a different team is convened to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the child, a document intended to address the unique educational needs of the child. The figure below describes the legally required members of the team. Parent participation is particularly important; in addition, starting at age fourteen, when appropriate, students are required by law to attend. Many educators recommend that students participate at all ages, suggesting that their presence encourages those attending to focus more directly on the needs of the child. Parents also may invite other participants such as a parent advocate, a university professor, or staff of the state protection and advocacy agency (see Chapter 6) (Gibb & Dyches, 2000; Michigan Department of Education, 1999; Parent Education Project, 1998a; Riester, 1998; Seyler & Buswell, 2001).

The figure below describes the required components of an IEP from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the IEP we:

1. Identify goals for children with special needs, select services to help them reach such goals, and decide how they will be involved in general education;
2. Specify the placement of the student, particularly related to participation in general education;
3. Describe the services to be provided in terms of amount, frequency, and duration; and
4. Develop a plan for evaluating the student's progress (Federal Register, 1999).

Individualized Education Plan Team

The law requires that the following individuals participate in the development of the IEP. Other people *may* participate—family, friends, peers of the student, and others.

- The *parents* of a child with a disability
- At least one *regular education teacher* if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment
- At least one *special education teacher*
- *Administrator:* A representative of the local educational agency who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities
- *Evaluator:* An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- *Other individuals* who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel
- *The child with a disability* (whenever appropriate)

Source: Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004).

An IEP is a legal contract between the school and the parents. We have the responsibility of helping to plan and carry out the services described in the IEP. The legal mandate for IEPs was created, as with all laws, to solve a problem. In this case the problem was that schools were simply putting children in special education without consultation with parents, oftentimes in programs that did not attend to the unique needs of the child.

IEPs can provide powerful opportunities for parents and educators to work collaboratively to develop strategies for supporting a student with special needs. In addition, IDEA provides parents a powerful tool for seeking inclusive education for their children. Parents can go to court to request placement in the least restrictive environment and services that will provide help for the teacher and student so that inclusion is successful. The number of such legal actions, on the one hand, demonstrates that many schools resist inclusive education. On the other hand, the courts are increasingly clear in supporting the move toward inclusive education. Yet parents often feel caught in a bind. Legal action is time-consuming and emotionally draining.

Although IDEA requires that schools pay legal costs if the parents win, parents must foot the bill until such a decision is made, and sometimes they lose. Further, forcing a school to comply with a law or regulation often works against parents, as the goodwill and support of teachers and school staff are critical.

What Is Required in an IEP?
What the Law in the United States Says

The term *individualized education plan* or *IEP* means a written statement for each child with a disability that . . . includes:

- A statement of the child's *present levels of educational performance,* including—how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum
- A statement of measurable *annual goals*
- Short-term objectives for students with more severe disabilities who will take an alternate assessment (objectives are not needed for other students)
- A statement of the *special education and related services and supplementary aids and services*
- An explanation of *the extent,* if any, *to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class*
- A statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or districtwide *assessments of student achievement*
- The *projected date* for the beginning of the services and modifications . . . and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and modifications
- Beginning at age 16, and updated annually, an individual *transition* plan
- A statement of *how the child's progress toward the annual goals . . . will be measured;* and *how the child's parents will be regularly informed*

Source: Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004).

We talk with Cathy and Steve about their experience with their son Michael and his IEP meeting. Cathy explains that Michael, who is diagnosed as having mental retardation, had a hard time in first grade. He had attended an inclusive kindergarten program, so "we just assumed he would continue to receive his education in a general education class," Cathy says. Unfortunately, this assumption was incorrect. In Michael's first year in first grade, the teacher did not expect him to learn anything. "In a meeting before the end of the school year, a few members of the IEP team felt Michael should receive his education in a special education class and be 'included' only for music, PE, lunch, and recess. We couldn't believe it!" she exclaims, the tears welling up. "We finally had to tell them that it was not Michael who was failing. Rather, we had failed him. The expectation was that Michael should 'fit in' instead of being accepted for who he is."

Cathy and Steve educated themselves about their legal rights, "arming ourselves with every bit of information we could get our hands on about inclusion." In addition Cathy put together what she called "The Michael Book," a collection of pictures and stories illustrating her son's positive attributes. She hoped that the educators would look beyond Michael's Down syndrome. She presented the book to his new first-grade teacher along with other books and articles on inclusion and Down syndrome.

"At our first IEP meeting for the new year we decided to bring a parent advocate with us," she says. "Fortunately for us, staff had changed and the people who were pushing for a segregated classroom were gone."

Cathy and Steve were wary and cautious as they walked into a room full of unfamiliar people, only a few of whom even knew Michael. "We were totally prepared to battle," Cathy recalls, "but to my surprise and delight, they never even talked about having Michael in a separate class! Instead we all talked about our expectations for Michael, his strengths, and roles for each of us." The general and special education teacher used an "IEP matrix" to match Michael's learning goals to the curriculum. They looked at units of study—for example, America: community formation, community contributors, early settlements, animal habitats, and environment—and identified learning goals for Michael, using the matrix to plan lessons in which Michael could participate. Cathy says ecstatically, "I never in a million years thought I'd see that level of commitment to do what ever it takes. Michael is doing so well. He loves school, he adores his teacher, and his classmates think the world of him. In fact, Michael came home yesterday and told me 'Tiffany . . . wow!' " The delight on his face fills the room with warmth.

Michael's story richly illustrates both what can go wrong and what can go right as we work with students with special needs. The first IEP team had difficulty looking beyond Michael's disability and seeing a whole child. The second group worked collaboratively with the family and were able to see Michael's strengths and capabilities as well as his needs.

At best, all IEP meetings should be like this: meetings where educators and parents positively look at the needs and the strengths of a child. In the figure on page 162 we list a few practical steps to help you prepare for participating in an IEP. In fact, these are the same steps to consider for any child who is having difficulty in your class. First, develop a good picture of the student's strengths, challenges, and needs. Second, make notes on any other information that would be helpful. Finally, identify ideas for working with the student, including supports and assistance you need as a teacher. If you and others bring this kind of thinking to the meeting, you will be able to pool ideas and identify

ways to work together. Focus on how this student can be successful in your class. Be open and honest about your concerns, and ask for help and input (Ford, Fitzgerald, Glodoski, & Waterbury, 1997; Gibb & Dyches, 2000).

Steps in Preparing for an IEP

1. Identify the student's strengths and needs in your class.
2. Identify questions to understand the student's needs and potential strategies.
3. List ideas to meet student needs—teaching practices, support, adaptations, etc.

Parents often experience IEP meetings as extremely intimidating, which may cause them to become angry or withdrawn. In addition, often educators have focused only on the deficits of children leaving their parents with a sense of hopelessness. If we come to a meeting frustrated, aiming to remove a child from our class or feeling the need to blame parents, we will make the process very difficult for all. One key strategy is to begin meetings by giving people the opportunity to state and own how they are feeling.

These meetings can either be family- and child-centered or system-centered. System-centered approaches are typically built around defending what the school has in place rather than responding to needs of the child and family. Complex reports, provided in the technical language of a professional discipline, can be overwhelming and confusing to parents, adding to their sense of powerlessness. On the other hand, IEP meetings can be used to develop partnerships between families and school personnel. In the poorest IEP meetings, educators come with everything typed out, expecting parents simply to listen and sign. In an effective meeting, in contrast, the components of the IEP serve as the agenda, and parents, the child, peers, and other educators bring their own ideas and make decisions collaboratively. The goal of the IEP meeting is not to complete a form but to develop a genuine plan to help the student.

Present Levels of Performance: Strengths and Needs. After introductions, the person facilitating the IEP meeting asks the team to review the present functioning of the student. In some meetings individual specialists report one at a time. In more effective meetings, however, team members address key areas of functioning together: academic, emotional–social, and physical across environments in which the student functions. For example, the facilitator might ask people to give brief summaries of Jenny's academic strengths and needs. In response, classroom teachers first share work samples of the student that show Jenny's skill level and needs for improvement. The parents share their observations regarding Jenny's use of academic skills at home. The facilitator may

ask the child herself to add comments: "How do you use reading, writing, and math at home, Jenny? What are some things you would like to do better?" These discussions would be followed by specialists' testing reports and observations related to academic performance. Similar discussion would address other key areas in turn—social, emotional, sensory–physical, and more (Parent Education Project, 1998a; Williams, Fox, Monley, McDermott, & Fox, 1989).

Annual Goals and Measurable Objectives. The IEP must describe annual learning goals for most students and short-term objectives for each goal for students with severe disabilities who will take an alternative assessment to the state achievement test. These requirements are intended to help ensure accountability, and part of our responsibility will be to document the progress of a child related to these goals and objectives.

From time to time, educators have developed highly detailed and sometimes trivial goals in order to state objectives in measurable terms. For example, one might find statements in IEPs such as, "Lamar will learn to spell all words with 95 percent accuracy; Lamar will complete oral sentences correctly 90 percent, and respond to criticism appropriately 80 percent, of the time." However, there are several problems with these types of goal statements. On the one hand, their specificity and detail makes them difficult to document. In addition, while they lead to lists of skills and sub-skills that are immediately observable, they do not tend to evaluate complex cognitive, emotional, and physical learning goals. We see many examples of pseudo-behavioral language in IEPs, and too few examples of goals that consist of complex skills.

However, we can develop more effective goal statements that fit best teaching practice and relate to critical skills. For example, in some cases we can use curriculum guidelines in our own lesson plans to target skills for which our lessons are designed, generating goals that focus on meaning, practical application, and the ability to use skills in authentic community settings. Here are some examples:

1. Improve reading abilities and enjoyment of reading.
2. Develop basic math skills and apply these in simple daily money management.
3. Increase oral expression abilities.

Typically, measurable objectives are subunits of the overall goal. For the first goal above, for example, we might identify the following objectives:

1. Manuel will learn to monitor whether the text is making sense to him as he reads.
2. Manuel will discover meaning-based strategies for figuring out words.
3. Manuel will participate in oral storytelling based on stories he has read (Rhodes & Dudley-Marling, 1996).

In other cases, IEP goals will be directly related to the student's disability and to provision of specific special education services. If a student has difficulties in articulation of words, a speech therapist may target improvement of articulation as a goal. If a student needs to learn how to use a piece of assistive technology, such as a talking calculator, this can be identified as a goal with appropriate objectives.

Back Pack

Language, Culture, and Individualized Differentiation

The **Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE)** is a federally funded research and development program focused on improving the education of students whose ability to reach their potential is challenged by language or cultural barriers, race, geographic location, or poverty." crede.berkeley.edu

Teacher Vision has many resources for individualized differentiation and adaptations for a wide range of students.

Special Education and Related Services. Related services are services—such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, counseling, and so on—that provide needed assistance to a student. If a student is to receive in-class support from a special education co-teacher or paraprofessional, this will be written in the IEP. As appropriate, the IEP must also address issues of language acquisition, assistive technology, behavioral interventions, and other special needs.

One important issue is how special education service time is articulated on the IEP. As we will discuss in Chapter 5, special education supports can include both direct instruction or therapy as well as indirect supports – consultation with the teacher, accessing or developing instructional materials, and monitoring student progress. It's often helpful to write a range of services and specify that such services may involve both direct and indirect services. This maximizes the impact of special education service

resources in the general education class, providing flexibility while assuring accountability.

Students' Ownership of Their IEPs. We also should help students themselves understand and own their plans promoting student ownership and empowerment. When students participate in IEP meetings and provide input we help students' making choices for their lives and strengthen their own self-determination (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998; Hughes & Agran, 1998). This also provides a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate to the child that people care, as well as to teach the child to take responsibility.

Several strategies for student involvement are helpful. At minimum, when the student attends the meeting, we should explain what is happening and ask for the student's input. We will ask for and rely on the student's input and choices more as the child grows older. We can help the student use the IEP to track his or her own learning by developing a booklet with the student that identifies goals and provides a way to record progress. This can easily become part of the class portfolio. In addition, as students enter middle and high school, we can provide them training and support to provide substantive input into their IEP. One young man, Micah, began in middle school using a Powerpoint presentation to tell those at the IEP meeting what he saw as his needs and goals in which he was interested. This makes the IEP a living instrument, owned by the person it is intended to benefit, rather than a bureaucratic document.

Placement: The Degree of Involvement in General Education. Historically, the most controversial decision in IEP meetings has involved the educational placement of the student with a disability—the type of class or school where the student will be educated. Referral to special education has often meant a separate special education classroom. Since the passage of PL 94-142, however, the legal presumption has been that students would be educated in the general education class. When this does not occur, the IEP team must justify that decision. In almost all cases the needs of the child can be met in general education when, as the law requires, appropriate services and supports are provided. The questions then involve politics, how resources are used, and the willingness of schools to include students. For every student with a disability who is denied inclusion, there is most often a comparable student in another school who thrives academically and is a valued member of the classroom. In truly inclusive schools, placement is not often an issue. The child with a disability is part of the general education class like everyone else. What changes is not the location of the student but the degree of support and assistance provided in that class to aid both the student and

the teacher (LeRoy, England, & Osbeck, 1994; Parent Education Project, 1998a; Saha, Enright, & Timberflake, 1996).

There are still a small number of students whose needs are so complex that educators have not yet come up with ways to include them successfully. Other programs, such as separate schools, may be seen as the best alternative. Our goal, however, should be to include all students. If we are committed to inclusive teaching, it is painful when we find we do not, today, know how to include a student. Yet such instances offer us opportunities to reflect. "How can we do better? How might we have helped this student if things had been different in our school?" These are critical questions that will, we hope, lead to better answers in the future.

IDEA does require that school districts provide a "continuum of placement options" that range from inclusive to more restrictive. This requirement is based on the presumption that more restrictive settings may better meet the needs of some students. However, it is important to understand that *special education is a service, not a place*. As we will see in Chapter 5, we can develop an *inclusive continuum of services* where a range of supports and services are provided in general education based upon the needs of the student.

Evaluation of Progress. The law requires that educators report the progress students make on the goals and objectives identified in their IEPs. Evaluation criteria and tools need to be clear, so that we can track and report on a student's progress. If we incorporate goals for the student into the structure of our curriculum, and if we use assessment that is the same as or similar to what we use with all our students, this process is much easier to manage. We may need to make adaptations, but most often we should evaluate progress toward IEP goals in the same way that we evaluate progress made by other children. Most students with disabilities take the state standardized test while a small number who have more severe disabilities will take an alternative examination.

Mediation, Hearings, and Appeals. Sometimes school personnel and parents cannot agree on the IEP. Federal law has established procedures for the appeal of decisions. However, jurisdictions also encourage mediation, a process by which parents and school representatives come together with an individual who facilitates dialogue and discussion. Many states have established formal mediation services to achieve more amicable outcomes and reduce legal costs.

If parents and the school continue to disagree, however, the first level of appeal is an impartial hearing. This is a quasi-judicial meeting at which a court-appointed hearing officer, most often a university professor or a lawyer, hears the sides presented by the parents and the school system and makes a decision. If either side disagrees with this decision, the case can be appealed to federal court. Special education law is now a subspecialty of law practice. In every state multiple hearings are conducted yearly. This is costly and emotionally stressful for parents.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

Student Name Fred Borden **Date of Meeting** April 23

Present Levels of Educational Performance

How does the child's disability affect the child's involvement and progress in the general curriculum; or, for preschool children, how does the disability affect the child's participation in appropriate activities?

Fred is fourteen. Fred is able to read at a third-grade level but can understand at a higher level than he reads. He likes to read but is hesitant to write or express himself. He can do basic math functions and has begun to keep a checking account but would like to learn more daily math skills. He likes electric motors and machines and spends time with his dad at his car garage. Fred likes to be around people, but his oral communication skills are limited. He has a few friends but often seems awkward socially.

Fred is not sure what he wants to do when he graduates from high school. He could use exploration of the community and job options, thinking about where he might like to live. A MAP might be useful with his friends and family to provide input into his transition plan and IEP.

Eligibility

Does the student have a disability and need special education and related services?

Fred is diagnosed as mentally retarded.

Measurable Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives

How will these goals enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum or, for preschool children, to participate in appropriate activities? What other educational needs result from the child's disability? What services or interagency linkages are needed for transition, including instruction, related services, community experiences, employment, postschool adult living, daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation?

Annual goal: Improve Fred's ability to read and express himself effectively in writing and with other tools.

Objective	Service/Person	Assessment
Over the semester Fred will read six books he enjoys and will develop interesting responses and share key ideas and issues in each of the books.	1. Fred will participate in a literature circle where he will be part of sharing group. 2. Special education teacher will coteach literacy class twice a week and monitor Fred's progress and provide support as needed. 3. Peer partner in the literacy group will work together with Fred in designing a project reporting on book via a play, computer graphic, or art. 4. General and special education teacher with librarian will help Fred pick out books at his level that he finds interesting. 5. Parent and Fred go to library together once a month.	General and special education teacher observation, Fred's self-report, summary record sheet for each book (location, main characters, plot, key message). Actual reporting project. Criteria: number of books read, Fred's evaluation of these books, rubric on report and reporting project.
Fred will learn to express himself in writing and through other tools, using his own life and other topics of interest.	1. General education teacher will use writing workshop approach in English class for development of written pieces. 2. Fred and small group will work together reviewing and editing one another's pieces, providing encouragement. 3. Special education teacher will work with Fred and the group to help them use tools for expression to focus and expand their writing, such as stick figures and graphics as a tool for storytelling, Inspiration software for graphic organizers, PowerPoint, use of movies with I-Move to go with text.	General and special education teacher observation, Fred's self-report, rubric on written stories (teacher and student evaluation) and related expression products.

How Child's Parents Will Be Regularly Informed of Child's Progress

Regular report cards, parent conferences, and biweekly notes of learning activities and progress from the special education teacher.

Placement

What percentage of the time will the child be in general education or in a special education setting? What is the rationale for placement?

Location	% of time	Rationale
General education (specify) Fred will be involved in a schedule of classes that fit his interests and IEP goals. Special education (specify)	100%	Fred has been included in general education full time his entire school career. Teachers are working hard to teach at multiple levels and modify instruction to meet his needs.

Special Education and Related Services

What services, modifications, and supports are needed to help the child advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals, be involved and progress in the general curriculum, participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities, and be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities?

Service or Support	Start Date	Location	Frequency	Duration
MAP facilitated by social worker	9-3	Fred's home	Once per year	Time necessary
Coteaching support by special education teacher in language arts	8-15	Language arts class	2 classes per week	Year

Supplementary Aids and Services/Interagency Linkages

Service or Support	Start Date	Location	Frequency	Duration
Refer to vocational rehabilitation for job exploration program.	November	Counselor's office	NA	NA

Program Modifications or Supports for School Personnel

Modifications or Supports	Start Date	Location	Frequency	Duration
Allowing Fred to read and write at his own level in language arts class.	8-15	Language arts class	Ongoing	Year

Modified grading in machine shop based on project rubric designed with special education teacher.	9-15	Machine shop class	Each card marking	Year

Source: Adapted from Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (2000).

Behavioral Intervention Plan. If students have behavioral challenges a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) should be part of the IEP. In 1997, a multistep process was written into law. First, if a student with disabilities displays dangerous actions and the school wants to expel the student, a multidisciplinary team must conduct a manifest determination review—a review to determine whether or not the behavioral issues were directly related to the disability of the student. If the actions were related, the school must develop a BIP as part of the IEP (Riester, 1998).

Individual Transition Plan (ITP) and Inclusive High Schools. The transition of students with disabilities from school to adult life has been a concern for many years. Students with disabilities often have much higher rates of unemployment and more difficulty accessing postsecondary educational opportunities than their peers. Students with mild to severe disabilities may spend years on waiting lists for adult service systems. The Individual Transition Plan (ITP), a required component of the IEP starting at age sixteen, is a central tool. According to IDEA, the purpose of the ITP to is promote movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation [that is] based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests; and . . . includes—(i) Instruction; (ii) Related services; (iii) Community experiences; (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004, Section 300.42)

The law requires that students attend the transition planning meeting to develop the ITP and that schools work with adult service agencies to develop collaborative services to assist students with disabilities (Ludlow, Turnbull, & Luckasson, 1988). Inclusive high schools are very important in a successful transition from school to adult life as a member of the community. It is here that students with special needs develop relationships and are known by the future employers and leaders in local communities.

Schools to Visit

Ausable Primary School
306 Plum Street
Grayling, MI 49738

Ausable Primary is a K–2 school located in the rural community of Grayling, Michigan. Grayling is a resort town known for canoeing and snowmobiling; however, the prevalence of poverty is high, and some 56 percent of Ausable's 430 students receive free or reduced-cost lunch. The incidence of significant disabilities is also high—in a county with the highest infant mortality rate in the state.

The design of Ausable Primary, a relatively new school, was shaped by the dreams of a principal, staff, and community members who wished for a school that would meet the developmental needs of young children. From the beginning the school has been fully inclusive, reaching out to children and their families and seeking to keep all children in general classes. In 2001 the school included in general education classes children with autism, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, and emotional disturbance.

What's particularly amazing about Ausable is the degree to which all staff genuinely have adopted inclusion as a value. They struggle with students, but the commitment they share is clear. The principal, Barbara Mick, has been a leader in developing this philosophy, carefully selecting new staff and gathering all staff in yearly retreats.

Ausable has developed a particularly strong support system for inclusive education. The special education teacher, speech therapist, counselor, and occupational therapist share an office in the center of the school and coordinate support services in collaboration with general education teachers. Once a month each teacher in the school has a Wednesday afternoon planning session with the specialist team. All specialists provide in-class collaborative teaching and support. In addition, almost every classroom has a full-time paraprofessional to assist with students with special needs. Support staff and general education teachers have learned to work as a family team. Every adult takes responsibility for all children in the school, and all constantly share information and ideas, particularly in informal lunchtime discussions when specialists and teachers eat together in the office. Finally, school staff are active in accessing community agencies to provide support to families and children.

Getting Started and Moving On

We've explored how to design our classes for all students and have surveyed ways to develop individualized support plans.

Let's connect with DeMarcus, a beginning biology teacher and see how things are going. . . .

Well, it's the end of the first week of school. It's been a good week. My strategy for teaching eighth-grade biology this year combines several practices that are new for me, exciting but scary at the same time. We still have the district's required text, and my principal insists that we target our instruction within the state's curriculum framework. However, I have decided I am not going to "cover" these objectives week by week in the textbook. No, I am going to involve my students in real, authentic experiences. First, I am involving my students in planning the class. This week we spent half our time discussing what they want to learn in biology this year. We brainstormed ideas on the board. There were a lot. Then we spent time organizing the ideas around learning themes and activities. That was a good beginning. Following this, the students and I together compared the state curriculum objectives to what we had done in our own planning. This helped us focus on certain activities we wanted to do. It was amazing how much we had addressed based on their own interests. I then taught them about multiple intelligences and the need to have students work at different levels. Together we came up with fun, thought-provoking lessons that will include working in groups with different abilities (we talked about how to ensure each person was responsible and what would happen if they were not); developing our own experiments; using drama, art, and music to portray concepts; and conducting community projects both during and after school. The kids seem excited and so am I.

I was worried about the students with disabilities in my class. However, as we planned together, I asked the students to come up with ideas to ensure that everyone was learning and could participate. We will work these plans out in more detail as we go, but they had some terrific suggestions. In fact, I took their concepts into the IEP meeting for Joe, my student who is mentally retarded and has cerebral palsy. You should have seen the parents. They actually looked shocked. They smiled and came up to me after the meeting. The dad shook my hand heartily and the mom hugged me! They both had tears in their eyes. Wow! Makes me glad I am a teacher. At least today. (Thomas, personal communication, September 2001).

Photo Micah 200 meter race

Journey into the Classroom

Micah said, "I want to go in the same door as other students."

Micah Fialka-Feldman attends Oakland University in a suburb of Detroit, Michigan through the Options Program. Micah is one of the most popular and involved students on campus and is known by his friends as a very sensitive caring person. Alex, one of his friends said recently, "There are many kinds of intelligence. And Micah is one of the most socially, personally intelligent people that I know". Alex is Micah's friend and is also being paid by an adult service agency, the Macomb-Oakland Regional Center, to provide support to Micah as he attends classes and engages in college life.

Micah has a moderate cognitive disability. He is working hard now on learning to read but, until recently, he could read only by the many sight words he knows. He keeps up with current events and his emails on the internet via a screen reading program. He is able to respond to his emails and write short paragraphs by using a text to speech software program, called DragonSpeak ®

In recent years, Micah has spoken all over the United States telling his story. Listening to Micah, you'd be amazed how able he is, how well he communicates given his disability. He has received many standing ovations.

In grades K-2, Micah was in a separate special education class called the "opportunity room". It was at the end of the hall and students came in a side door. One day Micah said to his parents, "I want to go in the same door as other students." "What?" said Janice, his mother. He repeated his desire. It was clear. Micah didn't want to be in a separate special education class.

So began a long journey. For Micah's parents it was not always easy because the school administration had very limited experience having students with disabilities in the general education classes. For Micah, he says, "It was fun! It was what I wanted." To help Micah, other students were invited to join a circle of friends in the 3rd grade. Though some of the students changed throughout the years, the circle of friends was always active and supported Micah through his high school years. They problem solved issues that came up, but most importantly they had fun together, playing basketball, eating pizza, visiting senior citizens, hanging out, and going to dances together. In the tenth grade they noticed that Micah hung out only with the teachers at the school dances. At one of the circle meetings, they challenged Micah to dance with five girls at the next dance! They gave him practical tips on how to ask a girl to make that happen. Sure enough at the next dance, Micah danced with five girls and the teachers rarely saw him again. At the last meeting of the circle, they helped him get ready for the prom. Micah was also elected to the homecoming court.

In high school, students supported Micah in another way, through the LINKS program. Oliver was one student who received credit for helping Micah in his science class. Oliver said, "I took the class to be a LINK because I though this would be an easy A. More than getting an easy A, I got a best friend. I taught Micah about science but he taught me how to teach." Oliver now lives outside of Chicago and he and Micah are still friends. He is a middle school math teacher and relishes teaching students with disabilities. Recently Oliver and Micah presented at a teacher training workshop on inclusive education.

Since fifth grade, Micah attended and participated in his IEP meetings. He says now, "Nothing about me without me". He learned how to create PowerPoint presentations to express what he wanted in his IEP. "Here's what I told my teachers so they could teach me," says Micah. "Talk to me. Show me pictures.

Send me emails so I can hear it on my computer. Ask me questions and give me choices. Give me lots of new sight words. Let me use the internet to learn."

Micah received support from a paraprofessional and special education teachers helped general education teachers make adaptations to assignments. In history class, for example, students had to research an influential person in the civil war and write a paper. Micah created a PowerPoint presentation with some text and pictures. In a political science class students read materials on Vietnam, explored the politics regarding the war, and wrote a paper. Micah interviewed people who had protested against the war and made a video tape. Mrs. Schultz, his current events teacher, said, "I was so amazed and pleased how well the other students accepted him. We do a lot of group work and they invited him to join their group. They asked his opinion even though it took him a bit of time to get it out. He gave great presentations using PowerPoints. I would base his grade on these." Micah also joined the track team in high school. When he started he could only run one block! By his senior year in high school he was running 2 miles and received his varsity letter.

Micah has influenced hundreds of people helping them see new possibilities for students with cognitive disabilities. You can read more about Micah's experience and watch the award winning video of his experiences as a student on the college campus at http://www.throughthesamedoor.com/. Additional materials written by and about Micah can be obtained at http://www.danceofpartnership.com/.

Reflection: Some people have said, "Well, Micah is 'higher functioning' than students with cognitive disabilities I know. They could never do what Micah does. "Ah!!" We think. "They don't understand. For Micah is who he is *because of his experiences*. He was given a chance to learn and grow and he did!! How much more might other students grow and develop were they given the chance!" As Oliver, Micah's friend and now middle school teacher says, "Micah and our friendship shows what inclusive education is all about and what it can produce".

Traveling Notes

In this chapter we explored the relationship between designing our teaching for diverse learners and developing individualized intervention and support plans. Here are some notes for you to review on your journey.

1. As we work to develop individualized differentiation and interventions for students with learning challenges, an ecological framework can help us think systematically regarding how students fit into our classroom. We can consider adaptations of our classroom to help the student be successful.
2. Useful tools include collaborative consultation, person-centered planning using the MAPS process, curriculum matrix, and daily schedule with supports.
3. Many formal services are available for students with special needs to which we may refer them. We want to work with specialists in these programs to support and strengthen effective inclusive teaching in our classroom.
4. If the student has a disability, we can refer them for special education services and

will serve on a team to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which specifies goals, objectives, placement, services, and evaluation criteria. We take our ideas to the IEP meeting to contribute to a plan that works for our class.

Stepping Stones to Whole Schooling

Following are some activities that will help extend your understanding and actions you may take to plan for teaching diverse students.

1. Complete a Class Profile on your class. Do the same in the classroom of a colleague on your teaching team. What does this tell you? Is there a relationship between the problems students have in your class and the way that you teach? If so, what could you do?
2. Select one of your students who is having difficulty. Complete a student profile and identify some strategies you would like to try. Collect information. How well did this work? What did you learn?
3. Engage in collaborative consultation with another educator obtaining input and advice regarding a student who is having difficulty.
4. Obtain information about formal services in your school for students who are gifted, dominant language learners, at risk students, and students with disabilities. What collaborative programs are operated with community agencies?
5. Develop a plan for a student with a disability to be included in a general education class. Include the following components: (a) curriculum matrix; (b) a daily schedule showing supports and adaptations as needed (See chapter 4); and (c) a summary narrative description regarding how the student will participate in the general education curriculum.
6. Participate in an IEP meeting. What occurred, and how did you feel about it?
7. Interview community agencies that work with people with disabilities about their individualized planning processes. What do they do that is similar to and different from the IEP process?
8. Talk with the principal and other teachers about the tools in this chapter and how they might be used in your school.