

Book review by

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A Practical Guide to Early Childhood Inclusion: Effective Reflection

Ann M. Gruenberg & Regina Miller
Pearson, Boston, 2011

In this book review, Gruenberg and Miller's book entitled "a practical guide to early childhood inclusion effective reflection" was reviewed. In the book preface, the authors indicate that there have been dramatic changes in the field of special education and early childhood education during the past twenty-five years. Therefore, they focus on enduring and innovative practices in the inclusive programs and adaptations for children who are at risk or who have disabilities. The authors expected that this text will provide practical support to practitioners and teachers.

This book includes ten chapters: *Introduction: Effectiveness in a Changing World, Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practices, Families, Teams and Communication, Assessment, Introduction to Curricular Adaptations, Play and Social Development, Curricular Adaptations: Language and Literacy, The Arts, Music and Movement, Solving Problems in Everyday Life: Math, Science, and Beyond* and *Professionalism: Becoming A Lifelong Learner and Organizing Community Resources*. Each chapter has a list of objectives and some key terms at the beginning.

In the chapter one, *Effectiveness in a Changing World*, the authors present topics which are covered in the book. Then, they explain the concept of inclusion. According to the authors, the concept of inclusion is just a trend. Therefore, in the field of inclusion, any answer is not 100% certain. On the other hand, they focus on the changing field of early

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childhood special education. Authors indicate historical perspectives and sources of changes on special education. After authors examine all of them, they emphasize current perspectives which have been maintaining professionalism during changing times. Although there was a lot of diversity in the field of early childhood education, practices and methods are perhaps now more of a natural processes than it began.

In the chapter two, *Developmentally and Individually Appropriate Practices*, the authors emphasize significant changes in services in the US. These changes have got some implications for practice. These changes and its implications for practice were examined under the topics of *Legal Changes in Perspectives, Technological Transformations, Presumption of Inclusion and Blended Programs*. Then, the authors emphasize evidence-based practices, dynamic perspectives on development, and define developmentally appropriate practices based on theoretical perspectives, practical implications, inclusive mandates and imperatives, organizations working together and research and practice. After that, authors explain the bridge between theory and practice.

In chapter three, *Families, Teams and Communication*, the authors explain the importance of dynamic teams and families working. Communication is seen important between team members and families in the early childhood special education. Therefore, practitioners attend a cultural diversity, a unique features of families and families' belief system. On the other hand, for best communication there was clarity about roles and responsibilities. Authors emphasize importance of reflection ways which may be used to enhance the quality of interventions in teams. According to authors, families' emotions are important for relationships between practitioners and families. Effectiveness of inclusion in early childhood education is believed depend greatly on family participation.

In chapter four, *Assessment*, authors emphasize that high-quality assessment is essential for all children who are at risk or who have disabilities. Therefore authors indicate the variety of available options for assessment. They identify and explain ways in which reflection can be used during the process of assessment. Appropriate type of assessment is believed as the most important issue in the early childhood special education. In the assessment procedure, families' and team members' roles are also important. Team members must have positive relationships with families because the main aim of the assessment is to discover the current levels of children's performances. The authors indicate also that team members should use reflection to interpret data from various sources, especially families, for discovering the children's performance.

The chapter five, *Introduction to Curricular Adaptations*, introduces ways in adapting curriculum to meet individual needs of children. Most important issue of the adapting curriculum is seen as that practitioners must match unique characteristics of children with positive options for adaptations. Determined goals and objectives for children who are at risk or who have disabilities should be integrated into curriculum. Also, authors

indicate ways in which practitioners embed differentiated instructional methods into general curriculum, daily routines and activities. In this process, practitioners have to use evidence-based practices.

In chapter six, *Play and Social Development*, authors overview typical and exceptional social-emotional development for planning the developmental appropriate curriculum to support social-emotional development. In social-emotional development, play has the most important role. Therefore, curriculums of social-emotional development have to involve the play. Authors identify the stage of play and factors which effect the play process. On the other hand, authors indicate ways in which an active reflective process may be used to enhance the effectiveness of inclusion of children with social and emotional challenges. Children who have social and emotional challenges often respond very well to effective intervention so practitioners must be taken account all factors which effect the intervention procedure.

In chapter seven, *Circular Adaptations: Language and Literacy*, authors explain early language and literacy development and linking language and literacy. Also, some factors are being identified which may contribute to difficulty in language, communication and literacy. Authors emphasize possible strategies, including assistive technology, and augmentative communication. At the end of the chapter, authors explain ways in which an active reflective process may be used in the language and literacy activities in the inclusion process. As a summary, specific strategies and factors have been emphasized in this chapter to increase the quality of the match between the strategies and the children's needs.

In chapter eight, *The Arts, Music, and Movement*, authors explain the scope and content of the arts. Authors see the arts as vital component of curriculum for children, especially those with disabilities. They indicate some factors which may cause some difficulties for participating arts' activities. A range of possible strategies for arts education was explained for adapting curriculum to children's needs. At the end of chapter, authors emphasize ways in which an active reflective process may be used in the inclusion for arts activities.

In beginning of the chapter nine, *Solving Problems in Everyday Life: Math, Science, and Beyond*, various theories of cognitive development and problem solving are being explained. Then, authors point out ways in which cognition can be assessed for making curricular adaptations. After assessment of cognition, conditions which effect cognitive performance are being identified. In math and science activities, authors indicate the concept of how adaptations can be made for children who are at risk or who have disabilities. At the end of chapter, authors emphasize strategies, which may be embedded into problem-solving activities, challenges of adaptation process, and integration math/science concepts into activities of daily living.

In chapter ten, *Professionalism; Becoming a lifelong Learner and Organizing Community Resources*, authors state the importance of lifelong learning for professionalism. Therefore, key features of professionalism and its related standards for inclusive practices are being identified. The chapter explains the integration of concepts regarding the value of reflection into professional development. Authors emphasize the ways to increase resourcefulness by identifying community resources that help in sustaining professionalism through ongoing professional development.

Early childhood inclusion is a very new concept for many countries. From this point, this book is a very important resource for professionals and related individuals in early childhood inclusion.

Reference

Gruenberg, A. M., and Miller, R. (2011). *A Practical Guide to Early Childhood Inclusion: Effective Reflection*. Boston: Pearson Inc.