

INSTRUCTIONAL COLLABORATION IN INTERNATIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONTEXTS

Edited by Sarah R. Semon, Danielle Lane
and Phyllis Jones

Series Editor Chris Forlin

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES
ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

VOLUME 17

**INSTRUCTIONAL COLLABORATION
IN INTERNATIONAL INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION CONTEXTS**

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION VOLUME 17

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emerald
PUBLISHING

United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

Editorial matter and selection © 2022 Sarah R. Semon, Danielle Lane and Phyllis Jones.
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83982-999-4 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83982-998-7 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80043-000-6 (Epub)

ISSN: 1479-3636 (Series)



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Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To Dr Phyllis Jones who reminded us daily to “Trust the Process” and whose caring, thoughtful mentorship made all the difference. You are a true light in the world.

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SERIES INTRODUCTION

The adoption internationally of inclusive practice as the most equitable and all-encompassing approach to education and its relation to compliance with various international Declarations and Conventions underpins the importance of this series for people working at all levels of education and schooling in both developed and less developed countries. There is little doubt that inclusive education is complex and diverse and that there are enormous disparities in understanding and application at both inter- and intracountry levels. A broad perspective on inclusive education throughout this series is taken, encompassing a wide range of contemporary viewpoints, ideas, and research for enabling the development of more inclusive schools, education systems, and communities.

Volumes in this series on *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* contribute to the academic and professional discourse by providing a collection of philosophies and practices that can be reviewed by considering local, contextual, and cultural situations to assist governments, educators, peripatetic staffs, and other professionals to provide the best education for all children. Each volume in the series focuses on a key aspect of inclusive education and provides critical chapters by contributing leaders in the field who discuss theoretical positions, quality research, and impacts on school and classroom practice. Different volumes address issues relating to the diversity of student need within heterogeneous classrooms and the preparation of teachers and other staffs to work in inclusive schools. Systemic changes and practice in schools encompass a wide perspective of learners to provide ideas on reframing education to ensure that it is inclusive of all. Evidence-based research practices underpin a plethora of suggestions for decision-makers and practitioners, incorporating current ways of thinking about and implementing inclusive education.

While many barriers have been identified that may potentially constrain the implementation of effective inclusive practices, this series aims to identify such key concerns and offer practical and best practice approaches to overcoming them. Adopting a thematic approach for each volume, readers will be able to quickly locate a collection of research and practice related to a topic of interest. By transforming schools into inclusive communities of practice, all children can have the opportunity to access and participate in quality and equitable education to enable them to obtain the skills to become contributory global citizens. This series, therefore, is highly recommended to support education decision-makers, practitioners, researchers, and academics, who have a professional interest in the inclusion of children and youth who are marginalized in inclusive schools and classrooms.

Volume 17 continues to bring some excellent articles that have a very timely focus. The issue of instructional collaboration has never been more relevant considering the international educational climate over the past 18 months. During this extended time frame all countries have had to adapt to “schooling” that has taken on a range of meanings as they have responded to the need for isolation to prevent the spread of the highly infectious coronavirus (COVID-19). In most countries this has resulted in prolonged absences from the physical school environment with the need for systems to offer distance learning through online or through other off-school options for educating all students. To achieve this has required extensive collaboration between teachers, education assistants, peripatetic staff, parents, other stakeholders, and the students themselves. Effective collaborative practices are particularly essential to ensure that learners with special educational needs are able to maintain their education without direct contact with their teachers. This can be quite problematic for many students given that the majority of their instruction is traditionally presented face-to-face, as without direct support success is limited.

Instructional collaboration is also a key mechanism for ensuring that school connectedness continues during prolonged absences. In Volume 13 in the series the focus was on the importance of promoting social inclusion and developing a sense of belonging for learners with special needs. It was continually affirmed throughout the earlier volume that without this many students may present with social, emotional, or behavioral issues that challenge the effectiveness and sustainability of inclusion. These do not lessen when education changes to an off-school situation, and indeed may be emphasized when students return to the regular classroom. Learning how to effectively collaborate for enabling instructional approaches that meet the needs of all students is critical to prevent further isolation and a breakdown in the positive methods that have become well established and need to endure to support inclusive education.

This latest volume in the series is, therefore, an especially important one as while addressing the need for, and ways to support, instructional collaboration in a traditional sense, it also provides a diverse range of approaches than can be utilized in both traditional schooling methods and adapted for other unique situations as they arise. This volume provides an excellent international perspective as it includes collaborative approaches from a wide range of systems with reference to 13 different regions. Together these provide extensive ideas, techniques, and collaborative styles for instruction, covering a broad range of sociocultural and contextually different situations. The chapters also include recent research, policy changes, and local advocacy methods that support inclusive education for learners at most risk.

Within each regional experience collaborative approaches are highlighted between teachers, therapists, government officials, and other stakeholders to encourage change that drives inclusion forward. While providing insights into the ways in which instructional collaboration varies between regions, the authors also discuss ways of addressing barriers and potential challenges to enabling effective partnerships to be established and maintained. Volume 17 provides a wealth of international approaches and practical and useful ideas for enabling effective

instructional collaboration and will prove to be an extremely useful resource for everyone involved in the education of learners with special needs. It will be essential reading for those in the educational sphere for ensuring that all children and youth are included in consistently meaningful and effective ways. I highly recommend and endorse this book as an excellent addition to the *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* series.

Chris Forlin
Series Editor

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FOREWORD

I am honored to have the opportunity to write the foreword for this wonderful resource for educators on the topic of collaborative practices. I first met Dani and Sarah years ago while working on my doctoral degree at the University of South Florida. In that time, we grew to become friends, colleagues, and collaborators. Dani and I first met in a doctoral seminar course. Sarah and I met years later when we were assigned offices across the hall from one another. I have worked jointly with each of them on various projects including doctoral research projects, redesigning an online course for undergraduates, and more. During our time together, I have had the pleasure of collaborating with them both individually and collectively. Our collaborative work began as a weekly writing group designed to set goals, to hold each other accountable, and to provide each other with support and feedback on various writing projects we each worked on. We meet at least once a week to discuss our writing progress, provide feedback, and set new goals. Since joining this group, we have supported each other through multiple writing projects including a cowritten book chapter, various conference presentations, and most recently, my own dissertation, to name a few.

Beyond helping myself and one another, Sarah and Dani are both always looking to support others around them. Whether they are meeting with students, working on a team-related project, or mentoring doctoral students, they are so giving of their time and knowledge and constantly seek new opportunities for collaboration. They really live and breathe the foundations of this book in all aspects of their work.

As a former general education teacher in the elementary setting, I too, understand and value the importance of collaboration. In order to meet the variety of needs of a diverse student population, it is important to value the knowledge and experience of others to support inclusive education. It is befitting that collaborative practices for inclusive education be the topic of this book because we share the belief that all students deserve an education that meets their needs and challenges them to truly be the best version of themselves.

In this book, you will find detailed examples from around the world for how to use collaborative practices to support inclusive education for all students. I wish you well on your journey throughout these shared stories.

Nicholas Catania, PhD
University of South Florida

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to thank Dr Chris Forlin, the series editor, for the incredible opportunity to serve as editors of this volume.

To our authors, thank you for your tireless efforts and collaboration. Your passion and desire to increase inclusive opportunities for *all* is evident in the sharing of your knowledge of collaboration and inclusion with stakeholders across the globe.

Lastly, we thank our writing group for sticking with us through the process of editing this volume. Your insights and support were monumental in our ability to create a unique and comprehensive volume.

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MAPPING COLLABORATION ACROSS INTERNATIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Sarah Semon, Danielle Lane and Phyllis Jones

ABSTRACT

While the chapters in this book present insights on collaborative instructional practices from a cross section of international perspectives, this introductory chapter frames a commentary for the following chapters. The work of instructional collaborative practices internationally shifts the responsibility from the deficits within the student to the instructional decisions made as teachers, as well as policies, procedures, and decisions made by educational institutions. We highlight influential scholars whose work can inform the inclusive and collaborative instructional practices occurring worldwide. As teacher educators, we conclude that a collaborative approach to instruction empowers teachers with the knowledge that they have the ability, given a little ingenuity, to include students regardless of the unique learning needs they may present. Further, we examine sociopolitical current trends which support and constrain the work of collaborative inclusive practice in the field. Finally, we provide an overview of the chapters to come, all of which provide evidence for the need to invest in and cultivate collaborative instructional practices for the benefit of all students.

Keywords: Collaboration; instruction; international inclusive education; professional development; in-service preparation; international perspective

Instructional Collaboration in International Inclusive Education Contexts
International Perspectives on Inclusive Education, Volume 17, 1–6
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ISSN: 1479-3636/doi:10.1108/S1479-363620210000017002

INTRODUCTION: A JOURNEY OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES AND INCLUSION AROUND THE GLOBE

Around the globe, there is growing consensus that services for students with disabilities should be as inclusive as possible and promote appropriately ambitious goals for all students. This global emphasis on inclusive education is highlighted in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Goal Four, which charges nations to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 12). For this to occur, effective instructional collaboration is required. The efforts and continued need for effective instructional collaboration in order to achieve inclusion for all are highlighted in the work of international scholars in this volume. Specifically, each scholar or scholar team highlights developments and experiences related to collaboration between stakeholders in their respective nations – each framed within their own particular sociohistorical context. Historically, the stories of inclusion and exclusion are similar across nations. However, as you will read in the following chapters, recent research, policy, and advocacy efforts provide glimpses of improved opportunity and development while recognizing the need for continued progress and change.

The history of services for students with disabilities is portrayed by [John-Stewart and Tavera-Salyutov \(2018\)](#), who describe phases of social exclusion, neglect, separation, integration, and, finally, full sociopolitical inclusion. These phases of service mirror the continuum of inclusive education services ([Florian, 2014](#)). Internationally, countries are at different phases in providing services for students with disabilities. Social exclusion, neglect, and separation are seen in locales throughout the world where services are provided in a variety of settings such as group homes, orphanages, separate classrooms, separate schools, institutions, etc. Integration occurs when students with "special educational needs" are educated in the mainstream classroom with some accommodations and an expectation that they will function within the unaltered classroom environment (UNESCO, 2017). This suggests that integration requires students to change their behavior in order to conform with the status quo of the school system. Less common, but more ideal locales promote sociopolitical inclusion where the school changes to meet the learning needs of the community of students through the strategies of universal design for learning (UDL) ([Meyer et al., 2014](#)) and culturally responsive pedagogy ([Castro-Villarreal et al., 2016](#)). In the latter two phases (integration and sociopolitical inclusion), the special and general education teachers work collaboratively to meet the learning needs of all students in the general education setting ([Barrett, 2011](#)).

The idea that people with impairments are human beings, with the same human dignity as all other human beings who are considered nonimpaired, gained momentum from the middle of the last century in the aftermath of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). This process was supported by important international conventions and the rise of the disability rights movement ([Rioux, 2007](#)). It promoted the view that society should integrate people with impairments into their communities socially, politically,

culturally, and economically, giving them a better possibility of living more fulfilled lives than they had during the long ages of predominant exclusion, neglect, and inhumane treatment (Baynton, 2013). It ultimately resulted, in 2006, in an international commitment to giving people with impairments full human rights protection – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – requires the full sociopolitical inclusion of people with impairments among the member states of the United Nations.

While conceptualizations of inclusion vary throughout the world, the foundational understanding of inclusion in this book is the view that inclusion is a civil right, a concept that applies to everyone and encourages a “...system of policy and practices that embraces diversity as a strength, creates a sense of belonging, equal membership, acceptance, and being valued, and involves fundamental civil rights” (Jones et al., 2011, p. 9). The chapters in this book reflect the current status of inclusion in each nation and tell the story of how collaborative practices help each nation’s quest for inclusive practices. Further, each chapter highlights the unique pairings of stakeholders, such as teachers, therapists, government officials, and university personnel who unite as advocates and models for collaboration that encourages change and propels inclusion forward.

We begin our international journey of collaboration and inclusion in the Pacific Region where Page, Serlow, Hubert, and O’Donnell-Ostini describe partnerships aimed at creating inclusive classrooms. Specifically, the chapter authors highlight the policy guiding inclusion in the Republic of Nauru and a series of professional development workshops for teachers on unpacking the policy directions, guidelines, and roles and responsibilities for teaching staff in Nauru. Further, they describe how university staff work collaboratively with Nauruan teachers in order to develop their ability to create and facilitate inclusive classrooms. The authors do so by embracing approaches that incorporate culturally responsive practices such as the framework of Ekereri (educational approaches that embody the core values of Nauruan culture).

In Chapter 3, our journey continues in Australia where we acknowledge that while most chapters in this book are focused on collaboration in the field, it is important to recognize and encourage the efforts of teacher educators who are doing the important work of preparing inclusive educators. In this chapter, Agbenyega and Tamakloe explain how they use the status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness (SCARF) model developed by David Rock, to build on existing knowledge of student teacher development. They do this by theorizing and offering practical ways to enact collaborative instructional practices through attention to the social and emotional aspects of collaboration. The chapter reports on student teachers’ experiences in a course unit on inclusive education in one Australian university that adopted a collaborative instructional practice, deepening their understanding and practice of inclusion. The student teachers’ collaborations with peers and teachers in the field are examined in terms of the SCARF framework, which describes five domains of human social relation and experience (Rock, 2008). The authors provide clear recommendations for teacher educators who are working to prepare collaborative inclusive educators.

Chapter 4 takes us to Saudi Arabia where Abu-Alghayth sheds light on aspects of instructional collaboration with the purpose of providing further understanding of how teachers collaborate and what hinders their collaboration in Saudi inclusive and mainstream schools. The author presents the voices of two special education teachers and two college professors while explaining and clarifying aspects of instructional collaboration. The chapter also outlines possible changes that may encourage teachers and support them in developing effective practices for instructional collaboration.

In Chapter 5, we travel to Germany where, like many nations around the globe, there is a long-standing dual system of general and special education. Changing attitudes and raising awareness about the benefits of collaboration may help to shift thinking about long-standing roles and settings for special educators' work. Framing their work as teacher educators and researchers toward this end, Neumann and Lütje-Klose provide insight into the historical background and legislative efforts designed to promote inclusive education in Germany. Understandably, the realities of classrooms do not always reflect the intent of the law, and as such, these authors contend that growing collaborative relationships is key to building parity and trust among special and general educators as well as transdisciplinary coalitions to support students in inclusive environments.

As we depart from Germany, we continue our international trek to Italy where Ghedin shares, in Chapter 6, a proposed framework that aligns with the Italian Ministry of Education's focus on ensuring a welcoming school for pupils with disabilities, strengthening the role of families and professional partners in the inclusion process, and involving, especially through on the job training, all school staff. In taking a macro approach to understanding collaboration that supports inclusion, the author suggests and highlights how the Educational Inclusive Ecosystem (EIESy) model transforms the fragmentation of education toward interconnected government in order to support more inclusive opportunities for student.

In Chapter 7, we move to the United States where Stewart and Lane take a uniquely critical and personal approach to coaching for inclusion. They share how their own experiences with discrimination and injustice inform their work preparing and coaching inclusive educators. They highlight and provide compelling microlevel vignettes grounded in research on the centrality of relationship-building and empathy work for establishing collaborative relationships with teachers and families. They also share firsthand knowledge of what it takes to change the mindsets of administrators district-wide. The chapter closes with a series of provocative questions applicable to the collaborative work of teacher educators, leaders, coaches, and teachers.

In Chapter 8 of this book, we light in Africa where Kungwane and Boaduo provide a distinct contribution to our understanding of collaboration to support inclusive education. Specifically, the authors describe the collaborations between occupational therapists and teachers in public schools in South Africa. In their discussions, they highlight the vital role of occupational therapists in supporting inclusive practices, the obstacles teachers and occupational therapists must overcome in order to collaborate, and the benefits of collaboration between

occupational therapists and teachers aimed at increasing inclusive experiences for students.

In Chapter 9, our exploration of collaboration and inclusion remains in Africa where Morai chronicles the developments toward inclusive educational systems in Lesotho, Africa, one of the 29 least economically developed countries in the world. Here, Morai shares the ongoing challenges facing the nation, while highlighting the good work that has been done so far to include children with disabilities in many schools. Recommendations for setting a strong interdisciplinary collaborative foundation for professionals, communities, and families are set forth.

Chapter 10 takes us to Cambodia where Pov describes inclusion in a nation with limited resources and capabilities. We learn about the legal requirements related to inclusion and to facilitating collaboration aimed at increasing inclusive practices. Despite limited literature on special education and inclusion in Cambodia, the author provides a history of special education and inclusion in the country. The chapter also outlines trends, challenges, and collaboration aimed at supporting inclusion across the nation.

In Chapter 11, we travel to Indonesia where Suhendri, a teacher trainer with the Ministry of Education, shares the history of inclusive education in Indonesia. While providing a detailed history of Indonesia's legislation, philosophy, and commitment, Suhendri points out realities and gaps that remain in terms of enacting and coordinating inclusive instruction, curriculum, and therapies to support students with special needs. Suhendri shares insights into what the nation might do to bring implementation efforts into alignment with the lofty legislation and initiatives of Indonesia.

We continue our international journey in Chapter 12 to Myanmar where Wai Oo describes inclusion and collaboration from the perspective of a graduate student specializing in inclusive education. In this chapter, Wai Oo provides an overview of inclusive education in Myanmar as well as the policies, agencies, and programs guiding inclusion throughout the nation. The chapter also outlines barriers in collaboration aimed at supporting inclusive education and the need for government agencies to work collaboratively in order to support a truly inclusive education system in Myanmar.

In Chapter 13, Kawai details Japan's current efforts to support students with disabilities in inclusive settings. The roles and responsibilities of special needs coordinators are contextualized within Japan's historical trends, legal foundations, and sociopolitical structures. The chapter highlights ways in which Japan creates existing special schools as centralized supports for teachers, families, and students in regular education settings. Drawbacks to this model are noted, and recommendations for moving forward are presented.

Our international journey concludes in Chapter 14 where Basister and Valenzuela share a model of collaboration to support inclusive practices in the Philippines. Basister and Valenzuela's proposed model for collaboration highlights stakeholders' experiences, accomplishments, issues, and challenges in providing inclusive education. In addition to the proposed model, the chapter

includes a critical look at the impact of existing policies, culture, and practices on the collaborations of professionals and other stakeholders of inclusive education.

EMBARKING ON A JOURNEY OF COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES AND INCLUSION AROUND THE GLOBE

When you turn this page, you will embark on a 13 chapter excursion around the world. At the start of each chapter, you will be introduced to a new nation, a new context, a new culture, and a new view on instructional collaboration and inclusion. You will read about barriers and triumphs that stakeholders around the world experience and grapple with on a regular basis, in the name of inclusion for *all*. As you read each chapter and turn each page, we, the editors, encourage you to consider your own context and how these chapters and the lessons you learn can be applied to your unique setting. Most importantly, we ask that with each context, each barrier, and each success, you see an opportunity to do and be better because *every* student deserves our best.

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CREATING INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS IN THE PACIFIC REGION: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TEACHERS IN THE REPUBLIC OF NAURU TO DEVELOP INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education can be viewed as an ongoing active process or journey that is impacted by changes in policy, practices, and values (Anderson & Boyle, 2020). This “journey toward inclusion” is not always an easy undertaking, but rather a progression that requires modification to systems, structures, and functioning in schools. Nauru, a small Pacific republic situated in the Micronesian central Pacific Ocean, has worked in partnership with Australian education providers since 2011 to improve educational learning experiences for all Nauruan students. More recently, initiatives by the Nauru Government resulted in the commissioning of a national project to develop a Nauru policy on inclusive education and also to deliver professional development for teachers that would be needed to support inclusion. Inclusive education staff at the University of England, Australia, guided the development of the project which culminated in the Nauru Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines (2017) (Page, 2018). From this policy, a series of workshops were delivered on unpacking the policy directions, guidelines, and roles and responsibilities for teaching staff in Nauru. This chapter describes the university staff who are

working in collaboration with Nauruan teachers in order to develop their capacity to create inclusive classrooms. In doing so, we embraced approaches that incorporated culturally responsive practices into our work, using the framework of Ekereri (educational approaches that embody the core values of Nauruan culture) into our practices. With this chapter, we hope to further the understanding of how contextual factors influence the collaboration and implementation of educational partnerships between culturally distinctive groups of people.

Keywords: Partnership; Nauru; cultural context; collaboration; professional development; inclusive education policy

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education in the greater Pacific region, and as it is globally, is grounded in the United Nations (UN) Convention (United Nations, 1989), the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006). Internationally, the UN has continued to press for all government bodies to ensure an inclusive education system for children at any level of their educational attainment. These efforts led to the Incheon Declaration which also includes a framework for the provision of an action plan for inclusive education (UNESCO, 2016). Nations in the Pacific have responded to these initiatives for inclusive education, especially for those students who have disabilities (Sharma et al., 2016; Tones et al., 2017). These wider Pacific goals include the UN Sustainable Goals 2030 (United Nations, 2015), which among them, addresses inclusive and equitable education.

New educational processes, such as those initiated in the Pacific region in inclusive education, are impacted by ongoing changes in policy, practices, and values. This chapter focuses on the “journey toward inclusive education” in the small Pacific state of Nauru. With 11,347 residents, Nauru (Fig. 1) is the smallest state in the South Pacific and the third smallest state by area in the world, at 21 square kilometers. Nauru gained independence from Australian administration in 1968, although it remains reliant on Australian aid (Williams & Macdonald, 1985). Ongoing support remains and includes commitments such as the Aid Investment Plan (DFAT, 2015). Over the last 10 years, partnership priorities between Australia and Nauru have focused on improving the learning experiences for Nauruan students (Rose et al., 2018). One example of this ongoing support is a working partnership, which began in 2011, with the Australian education provider and the University of New England with the aim to improve the educational learning experiences for all Nauruan students.

In 2015, initiatives by the Nauru Government resulted in the establishment of a national project to develop a Nauru policy in inclusive education and also to deliver professional development and training on inclusive education practices for teachers that would be needed to support inclusion. Inclusive education staff at the University of England, Australia, guided the structure and content of the