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## Review of *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education: An Administrator's Guide to Building Inclusive Schools*

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### Abstract

This is a review of Maggin and Hughes' (2020) *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education: An Administrator's Guide to Building Inclusive Schools*. This review contains a brief summary of each chapter, along with a review of the book.

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**Review of *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education: An Administrator's Guide to Building Inclusive Schools***

By: Daniel M. Maggin and Marie Tejero Hughes (Eds.), 2020, Hardcover Edition, 196 pages, ISBN 9780367406912.

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The need to promote success and equity in schooling seems to be the reason that there has been growing interest over disability studies in education. Inclusion of disability studies in special education teacher preparation programs creates awareness of diverse needs among learners with disabilities. It changes the perception of disability from deficit while encouraging teachers and scholars to resist the dominant discourses of normalcy (Ashby, 2012). At the same time, inclusion of disability studies in teacher preparation and preservice helps teachers understand the role of incrementalists and reconceptualists in special education. Baglieri et al. (2011) differentiated between these two stating, "Incrementalists believe special education prepares students to adapt for the postschool world. Reconceptualists seek the creation of a caring society that accepts human differences without labeling, hence stigmatizing, them" (p. 268). This idea takes us back to the early 1990s, where elementary and special education teacher preparation programs were established to promote excellence and equity in schooling (Ashby, 2012). There is a need to empower teachers through in-service training on emerging issues in education to facilitate their performing quasi-administrative functions in inclusive schools. This concept is essential to implementing changes necessary for instructional reforms to address diverse needs of learners in schools (Ashby, 2012). This review of *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education: An Administrator's Guide to Building Inclusive Schools* (Maggin & Hughes, 2020) offers more insight into developing teachers in special education for leadership roles in inclusive schools that could lead to better educational outcomes. *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* guides how teachers can be effective leaders in special education. This book's chapters are prepared and written by multiple authors with different expertise and experience. The editors of this book are Maggin and Hughes. At the time this review was written, Maggin is serving as an associate professor of special education at the University of Illinois in Chicago, where he teaches graduate courses in behavioral intervention. Likewise, Hughes is a professor of special education at the University of Illinois in Chicago. She teaches graduate courses in literacy. This review will begin with a summary of the contents of each chapter and then discuss the significance and contributions of this work.

The book breaks down the kinds of skills school leaders should have in order to create a more inclusive and successful community in schools. It outlines how effective leadership among school administrators can be useful in addressing the present gap in unmet educational needs among learners with disabilities in inclusive schools. The purpose of this book is to promote the development of better inclusive schools by giving school administrators practical recommendations. The book has eight chapters presented in a narrative format. In the first chapter, the authors (Kumm et al.) focus on the teacher preparation. This chapter outlines the role of teacher preparation in impacting exceptional skills among teacher leaders. It provides a detailed discussion of teacher orientation programs and professional development opportunities. School administrators are identified as the primary tools for teacher empowerment because they

are responsible for implementation of school-wide initiatives and developing school culture and climate.

In chapter two, the authors (Passmore et al.) discuss the core aspects of teacher leadership. The chapter outlines inherent qualities of special educators. These qualities make teachers of special education critical contributors to the school leadership and the development of a favorable learning environment in inclusive schools. Additionally, this chapter outlines the role of teacher leadership in special education and offers solutions to challenges facing teacher leaders in academic, behavioral, and collaborative practices. In the third chapter, the authors (Zarate et al.) explain how data use is significant in improving outcomes throughout all areas of school improvement. School administrators are encouraged to develop special education leaders within schools in order to foster collaboration and improve learning. This chapter connects to chapter four, where the chapter authors (Tobon et al.) discuss the concept of Data-Based Individualization (DBI) as the basis of decision making in school leadership. In chapter four, Tobon et al. provide an in-depth introduction to the DBI framework, components of the DBI framework, and how schools could use such data to improve the learning outcomes in inclusive classes.

Chapter five outlines the components of instructional expertise. It defines instructional expertise under declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge. The authors (Barcus & Moles) expand the components of instructional expertise in chapter six by discussing in detail the concept of adaptive expertise. Additionally, the authors of chapter six (Moles & Barcus) outline training needs for special educators that cultivate adaptive expertise and unique skills necessary for school-wide initiatives to succeed. This chapter is connected to chapter seven, where the topic of collaboration is discussed in detail. The chapter seven authors, Posey et al., explain how school administrators can take advantage of special educators in supporting student outcomes and community relations by utilizing them as leaders of collaboration in teamwork processes. The authors Dorsey and Zarate conclude the book with chapter eight on advocacy. The chapter on advocacy provides a historical overview of special education advocacy to serve as an explanation of what is happening in the present-day special education. Additionally, the role of advocacy in protecting educational rights for children with disabilities in the United States is outlined. It seems that the purpose of this chapter is to empower educators and parents in advocating for rights among American children with disabilities by defining the key competencies of effective advocacy.

This book has several target audiences. These include school administrators, teacher educators, teachers of special education/teacher candidates, curriculum developers, and parents. It guides school administrators by outlining their supervisory roles in ensuring students with disabilities get the support they need to attain good academic outcomes like other learners. At the same time, it helps teacher educators understand differentiation needs among the students with disabilities. *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* is useful to special education teachers because it guides how special education teachers/special education teacher candidates should relate with students with disabilities. Additionally, this book may be useful to curriculum developers because it outlines considerations in teacher education necessary for the success of inclusive education. This may be useful in developing a curriculum that takes care of the needs of the teachers and learners with disabilities. Furthermore, the book acknowledges the central role played by parents hence raises the need for special education educators in engaging parents to help them understand the unique needs of every learner.

*Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* is situated in the field of special education, where most of the critical aspects of developing teacher leaders in special education were discussed. It is evident across the eight chapters of this book is that special education needs have not been satisfactorily met in most inclusive schools. For this reason, there is a need to put more emphasis on strategies that can attain equity in terms of learning outcomes. However, some critical areas were not exhaustively discussed in the book. For instance, leadership needed in specific learning disabilities in order to promote access, success, and equity in inclusive schools are missing. Other elements missing in the book comprise the development of communication and social skills within a language-rich environment as well as parent communication and staff collaboration in promoting inclusivity in learning institutions. These elements are essential because they are an excellent foundation for impacting leadership skills.

While most aspects of this book are exhaustively discussed, less emphasis was put on trending issues related to teacher leadership. For example, the need for early intervention when initial signs of disability begin to manifest is mentioned, but interventions for older students are not included. Likewise, little about technology as a trending issue in the present-day leadership in education is mentioned despite its contribution to the progressive success of learners with disabilities through assistive technology (Ahmad, 2015). Other issues overlooked in this book concerning teacher leadership include the role of transitional planning, teacher licensure, and placement.

*Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* is an excellent resource to the field of special education because it draws connections between theory and practice in the inclusive classroom. The mentoring of special education teachers through induction and professional development training helps refine and hone leadership skills developed earlier. This book is useful, helping explain the paths to special education leadership, such as mentoring other teachers and paraprofessionals, supporting students during transitions, advocating for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms, and affecting school-wide changes. At the same time, this book serves as a guide on how to improve learning for all students because it outlines the importance of decision making based on existing evidence. As a result, it helps us see the scientific aspect of teacher leadership that ensures every student gets a quality education. Moreover, this book situates special educators as teacher leaders in inclusive schools. Some of the primary leadership roles of special educators discussed in the book include developing individual student programs, coordinating program implementation across many students, and directing the work of paraprofessionals. The use of literary criticism in the book methodology ensures accurate and orderly presentation of facts outlined by the authors.

Furthermore, *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* is significant to society because it focuses on the needs of all stakeholders' involved with special education. The book acknowledges the central role played by parents and raises the need for special educators in engaging parents to understand the unique needs of every learner. Simultaneously, the emphasis on the need for inclusion helps position special educators as leaders in differentiation and establishing inclusive practices and school culture. *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* also serves as a guide to school administrators by outlining their facilitation and supervisory roles in ensuring students with disabilities are accorded the necessary supports. Additionally, the book outlines the strategies of addressing various needs of learners with disabilities in inclusive schools in order to attain social justice making it significant for teachers. In doing so, this book helps uncover inequalities that exist in inclusive schools, such as

discrimination in access to learning resources and the role of the teacher leadership in finding solutions.

Finally, *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education* offers important insight into critical issues that go on every day in inclusive schools. Maggin and Hughes are active and well-known scholars for their published works on teacher leadership, leading projects related to teacher leadership in the United States and having worked together as professors at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Additionally, the contribution of the authors in every chapter is worth acknowledging because the information presented is accurate, objective, and useful to the intended audience. The content of the book reflects the great scholarly experience and exemplary academic attainment among the authors. *Developing Teacher Leaders in Special Education: An Administrator's Guide to Building Inclusive Schools* is an excellent resource for developing better leaders in special education.

### Author Note

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