I. The History of Education

F. The History and Philosophy of Inclusion

1970s: Mainstreaming Legislation

CATHY HAMILTON:

I’m Cathy Hamilton, and I came to the project, Standards-Based Instruction for All Learners, over a decade ago actually. It has a new name, but its goal has not changed.

In approximately 1993, the state of Ohio brought a gentleman named Dave Rothstetter to our state. Dave has been one of the original authors of the legislation that would bring mainstreaming to children with disability. What mainstreaming refers to is that practice of allowing children with disability to come out of segregated classrooms and to actually go into general education classrooms.

It was a good idea. As Dave Rothstetter pointed out to us, it did, however, have some flaws that were unanticipated. Dave had been one of the writers on that early legislation, and when he came to us in the early 1990s, he was not pleased with what had happened with the legislation of the early 1970s.

That mainstreaming legislation was supposed to offer children with disability an opportunity to have an equitable curriculum. Unfortunately, that legislation came without required training for educators. If an educator came into the profession as I did in the early 1970s, it was quite possible that you would have absolutely no class work that dealt with children with disability.
As I came into my classroom, my general education classroom, I had not been prepared to have children in my room who had disability. It was even worse than that. Not only had I not been prepared, I’d been told not to expect those children; that someone else would be their teacher; that someone else would be someone who was certificated, who was credentialed in special education issues. I also was told I would not deal with the other end of the spectrum – someone else, someone certificated in giftedness would teach those kids who were on that end of the spectrum. I and millions of other teachers like I were summoned to teach that big average.

With that early 1970s legislation, students with identified disabilities were to still have the help of those certificated special ed teachers, but they were also to be offered an opportunity to go into general ed rooms. Not receiving training with that, emotion met many of those kids – emotion from teachers. Am I angry that students are coming into me, and I have not been trained? Am I scared? Am I scared that I might not give them the right kind of education or that I might somehow exacerbate their disability? Frustration. It was a tremendous decade around emotion.

As we went through that particular period, we had some students who actually were sent back to segregated rooms. Generally, where we sent those mainstreamed kids was to what we called specials – to music classes, to physical education classes, to recess and to lunch. We sent out children with disability to the classroom environments that had the least structure. Many of them could not handle that piece.

That particular practice was done because there was a thinking that children with disability would not be able to handle the rigor of an academic class – a science, a mathematics, a language arts, a social studies

1990s: Classroom Inclusion

CATHY HAMILTON:
With about 15 years of research behind them, policymakers, special educators, decided in the early 1990s that the great mainstreaming experiment had been a very costly venture that had not rendered what we had hoped would happen; that actually students had not been remediated who had been sent to segregated and some mainstreaming but, actually, in some cases, they had fallen further behind.

With that particular finding, as Dave Rothstetter pointed out to us, new legislation came to us in the 1990s. As Dave Rothstetter came to the state of Ohio to share with us the findings that would lead to new legislation in the 1990s, new legislation that would call not for mainstreaming, not for visiting, but actually for full inclusion into our classrooms.

Dave Rosthetter pointed out some very frightening data. For example, he said to us—those of us who were, in my case, a high school principal during that time—he told us that of the students on IEPs who came into our schools and stayed with us, did not dropout, continued to do their best, give us their best effort, that those students graduating on IEPs – Individualized Education Plans – those students, less than 20 percent of them, were having what you and I would call a normal life.

I sat amazed as I heard him in the very first audience where I would meet Dave Rothstetter. Amazed, because I had come to this particular meeting as a high school principal – a high school that serves 68 percent children in poverty and had over 200 kids carrying an IEP. Those students mattered very much to me; and as I listened to Dave Rothstetter say that the chances were that only 20 percent of them would have some kind of normalcy, meaning a job, a home, friends, family, I call that failure. I did not want that to be true of the students that I principled.
But I heard him with another ear as well. I, at that point in time in the early 1990s, was mother to a 17-year-old daughter who had been identified with multiple disabilities. We had done everything the school system had asked. We had met for many, many hours. We had come in the hopes that she would have some kind of normalcy in her life.

As I listened to Dave Rothstetter, I began to wonder if we had our trust in a paradigm that was going to not only disserve students I principaled, but a disservice to a student who lives in my own household.

_Journey to Standards-Based Instruction_

CATHY HAMILTON:

I was challenged by Dave Rothstetter to look at the research, to go more deeply, to seek out what are possibilities that could mean a deeper kind of life for these kids.

I went back, shared that information with my high school staff and asked simply this question: Are we playing any part in the sad life of these kids? Are we, in our limitations, becoming their limits? As I spoke with my staff, a good group of people, we began to think differently about the students and to ask ourselves: Are we challenging them to the extent that we ought to, or are we settling for stereotypes and for less information than we had gathered on other students in our building?

With that particular kind of thinking, we began a journey that would lead us to become one of the 16 high schools in the nation that John Goodlad would honor as being research driven on behalf of all children. That particular honor came at the very same time that the Ohio Department of Exceptional Children asked me to join the committee that would, in the future, very recent future, begin a new program that we would call Standards-Based Instruction for All Learners: A Treasure Chest of Strategy.
This particular work has evolved from those early days when we initially began to inform principals as to what their role would be if, indeed, they were to become an inclusive environment.

In the beginning, we sought to bring principals only to those meetings, believing that if the leadership had a deep understanding of his or her role in making the lives of these children fuller, then they would be able to better assist those teachers who, given support, would want to go in that same direction.

That particular program was called APEX. Within three years of that program, we had moved to another program called Leadership for Results. In that particular program, we had an evolution occur. You see, we had realized that while our initial offering had been to special education students, students who had been identified with disability that was hampering learning—as we began at that point, it became very obvious to us that while we needed to certainly stay focused on that particular child, who through regulations and even laws had been denied equitable education, we also had to be, if we were indeed ethical, aware that there were students sitting in classrooms who did not have an IEP but who desperately needed to have authentic strategy around their learning and who needed to have performance assessments that would allow them to show what they knew and could do, even if they did not have traditional methods of doing so.

We also were very much aware that there were students in our classrooms who had gifted status, who could very easily get lost in the mix.

And, so, our Leadership for Results began to evolve into a program that would reach out to all learners. As we began the new program—the one that you will become more and more familiar with as you work through the course called Treasure Chest—this particular course reaches out to all learners, recognizing that on any given day a child
may have a challenge that if we do not recognize that, then our limits will become his limits.

**Inclusion**

CATHY HAMILTON:

When we talk about the word inclusion, it causes a great deal of emotion for some folks. Of course, there are those of us who believe that segregated education always brings us at some point a kind of shame and, therefore, we’re extraordinarily excited that we would become inclusive.

At the same time, again, a federal law came to us without a mandate for training and, so we, in some ways, relive the exact same history of that early, early 1970s legislation that called for us to mainstream without having any specific training to make that happen.

When we talk about inclusion, I have to sadly tell you that I’ve been in some places where inclusion that pull all kids out of segregated rooms and put them in a general education room and voila, we have inclusion. Actually, it’s not quite that simple.

When we have students who have for sometimes three and four and five years experienced absolutely nothing but segregated environments, the concept of inclusion can be very frightening.

Let me explain what I mean about a segregated environment. Until the 1990s, it was a norm that a child who carried an IEP label, that youngster would come into school; perhaps move into a general education homeroom, be there for 15, 20 minutes; and then he would move away from the general population into a classroom that would range between 4 and 12 people. A teacher who may serve that student for as much as three or four years because she would travel for all of those grades would actually be with that
student all day long with the exception of a mainstream class here or a mainstream class there. In some scenarios, a student would be deemed incapable of being mainstreamed at all, so he would spend his entire day with one teacher.

As we moved into the concept of inclusion, the thinking was totally different. In our heads and in our hearts we were to start with the concept that you would spend the day with the general education population; that you would be in those classes with students who were your same age, typical peer. That did not mean that a student would not need to be pulled out for varieties of different kinds of services. Sometimes it would be a discreet service like speech therapy or occupational therapy.

However, some schools that really embraced the concept of inclusion actually created environments that allowed some of those therapies to occur right in the general education room.

The fear for me as a former teacher, as a principal and always as a mom is that without giving critical thinking to this that we may actually do more harm than good, and that certainly would be not what these children deserve.

As we look at inclusion, the concept is one of being rather than doing. I’ll honestly tell you that when people tell me that they doing inclusion, in my heart, I doubt it. Inclusion is not about doing; inclusion is about being. Inclusion is about believing that children have a right to be a part of the natural community, and that in that presence people will obviously see disability that may, in some cases, cause them to be awkward, either in speech or in act. But at the same time, it will also allow them to be seen in their times of funny, in their times of curiosity, in their times of brilliance; and they have those moments too.
As we look at the concept of inclusion, the greatest fear that I have as a professional is that in our lack of training our limitations will become theirs. It is imperative that if we would do right things by all children, those with identified disability and those with needs, whether they’re formally identified or not, then we are going to have to have a mode of continuous learning ourselves. We’re going to have to seek out best strategies, ways of meeting needs of children that, perhaps, we would have never imagined in our earlier careers that we would ever be touching.

Assessment and Strategies

CATHY HAMILTON:

As we work through the concepts of this particular course, assessment, for example, do we have the capacity to assess in a way that we weren’t trained to assess. Am I so married to paper and pen tests that I cannot understand performance tests as being as valuable and as authentic as a paper and pen test?

We have some children coming to us who if we demand paper and pen tests, those students can never get into the game.

At the same time, when we look at strategies, we have a plethora of strategies that were absolutely not available to us when I began my career 30 years ago. If ever there was a profession that has been soaring in knowledge, it is the profession of education. As we have learned more about how the brain functions, our own strategies come into question almost as quickly as they come into print.

Research

CATHY HAMILTON:

We really, really as we look out at our best practices have to be very grateful to some giants who are there for us. From the early giants of Bloom, for example,
Benjamin Bloom’s work around taxonomy, in which he said over 50 years ago, “If you want children to critically think, let them practice.”

Sadly, we have some research that says when, in our profession, we think a child is not bright, we often do not allow that child to move up Bloom’s Taxonomy and, instead, keep that child in the world of knowledge-level questions. It’s hard to grow when we do not have those kinds of opportunities.

We have the giant work of TESA, Rosenthal’s great work—Teacher Expectation/Student Achievement. This body of work, first brought to us in 1965, and as recently as a few weeks ago, the prominent first page of some of our educational journals. This particular work was embarrassing and powerful. In this work, Rosenthal’s research has clearly said that when we in our education field believe children are bright, we hold them to higher standards, we hold them to higher expectations and, yes, we give them more attention.

That particular body of work is huge as we begin the task of filling in gaps for children who come to us so many times without input strategies; input strategies that they need in order to get into the academic game of today. The TESA, Teacher Expectation/Student Achievement, this particular work begs educators to build relationships with kids so that those students will have hope that they too can attain high standards in academics.

Of course, Madeline Hunter’s work, which is being reissued this year, came to us full force in the 1970s and 1980s. What Madeline Hunter said very clearly, “If it can be taught, it can be learned.”

I’ll never forget when I first met personally Madeline Hunter. I was struggling with my own daughter. She was a fourth grader, and I had been told by her teachers that
she could not make change for a dollar. There Madeline Hunter was saying on the dais, “If it can be taught, it can be learned.” With the pomp and circumstance of a desperate mom, I walked up to an international researcher and I said, Doctor Hunter, they tell me my fourth grader cannot make change from a dollar.” I was amazed. For the first time in a long time I was not met with the response, “What is her disability?” Instead, the great Madeline Hunter looked at me and said, “What coin do they start with?” In other words, Madeline Hunter did not blame the victim. She said, “What strategy are you using to teach this new skill.” In two days, my daughter was making change from a dollar.

That research altered my life both personally and professionally when she challenged us to critically think about how we approach children when we wanted to take new learning to them. I will never forget she made the general statement: There is one thing that a master teacher always does – think, think. It was a powerful lesson for those of us who sat in her presence.

It is with great enthusiasm that I hear today those three giants of research being embraced by today’s researchers – by Robert Marzano, by Rick DeFour, by Rick Stiggins, by Grant Wiggins, Jay McTighe. These people, with new research, amen that old research.

I think this is good news, good news for today’s educators. We don’t have to learn everything anew. What we have to do is remember the good as the new comes in front of us.

**Labeling is Disabling**

CATHY HAMILTON:

As we begin the journey toward inclusive environments in our schools, it is critical that we do some reflection on exactly what does this mean.
I do know from the work of Ruby Payne, who is an international researcher around issues of poverty, that 85 to 90 percent of all students on IEPs in the nation are also children from generational poverty. I will tell you very clearly that I do not believe for a moment that all of those children are clinically disabled. Actually, they’re culturally and linguistically different and very easy to place.

It’s very important for us to have that conversation because, quite frankly, labeling is disabling. As I think about some of the labels we have placed on children in the last 30 years—mentally retarded, cognitively delayed, severe behavior handicapped, emotionally disturbed—those labels precede the children before they walk into that classroom. And those of us who have not a deeper understanding of those labels can, quite frankly, be put off by them. Labeling is disabling.

One of the first things we did in a high school was move the labels off our teachers. We found that if we did not refer to our teachers as learning disability teachers or cognitively delayed teachers that the students they served escaped, to some degree, the label as well. It’s a very important concept for us to give thought to.

I’ve actually, in my career as an administrator, have seen students linger behind until the bell rang so that kids did not see them walk into segregated environments. When we would talk about that, the students would say, I don’t like my friends thinking I’m stupid. Very interesting concept. We intended those rooms to be places where cognition could grow, not where kids would get reputations for not being bright. It was well-intentioned; it simply didn’t work.

Our hope today, as we move into another construct, is that we’ll have more forethought as we move these children along our plan.
As we talk about labeling being disabling, I remember that SBH label in particular. SBH, the official meaning, was severe behavior handicapped. I gave it a new name as principal of my high school. I called it severely broken hearted.

As I read the folders of my children who had come to us labeled severe behavior handicapped, my heart broke for each one. I said to myself, I wonder how my biological children would behave if, indeed, they had had such atrocious lifestyles. It was sad for me as I looked at that.

Then I remembered back a tamer story when I was, as a mother, attending an IEP—Individual Education Plan—meeting. My own daughter was being – a plan was being made for her. In that particular meeting, the professionals were trying to determine what label we would ultimately assign to her, a requirement of bureaucracy of our government.

It was interesting. When my daughter, who has oral praxia, had been given an IQ test, she had been given the Stanford-Binet, a very common test given in public schools. It is also language based. My daughter has an oral praxia, a severe language impairment. She scored a 39.

At that particular time, I was not as versed in the IQ tests as I would become, but I questioned that my daughter’s IQ was actually that low. I asked for another kind of testing, and she was administered the Lighter International. It’s a test given to deaf mutes. On that particular test, she scored a 94. The 39 would make her soundly mentally retarded. The 94 would put her in learning disability.

As I listened to colleagues talk about my daughter, they said, Well, we can also call her speech impaired because of the oral praxia, and then there is that sensory disintegration. She’ll need orthopedic work. They couldn’t figure out what to call her,
and I was becoming exasperated. I remember saying, You know, if I can get her to bite somebody, we’ll call her SBH, and we’ll have the entire menu.

It wasn’t funny then; it’s not funny now. But my point was well taken. At home, we call our daughter Sara.

Adaptations and Equity

CATHY HAMILTON:

One of the things that I find interesting, however, is that sometimes people see the difference and act as though it makes no difference. For example, I’ve had people say to me, Is it fair for a child with disability to get an A on a report card. I mean, she couldn’t get an A if she weren’t getting some adaptation or getting some special help. That’s an interesting thought for me. As I, who sometimes wear glasses, would I say, Is it fair for people to be allowed to drive who wear glasses when they couldn’t if they didn’t have those glasses.

When we talk about adaptations, it is critical that we do two things. One, that we recognize that people who have identified disabilities do have a difference; and that difference makes a difference. In another words, to acknowledge that I have a disability, I’m going to resent that I have an adaptation truly begs the question. Of course, I’m going to need some assistance; but that assistance should be the least amount I need in order to perform. I should not be made to be more disabled than I am and, quite frankly, in our lack of training, we sometime moved into learned helplessness, giving students far more accommodation than they needed or wanted.

As we work with our students, what we want to do is dignify them to the degree that they do what they can do, being held to high expectations, simply differentiating our strategies as we take them on the journey.
The newest legislation, No Child Left Behind, requires that every child be expected to approach the same standards, not necessarily through the same strategy. But we want our students to have an equitable education. Without equity, those students are going to have a far different qualities in their adult lives than they could possibly hope for if they do not get that equity. Without an equitable education, students find themselves jobless, homeless and, in many instances, faced with institutionalization of one kind or another.

Create a Safe and Welcoming Environment

CATHY HAMILTON:

As we look at this piece, we want our students to feel physically safe – not just special ed students, but students across the board. That is a challenge facing America’s educators today. How do we create an environment in our schools where students feel physically safe? Students tell us they’re not afraid that someone from the outside is going to hurt them. They’re more afraid of bullying from their very own peers.

A second thing Feuerstein called on us to do is to make children feel welcome; to make children feel invited. I have some fear around this particular one because as I’ve traveled the country with some of my own education work, I hear people say, We would have met the state report card standard if that one special ed child had passed the test. It’s pretty easy to feel unwelcome when you’re labeled as “the reason” a school gets a bad report.

Actually, I doubt seriously that one child there is all that guilty. We want children to feel like they are welcome, that they are wanted and that if they were absent we would be less without them.
Reuven Feuerstein said in 1948 that if they want children to critically think they must first feel safe, they must first feel welcome. And he said when we pull those two off we’ ll be able to do the third component – that is master teach.

Master Teach

CATHY HAMILTON:

Master teach. I’ m not talking about the certification or master degree. I’ m talking about that teacher who remembers why he or she came into the field so that we are empowered to impact the lives of children, any child who is assigned to us; and that in that impact, we are going to reach out with strategies, not only around content, but around pedagogy.

How do I teach? As a classroom teacher, language arts, that was my field, I remember a student coming into my classroom; and that student relied on a voice board for her speech. Without that machine, she would have had no voice. I remember when I first saw her I thought this is really going to impact how I teach. Extemporaneous speaking will not be her forte. I would have to wait for her to type her words. But somehow as we in that class learned to accommodate her needs, we grew in our respect for her effort; and as we began to count our own blessings, we could see the beauty in her as we waited for her next word of wisdom.

IQ

CATHY HAMILTON:

As we as educators embrace our authority in terms of what we can take to a child’s life, there is an empowerment that we have yet to claim. With the work of Robert Marzano, we have actually been told we can grow an IQ.

Robert Marzano is not the first one to say it; it’s just the first lay research that an educator has very, very handy in a very small book. Robert Marzano says in his book
What Works in Schools that with engaged and interesting classroom performance, a youngster’s IQ can actually grow. What a phenomenon.

I had first heard this about 20 years ago when I was talking with neurologists around that possibility that an IQ could, indeed, grow. Interesting, I thought. I’d been told when I was a new teacher that the IQ was static – what you have is what you have, maybe changing 5 points this way or that but in no significant way.

I was very interested in this because, as a mother, I was concerned about what my daughter’s education would hold if her IQ, indeed, were to remain static.

As I worked through this on personal levels, it was with delight that I saw that in professional journals this was, indeed, beginning to become clearer for us; and if we engaged our students in critical thinking that we could actually take those children on a higher journey academically and intellectually.

Well, as a high school principal, my opportunity to check this particular theory came when 14 students showed up in my freshman class all carrying MR labels – mental retardation. I was curious about that, and I took the 14 folders of my students and went into deep study of each folder. It was with sadness that I recognized that of the 14 who now carried mental retardation labels, 9 of those students had begun their career in special-edness as learning disability. One cannot have a label of learning disability without at least an average IQ. Nine of the 14 had seen their IQ drop as they journeyed through public education.

We are powerful people one way or the other.

Touch the Future

CATHY HAMILTON:
A few years back, a famous teacher, Christa McAuliffe, said, “I touch the future. I teach.” Those of us in education took great pride as our astronaut teacher showcased our profession. What Christa McAuliffe did is forever say to each one of us who calls ourselves teacher that we have authority over the lives of children and the future they hold.

As we embrace new ways of thinking around our at-risk children—and quite frankly, on any given day, any child is at risk—as we face that empowerment on our part, it behooves each one of us to give our extraordinary best to be open always to new learnings and to collaborate with people, to come out of our own isolation and to seek other colleagues as we begin to be more in the lives of children who, once upon a time, were down the hall, in another room, taught by someone else.