INSTRUCTIONAL COLLABORATION IN INTERNATIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION CONTEXTS
INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Series Editor: Chris Forlin

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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 lesson 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*
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.