

## How Did We Get Here and Where Are We Going?

Osgood, R. (2005). *The History of Inclusion in the United States*. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press. 226 pages. \$55.

The “inclusion movement” has had a profound impact on how educators think about education for students with disabilities. Inclusion is therefore a topic that must be addressed in any upper-level undergraduate/introductory graduate course sequence in Special Education. If I were preparing such a course, I might consider including (pun intended) *The History of Inclusion in the United States* by Osgood (2005) as part of the required readings.

This relatively brief volume (about 200 pages) provides a general overview of themes, issues, and perspectives that have shaped changes in special education, particularly in the last 40 years. *The History of Inclusion in the United States* structures its narrative sequentially, beginning with precursors to special education in the early to mid 20th century and on through the turn of the millennium. Its strength is not as a reference book, where readers can find answers to specific questions. It is also not a literature review that presents empirical evidence for or against inclusion. This book must be read holistically to glean its main intent: to present the evolution of major ideas regarding special education and inclusion.

A more appropriate title for this volume might be *The History of Commentary on Inclusion*. There are extensive excerpts from vocal scholars in the field, with many sections centered around seminal works from authors such as Elise Martens, Lloyd Dunn, and Susan and William Stainback. Although the intermittent direct quotes throughout the volume can be distracting, the compiled commentary shows how the language and assumptions regarding inclusion was presented through the decades.

On the whole, Dr. Osgood presents the commentary without his own interpretation and analysis (this

is only explicit at the end). Because this volume should raise more questions than answers, *The History of Inclusion in the United States* could provide a springboard for critical analysis of why inclusion is supported or criticized. Important discussion points might include: What evidence is there that inclusion supports desired outcomes for students with disabilities? How do educators look at the specific characteristics of each child to determine how to best provide necessary services? How does No Child Left Behind affect how we think about inclusive practice? How do we support general education teachers in providing appropriate education for integrated students?

For educators of deaf and hard-of-hearing students, two important points have been raised in Chapter 7—Resistance to Integration: Giftedness and Deafness. The first is that students who are deaf are the only group that is referred to as having a community identity. The second important point is that residential schools remain as one of the only strictly separate educational settings in a “continuum of services.” Students in Special Education would benefit from a discussion of how the broad inclusion movement interacts with different philosophies of how best to educate students who are deaf.

In conclusion, *The History of Inclusion in the United States* challenges readers to assess their assumptions and rationale on how to educate students with disabilities. Students and faculty might benefit from a discussion of philosophical viewpoints behind this volume and its implication for future education reform.

Stephanie W. Cawthon  
Walden University