

# **Classroom management texts: a study in the representation and misrepresentation of students with disabilities**

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This paper suggests ways in which to look at textbooks in terms of how they socially construct students with disabilities who receive special education services. Although students with developmental disabilities were not included in most of these texts, the treatment of students with mild disabilities revealed varied attitudes towards disability. Competence-oriented interpretations of atypical classroom behaviours can promote or reveal student engagement, while deficit-orientated interpretations can obscure student competence and engagement. The possible impact of misrepresentations of students with disabilities on pre-service teachers' attitudes and practice suggests ways to revise textbooks to be competence-oriented and inclusive. It is recommended that pre-service teachers learn to evaluate management suggestions and approaches in terms of their impact on all their students.

## **Introduction**

Teachers of learning disabled or emotionally-disturbed kids must be willing to give and give and give, and in return receive frustration, criticism, defeat, and failure ... in short, these children can be a constant drain, depleting your energy reserves.

(Curwin & Mendler, 1999, p. 184)

This passage from *Discipline with Dignity* (1999) disturbed me as I was reviewing the book for use in a special education course called Classroom Management. I was searching for texts that applied to students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms and became concerned about what these texts would convey to pre-service teachers about disability. I began to look at how other classroom management texts treated students with disabilities. My search yielded a thought-provoking variety of

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textbooks marketed in the USA and Canada regarding the construction and portrayal of students with disabilities. Although the research for this paper was conducted with texts used in English-speaking North America, the issues encountered reflect attitudes about disability that will be familiar to international readers and advocates.

Textbook analyses have tended to analyse and compare content and features (Hobbs *et al.*, 1996; Miller & Hines, 2001; Dinnebeil, 2003). Some looked at content including issues of bias (Spiegel, 1990; Ferree & Hall, 1996) and inclusion of multicultural content (Sileo & Prater, 1988). The importance in sensitizing pre-service teachers to issues and practices involving students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds was conveyed through content analysis of such things as included groups and discussed topics. However, in these analyses, disability imagery has not been questioned.

Disability issues, when addressed in many classroom management textbooks, are often limited to the logistics of including students with physical disabilities. Recent textbook analyses question the portrayal of people with disabilities in Special Education introductory texts. Rice (2000, 2005) explores ideologies and excluded narratives. Brantlinger (2003) explores the construction of 'disability' and 'best practices' in these texts. This paper proposes a different approach to examining textbooks for adoption. Rather than review texts for the extent to which they might meet content requirements of professors of teacher education concerned with management and behaviour issues, I argue that there should be another way to review a textbook: the potential ethical and practical impact upon the reader with regards to the dispositions and teacher behaviour the text promotes. Textbooks can either reproduce current societal attitudes that marginalize certain students (whether the differences are cultural, linguistic or behavioural) or assist educators in broadly considering the empowerment and learning needs of their students, including those students with behavioural differences. This paper suggests moving textbook analysis and review beyond the stated management related goals of the text to the implications of the structure of the text as well as its content.

Disability Studies scholars in the arts, humanities and education have studied how people with disabilities are portrayed and treated in our culture in literature and print media, film and television, entertainment, and public policy. Their work includes noting the contrasts between the public images of disability with the lived experiences of disability and the consequences of these differences. Disempowering attitudes are embedded in US culture and are invisible to most of us (Wendell, 1996; Thomson, 1997; Linton, 1998; Longmore, 2004). For example, in exploring the marginalization of people with disabilities in literature, Thomson (1997, p. 9) identifies patterns that also apply to non-fiction and academic narrative:

The discursive construct of the disabled figure, informed more by received attitudes than by people's actual experience of disability, circulates in culture and finds a home within the conventions and codes of literary representation. ... Disabled literary characters usually remain on the margins of fiction as uncomplicated figures or exotic aliens whose bodily configurations operate as spectacles, eliciting responses from other characters or producing rhetorical effects that depend on disability's cultural resonance.

The same pattern of the power of 'conventions and codes' holds true in special education and general education literature (Smith, 2000b), in schools, and in textbooks with regards to real students with disabilities. Qualitative studies find that educators in schools may view special education students as 'other' or invisible (Giangreco *et al.*, 1993). Others promote attitude changes on the part of educators along with new practices (Stainback *et al.*, 1992). Kliewer (1998) studied the schooling of children with Down syndrome and found teachers who did not know how to support their students with disabilities due to incorrect assumptions of incompetence. These teachers gave little thought to reciprocity in relationships between the children with Down syndrome and non-disabled peers or of the rights of children with Down syndrome to full citizenship. They even refused to believe evidence that their students were literate. Education textbooks contain structures, undiscussed issues and medical representations of disability that contribute to the marginalization of students with disabilities (Rice, 2000; Brantlinger, 2003).

One of the prevailing cultural paradigms is the perception that people with disabilities are plagued with deficits (incompetencies) that render them incapable of the same meaningful thought and action as their presumed competent peers (Biklen *et al.*, 1989; Goode, 1989; Biklen & Duchan, 1994; Rubin, 1998). Education literature and research reflects a divide between competence- and deficit-oriented perceptions and practices regarding students with mild, moderate and severe disabilities (Smith, 2000b). Textbooks can contribute to either the reproduction or the rehabilitation of attitudes that marginalize students with disabilities.

Competence-orientation means that educators perceive students, including those with cognitive and communication impairments, as whole and complex persons and teach with the students' strengths in mind (Udvari-Solner, 1997; Smith, 2000a). Instead of questioning if students can participate in a class activity, these educators think about how students can be involved in the activity. Rather than address a behaviour pattern as a deficit or grounds for discipline, punishment or exile, they treat it as a meaningful communication. Such educators acquire the skill of 'reading' or interpreting students' verbal and non-verbal communications that differ from how their peers communicate. They learn how students show engagement, boredom, contentment, and dissatisfaction. They are aware of their students' strengths and challenges and how these strengths might be used to support learning and achievement. They understand that refusal and resistance might actually be skills, the only way a student has thus far figured out how to communicate. Their descriptions of students tend to foster understanding and communication with students.

Deficit-orientation refers to the attitudes of educators who tend to teach to a medical model of repairing the (often) irreparable individual. Their descriptions of students foster ranking, sorting, and diagnosing. Such medical model descriptions obscure the abilities of students who may have unique approaches to communicating understanding, wants, and needs (Smith, 2000b). Deficit-oriented educators often perceive their students with developmental disabilities as difficult to understand and therefore lacking basic understanding of the things going on around them. These educators perceive the challenging behaviours of their students with mild disabilities

as non-compliant. They interpret behavioural differences or atypical behaviours as deficit or deviance rather than as strategies of communication (Janney & Snell, 2000).

How educators assess students and interpret behaviour relates to and reflects the cultures of acceptance and non/acceptance for people with disabilities (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987, 1989; Taylor & Bogdan, 1989) as well as how the culture in general constructs students with disabilities (Abberley, 1987; Biklen, 1992; Allan, 1997; Brantlinger, 1997). These and other works have contributed to a growing disability studies literature in which researchers from the arts, sociology, literature and disability rights activism have assisted educators to understand and resist the medical model that sees disability as something to be repaired, overcome, or accepted with limitations defined by the society. This model has resulted in stigma and segregation in spite of technical advances promoted within this model. The medical model was an advance over prior models that blamed disability on the person or on supernatural agency. However, the medical model strives to eliminate disability or ultimately considers disability as something to be eliminated as blight on the gene pool (Selden, 1999). This medical model has disadvantaged people with disabilities by imposing a therapeutic model in which failure to achieve normalcy becomes translated into what Ferguson (1994) has called, in relation to people labelled retarded, 'chronicity'. Chronicity renders failure into 'incurable' and 'unsalvageable', less than human, and fosters social policies of custody and marginalization. With disability rights activism and social models of disability, people with disabilities have come to see their disability as a relationship between themselves and the culture. They have insisted that with any given disability or impairment, attitude and social barriers are often the most disabling aspect of any condition (Shapiro, 1993; Longmore, 2004). Social models of disability rely on social justice paradigms rather than disempowering charity models. Thomas (1999), however, warns that the lived experience of the person with the disability often goes unrecognized by both social and medical models. In disability studies in education, proponents of the social justice model seek to inform educational practice based on the voices and perspectives of people with disabilities and their lived experience.

## **Methods**

This study of texts was conducted from the perspective of disability as sociology (Bogdan & Knoll, 1995). A post-modern or critical theory perspective describes disability as constructed by the meanings people make of it. Students with disabilities are defined and impacted by the environment and the meanings people make of the students' situation (Abberley, 1987) as their lived experience remains unacknowledged (Thomas, 1999). Thus, rather than analysing texts for intervention strategies, I looked at what the texts communicated about the students who would ultimately be served and how the authors' attitudes reflected their cultural traditions about disability. How authors portray key aspects of disability, education, and the school experience conveys meanings that can translate into powerful influences in the classroom, and on classroom interactions with students. Teacher attitudes in classrooms have been shown to obscure or reveal student engagement or even impact student engagement

(Smith, 1999). Attitudes embedded in classroom and behavioural management styles may also impact engagement. Thus, findings in classroom management textbooks are framed here with regard to the patterns of meaning found in the texts and the potential impact upon pre-service teachers who adopt these meanings.

I am using the term classroom management to include the ways educators create and organize learning environments to promote student motivation and engagement as well as to prevent and respond to disruptive or otherwise challenging behaviours. The textbooks I consulted had varied meanings for 'classroom management' ranging from purely discipline and behavioural issues to motivation, communication, lesson design, and discipline. I was particularly interested in textbooks that targeted general educators who might have students with disabilities in their classrooms or that addressed inclusive education. Thus, special education texts that specifically dealt with challenging behaviours were not included. The paper will show varied representations of students with disabilities and conclude with a discussion to shed light on a way to revise textbooks or review them so that one might choose appropriately, or if the book is chosen for other strengths, to inoculate the teacher candidates against deficit-oriented attitudes.

### *Sample*

I studied ten classroom management texts that were referred by colleagues, recommended at conference textbook book displays or were on a list of current best-selling textbooks (Monument Informational Resources, 2000). I eliminated special education texts that dealt specifically with behavioural issues of children with emotional disabilities in order to limit the sample to books likely to be used in general education and non-categorical inclusive education programmes. The sample of ten classroom management texts is not exhaustive and not intended to be a comprehensive guide to texts. It is a sample providing varied examples of disability imagery.

I began by inspecting each text for inclusion of students with disabilities, how students with disabilities were described, and the context and locations of these students in the book. Guiding questions initially included the following:

- What was said about students with disabilities?
- What was the context and language of their inclusion in the text?
- Were competence- or deficit-oriented language and examples used?

I took notes and developed and expanded themes relating to competence- and deficit-orientation. As part of this process, I took notes on recurring features in structure and content. For example, I found recurring perceptions of students with disabilities that I coded as 'probable failures' and 'turf of experts'. I also noted the use of 'people-first language'. This means describing the student as having a disability rather than as a disability and using terms that do not evoke pity or reinforce stereotypes. For example, 'students with learning disabilities' versus 'LD student' or 'student who uses a wheelchair' or 'wheelchair user' versus 'crippled' or 'wheelchair bound'. The results of the following questions are in Table 1:

Table 1. Presence/absence of competence oriented features

Reference	Included disability-related guidelines in chapters	Included students with disabilities in illustrative examples	Used people's first language	Competence oriented
Curwin & Mandler (1999)	absent	absent	absent	(mixed messages)
Lemlech (1999)	absent	absent	mixed	absent
Levin & Nolan (2000)	absent	(isolated examples)	absent	absent
Martin <i>et al.</i> (2000)	absent	(isolated examples)	absent	absent
Emmer <i>et al.</i> (2000)	absent	absent	present	present
Evertson <i>et al.</i> (2000)	absent	absent	present	present
Porter (2000)	absent	present	present	present
Jones & Jones (2001)	present	present	present	present
Jackson & Panyan (2002)	present	present	present	present
Nakamura (2000)	present	present	present	present

- Did the text include substantial disability-related guidelines in the chapters
- Did the text include students with disabilities in illustrative case examples?
- Was disability segregated in a separate section or chapter?
- Did the text use people-first language?
- Overall, was the text competence oriented?

For purposes of this paper, the theme of competence- or deficit-orientation is emphasized.

## Results

The texts' inclusiveness of students with disabilities reflected patterns of segregation, partial inclusion, and full inclusion found in public schools. Among these texts, I found conflicting and competing images of disability and academic potential of students with disabilities. Textbook analysis in the light of views of disabilities in the general public revealed that several authors' views represented culturally prevalent stereotypes while others worked to contradict the stereotypes. The stereotyping narratives concerned students with challenging behaviours in general education or inclusive classrooms. Four themes emerged. The theme 'aliens or visitors' emerged from several texts. Some texts also constructed students with disabilities who have behaviour problems as outsiders and the 'turf of experts' and implied the students were burdens (Curwin & Mandler, 1999; Lemlech, 1999; Martin *et al.*, 2000). Some presented special education students as 'probable failures', i.e. likely to be academically unsuccessful, and also as a burden (Curwin & Mandler, 1999; Lemlech, 1999). Texts without these themes generated a category of 'missing students' with no mention of students with disabilities (Martin *et al.*, 2000) or mention them in the context of guidelines regarding specific mild disabilities (Nakamura, 2000).

*Aliens or visitors*

Six texts treat students with disabilities as visitors or aliens. They do this by placing disability issues in separate sections or chapters (Curwin & Mendler, 1999; Lemlech, 1999; Emmer *et al.*, 2000; Evertson *et al.*, 2000; Levin & Nolan, 2000; Nakamura, 2000) Students without disabilities are 'so-called normal' according to Lemlech (1999, p. 88) and 'normal' (also Curwin & Mendler, 1999). The not 'normal' students include 'crippled' (Lemlech, 1999, p. 87) along with others mentioned in IDEA. They are strangers in a strange land who bring problems with them. Lemlech (1999), for example supports 'integration' and teacher responsibility for everyone in the classroom. Yet, the textbook offers only a few tips on welcoming the new student with a disability and sensitizing the so-called 'normal age-mates [who] should be reassured that students with disabilities share the same interests and the same capacity for fun' (p. 89). The students with disabilities are presented as posing problems. The chapter on 'Creating and Managing the Learning Environment' has guidelines and tips on physical arrangement and creation and use of learning centres, yet needs of students with disabilities are limited to problem sections. One of these, 'Typical center problems and questions', in the chapter included the following:

I have a student who was in a special education classroom. I have been told that the student is of average ability but cannot read and actually rejects the use of a text. What should I do? [Answer:] Plan work tasks that are conceptually the same as those performed by the other students, since the child has average ability; however, furnish resource materials that appeal to more preferred modes of learning. Use records, teacher made tapes, pictures, and tactile experiences.

(Lemlech, 1999, p. 126)

This so-called 'typical problem' leaves the student as the problem to be solved with extra work by the teacher. It implies that the student may be the only struggling reader or the only one who prefers auditory or tactile access to the curriculum. Lemlech missed an opportunity to discuss references to differentiated instruction, universal design and multiple intelligences that might include all students without singling out a special education student. A 'case study problem' at the end of this learning centres chapter has candidates devise a special learning centre packet for a student preferring auditory approaches who reads below grade level since 'the student does not use the same learning centres as the other students' (Lemlech, 1999, p. 130). This was another missed opportunity to reframe the problem to design a learning centre that would engage and challenge this student as well as her peers.

*Probable failures*

In some texts, students with disabilities in general education are presented as likely to be academically unsuccessful (Curwin & Mendler, 1999; Levin & Nolan, 2000). Curwin and Mendler list the problems of students with average intelligence needing help with their learning disabilities.

At this early time in their school lives, teachers often used descriptions such as, 'lazy,' 'could do better if you work harder,' 'needs to develop good study skills,' 'seems unmotivated,' 'has better ability than he shows,' 'is bossy and can't share with others.' From the 4th grade through the 8th grade, they usually have great difficulty competing with the rest of the class. The more difficulty they have, the more likely they are to act up in class. They lack enthusiasm, skip class, and become regular visitors to the office of the school disciplinarian.

(Curwin & Mendler, 1999, p. 184)

The authors present these characteristics as facts of life rather than signs that the student is not being appropriately supported. The authors appear to take competition in class for granted. Such texts confirm the notion stated by the same authors that:

for many, the experience of academic success is unattainable, and the special student seeks other methods of gratification ... [and that] disciplinary problems among handicapped students are therefore strongly associated with their inability to compete with others in class, to get the attention of other students, or to feel equal to them.

(Curwin & Mendler, 1999, p. 184)

Levin & Nolan (2000, p. 215) state that:

Some students simply are not or cannot find a way to be successful in school in academic, social, or extracurricular activities. For these students, school is a daily source of failure that significantly reduces their overall success/failure ratio.

Neither text provides explanation and examples of how educators might approach some of the students with learning and attention disabilities. Readers are not invited to consider and identify the sources of the behaviour and design accommodations. These authors do not suggest possibilities of academic adaptations, environmental and curriculum changes, or teaching alternative behaviours.

### *The turf of experts*

Some texts state openly that disability accompanied by ongoing behaviour problems is mostly the province of experts. Disability is dealt with, if at all, in separate chapters (Curwin & Mendler, 1999; Emmer *et al.*, 2000; Evertson *et al.*, 2000; Levin & Nolan, 2000; Nakamura, 2000). In contrast, Levin and Nolan recognize the need for teacher authenticity and knowledge of the students' frustration and discouragement. They include an ingenious solution in a case study involving a 'learning disabled student' who wanted to 'do nothing' in class and who was motivated to participate by being allowed to do just that, which turned out to be boring for him (Levin & Nolan, 2000, p. 179). However, rather than building on this fine example of acknowledging this student's classroom experience, they refer what they consider complex problems to the experts who know how to work with students with such disabilities as ADHD and 'oppositional defiant disorder' (Levin & Nolan, 2000, p. 218). They missed an opportunity to cite the importance of effective collaboration with experts to resolve serious problems. An example of such collaboration with experts can be found elsewhere in the case study of a first grader with ADD who caused two teachers assigned to help

him to quit. He ended up with a plan that resulted in his full participation with minimal support at grade level (Artesani & Mallar, 1998).

Curwin & Mendler (1999, p. 184) also look to experts as the best solution without mentioning collaboration:

Since we are focusing our discussion on handicapped students who exhibit unacceptable behaviour, changing that behaviour needs to be one of the primary focal points in planning for the child's integration into a normal setting. If you work in a school that has the good fortune of extensive remedial and support services, then the major responsibility for preparing a student for life in the mainstream resides with a specialist. But if you do not, and you are a regular classroom teacher, then the burden (emphasis added) of responsibility falls squarely on your shoulders.

Thus, the expert is suggested as the only person who can possibly cope with students with disabilities and behaviour problems. The book provides no insights into handling the behaviour problems or how to seek effective collaboration.

In contrast, Jackson & Panyan (2002) bring understandings from special education to the general education classroom. They offer classroom management strategies based on positive behavioural supports for general education classrooms and whole schools. They include students with and without disabilities in their examples as well as point to accessing the expertise of special educators when necessary.

### *Missing students*

While some classroom management texts based in general education contexts may acknowledge the presence of students with disabilities in their examples or in separate sections or chapters, others still do not (Martin *et al.*, 2000). Special education students are either amenable to the classroom approaches used with their peers without disabilities or are presumably not in class. Jackson and Panyan provide the notable exception of included students with both mild and severe disabilities. Some other texts substantially recognize the presence of students with physical disabilities and learning disabilities in general education classes but not those labelled with mental retardation (Nakamura, 2000; Jones & Jones, 2001). Nakamura embeds guidelines for including students with physical disabilities in several chapters and devotes an appendix to itemizing the typical accommodations needed for many physical and learning disabilities. Jones and Jones include students who appear to have learning disabilities and attention deficit disorders throughout an extensive collection of case studies and include techniques to accommodate and plan for and with these students as well as students who are not classified with disabilities. Students with developmental disabilities do not figure in their examples. Curwin and Mendler as well as other authors urge their reader to get to know and respect students with disabilities. 'If you cannot see a person's strength, then there is no way for you to improve weaknesses' (Curwin & Mendler, 1999, p. 193). Yet these authors, with the exception of Jones and Jones, and Jackson and Panyan offer no examples or cases to help pre-service teachers gain insights for finding and building on strengths.

In these textbooks, the potential for students with developmental disabilities to be included was severely impaired, ironically, by limiting the discussion of strategies and techniques that could apply to all students to those having no or only mild disabilities. The importance of collaboration between general education teachers and special education related service providers was mostly overlooked. Lessons on classroom community building fall short if all are not included (Sapon-Shevin, 1996, 1999).

## **Discussion**

The range of examples cited here can provide insights into reading, selecting and revising textbooks. The meanings educators and textbook authors made of students' disabilities, potential and participation varied not only between authors, but also within texts. Interpretations of student understanding are constructed from a culture of competing and conflicting assessments of student competence and understanding. Elsewhere I have found that these same constructions found in the textbooks are frequently observed in classrooms (Smith, 1999, 2000a) The classroom teachers' social perceptions of students with disabilities that framed students as alien or not understanding not only kept educators from involving students in classroom activities, but also actually prevented them from seeing when the students were actually engaged. For example, a student with Down syndrome was paying attention in Health class, reacting appropriately to every question and rhetorical question, and brought up class content at other times with his teacher assistant. Yet, two special education teachers assumed he was not learning anything but social skills. Misperception of students' engagement and understanding also accompanied the attitude of many general education teachers who said it was up to the special education teacher to prepare and grade the special education students' work if they were in their classes. In classrooms, competence-oriented perspectives enabled student participation and social acceptance. Deficit-based perspectives obscured and denied student engagement and potential engagement (Allan, 1999; Smith, 2000b, 2002; Kliever & Biklen, 2001). This has important implications for establishing meaningful learning environments that prevent disruptive student behaviour and engage students. Educators who assume that some students with disabilities are not capable of engaging and learning and treat them as visitors, or as if they do not even belong in class, will not be able to form relationships with the students, support positive learning behaviours or build an effective learning community in the classroom/school. If pre-service teachers are exposed to the possibilities of student competence and learning in their textbooks, if the assumptions of incompetence they bring from the culture are challenged, it will help them practice higher expectations of students with special education needs. Educators open to possibilities and student strengths increase perceived and actual involvement with in-class activities with their peers.

The placement of learning issues of students with disabilities in the text can contribute to or contradict the image of 'not-normal'. The medical model of disability permeating special education often suffocates the efforts of those who profess to support

inclusion yet struggle with practices that might enable any student to participate fully in class. Best practices abound in special education and inclusive education that support many of the authors' statements that sound classroom management applies to all students. When texts exclude examples of these practices, segregate them into special chapters and sections, or merely suggest that practices exist, beginning teachers are not helped to think inclusively. Teachers remain with the deficit orientation that limits their thinking and their ability to seek help to support students with learning difficulties.

Teacher education textbooks need competence-oriented expectations and approaches to creating effective learning environments. This includes classroom practices, structures and curriculum design to enable all the students in the room to participate along with discussion of how that might happen. The principles of positive behavioural supports, for example, are no longer the sole property of special educators. They can be used to support educators in their quest to include effectively students with disabilities who have atypical behaviours and forms of communication as well as students without disabilities whose behaviour represents their inarticulate approach to distress.

Principles and practices from the field of positive behavioural supports (PBS) for students with high support needs have been found to translate effectively into school-wide PBS (Albin *et al.*, 1996; Ruef *et al.*, 1998; Janney & Snell, 2000; Jackson & Panyan, 2002). In order for educators to do this, they must understand that all behaviour is meaningful communication. This is true for students with and without disabilities. Table 2 summarizes key features to look for in an inclusive and supportive classroom management textbook. It can also be used to guide supplementation of an adopted text.

In summary, it is recommended that textbook publishers (1) revise their classroom management textbooks to be free of stereotypes and deficit oriented narrative and strategies and (2) move beyond the legal mandates for inclusion to include students with disabilities in examples, strategies, and guidelines throughout the book and include approaches to collaboration between educators and students. Pending the publication of more competence-oriented textbooks, those teaching with various classroom management textbooks should have pre-service teachers evaluate management suggestions and approaches to be sure that they are aware of possible deficit-oriented bias and learn how to move beyond to competence-orientation inclusiveness in their classrooms.

Educators need to rethink their assumptions regarding what students with learning difficulties do and do not understand, benefit from, and contribute. Educators will be more effective by basing their practices on assumptions that students can and do understand what is going on and that factors outside the student influence behaviour. Teacher educators need to communicate to in- and pre-service teachers and support staff how they might better interpret student atypical responses. Textbooks inform pre-service students' attitudes toward their future students with disabilities and so should include all students in the body of the texts and teach strategies of inclusion and collaboration from the perspective that all students are competent and that their behaviour is meaningful communication. Failure to do these things results in the

Table 2. Classroom management texts on students with disabilities

Deficit oriented	Competence oriented
Medical model	Strength based or complexity model
Ranks, sorts, diagnoses student	Understands and learns how to include student
Perceives students as difficult to understand	Perceives the student as complex and interesting
Perceives students as lacking understanding	Assumes student action is purposeful and meaningful
Behavioural differences defined as non-compliance, deviance, incompetence	Behavioural differences are meaningful communication
Students with developmental disabilities not acknowledged	Includes strategies that implicitly or explicitly apply to all students
Students with disabilities expected to fail	Includes logistical information and accommodations to ensure participation and engagement of students with disabilities
Turf of experts or a burden	Collaboration with special education teachers and related service professionals
Problems located within the student (e.g. 'non-compliant' or disability label as cause)	Problem solutions sought first in the environment (practice, structures, settings, tasks, teachings styles, etc.) and student-lived experience as a student with learning and behavioural differences
Deficit-oriented solutions such as isolation and negative reinforcement	Behavioural strategies use principles of positive behavioural support and full citizenship
Behavioural strategies based on control and compliance	People-first language
Stereotyping images and language	

continuation of oppressive paradigms that force those with differences to the margins and deprive them of an appropriate education.

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