During the late 1980s and early 1990s, The Cosby Show was one of the most popular sitcoms on American television. As with other timeless shows, it’s natural to relate certain episodes to real-life situations. The episode that came to mind while preparing this edition of Principal, which focuses on special education, is the one in which Cliff and Claire Huxtable’s son, Theo, is diagnosed with dyslexia. When test results confirm Theo’s learning disability, there’s a sense of clarity for the entire Huxtable family. In fact, they’re elated—hugs and pumped fists ensue. They are celebrating because they now realize what has caused Theo to struggle in school, and because school staff members now are able to provide him with proven methods that will help him to succeed despite his dyslexia.

The producers titled this episode “Theo’s Gift”—a fitting description not only for the qualities that special education students can bring to general education classrooms, but also for the special education services available to Theo and others like him.

The keys to success for special education students, in the form of services and early intervention strategies, are described by the articles in this issue. For example, Bronte Reynolds discusses ways in which principals should prepare their classrooms for inclusion, and Nicholas Myers describes a model that has worked in his school to provide remedial support for his special education students. Other theme articles detail how principals and special education staffs can best work together; the qualities to look for when hiring a special education teacher; and how to integrate students with autism into general education classrooms.

Because there’s so much we want to share with you about special education, we have made three additional articles available on the NAESP Web site for you to further explore the topic. Listed below are titles of these Web Exclusives.

WEB EXCLUSIVES
How to Retain Special Education Teachers—Luke Duesbery
The Evolution of Special Education—Kelli J. Esteves and Shaila Rao
Mental Health Problems in Children: What Principals Need to Know—Misty Ginicola
www.naesp.org/principal

As always, we’d love to hear your thoughts about this edition of Principal. Simply send us an e-mail at publications@naesp.org.

—Vanessa St. Gerard and Kaylen Tucker