Book Series

Contemporary Perspectives in Special Education

Series Editors
Anthony F. Rotatori, Saint Xavier University; Festus E. Obiakor, Sunny Educational Consulting

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- Educating Young Children With and Without Exceptionalities
- Leadership Matters in the Education of Students with Special Needs in the 21st Century
- Critical Issues in Preparing Effective Early Childhood Special Education Teachers for the 21 Century Classroom
- Multicultural Education for Learners with Special Needs in the Twenty-First Century
- Autism Spectrum Disorders

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This book provides readers with a comprehensive description of procedures and practices that can enhance special education collaboration, consultation and cooperation in classroom learning environments and ancillary educational services. Experts in the field of special education provide detailed information on critical topics such as fostering the collaboration between regular education and special education teachers. Detailed discussions also focus on the role of mental health providers in special education, and the innovative use of technology in enhancing partnerships in general and special education. Unique chapters include the psychologist in the special education process, the role of the government as a partner to enhance special education services, and the vital role that principals play as school leaders to insure that special education students garner the necessary services to maximize their learning potential. Lastly, the critical roles that speech and language and physical education specialists play are discussed with regard to optimizing the overall development of students with special needs.

CONTENTS:

Educating Young Children With and Without Exceptionalities: New Perspectives
Festus E. Obiakor, Sunny Educational Consulting; Tachelle Banks, Cleveland State University; Jessica Graves, College of Coastal Georgia; Anthony F. Rotatori, Saint Xavier University

Early childhood education (ECE) has always been intertwined with the use of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). To support excellence in ECE, it is critical how the knowledge about individual children and child development principles combined with the knowledge of effective early learning practices. Effective early childhood education involves an interdisciplinary collaborative process that is influenced by many factors. We present these aforementioned realities in Educating Young Children With and Without Exceptionalities: New Perspectives. In addition, we argue that general and special educators need to focus on applying new knowledge to better address critical issues that advance the field of educator preparation and improve educational outcomes for young children.

Early childhood research confirms the need for intensive intervention and remedial education—we need to avoid approaches that are “too little” or “too late.” Also proven to yield positive results for children are practices familiar to early childhood educators. These practices include relationship-based teaching and learning; partnering with families; adapting teaching for children from different backgrounds and for individual children; active, meaningful, and connected learning; and smaller class sizes. Evidence of the benefits of these practices suggests that they should be extended more widely into the elementary grades.

This book provides a practical focus and framework for establishing insightful leadership that will enhance the learning of students with exceptionalities in the 21st century by discussing critical leadership dimensions and topics by leading academics. Topics discussed include the following: shifting leadership paradigms for all students in general and special education, district leadership strategies for implementing individualized academic and behavioral student interventions, preparing leaders to work with students with diverse learning needs, critical leadership roles for regular classroom teachers in educating learners with special needs, innovative leadership to increase school completion and graduation of general and special education learners, why psychologists need to be a part of the school leadership team, the importance of culturally responsive leadership in general and special education, the role of school leaders in helping learners with physical and health impairments, school leadership for all students in rural schools, the use of technology by leaders to improve special education services, an international example model of leadership in general and special education, and future perspectives of leadership in special education.

Leadership Matters in the Education of Students with Special Needs in the 21st Century is a critically needed addition to the successful education of students with exceptionalities as it provides much needed and innovative leadership perspectives for effective instructional practices for today's students with special needs. The book can be a model for best practices for school district leadership teams challenged by the multifaceted needs of students with exceptionalities.

The purpose of this book is to provide a forum for an interdisciplinary scholarly dialogue with regard to preparing teachers for early childhood special education. In addition, it is aimed at examining and making available relevant and most recent scholarship to practitioners and at addressing critical issues and perspectives around preparing effective educators for the 21st century classroom and the future. This book intends to illuminate a complex and challenging task of preparing effective educators through the lenses of several educational disciplines, including but not limited to, teacher education, general education, early childhood education, and urban education.

The information in this work will focus on several educational disciplines that have the most immediate implications for teacher preparation and practice. The overall educational knowledge base will be enhanced due to the educational interdisciplinary approach. This has additional implications for teacher education, special education, educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, educational policy, and urban education, to name a few. The multidimensional nature of the book gives it the freedom to highlight multiple and diverse voices while at the same time providing a forum for different (and sometimes divergent) methodologies, philosophies, and ideologies.


Multicultural Education for Learners with Special Needs in the Twenty-First Century

Festus E. Obiakor, Sunny Educational Consulting; Anthony F. Rotatori, Saint Xavier University


Multicultural Education for Learners with Special Needs in the Twenty-First Century provides general and special educators innovative information that address the road blocks to effective practice such that diverse learners will be appropriately; identified, assessed, categorized, placed and instructed. The book provides those who instruct diverse learners comprehensive, creative and best practice chapters by scholars in the area of multicultural education. Chapter
One presents a system to reduce traditional education roadblocks that confront diverse learners called Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching (CLRT). The CLTR system is designed to accomplish three objectives, namely, to increase student achievement, to help students develop skills to achieve economic sufficiency and to allow students to acquire citizenship skills based on a realistic and thorough understanding of the political system. Chapter Two discusses the pervasive problem of disproportionate representation of students from diverse backgrounds in special education by examining what it is, who is impacted by it, why it is occurring, and how it can be addressed using promising strategies. Chapter Three examines the use of authentic assessment to provide feedback for teachers and students, and guide the instructional process by differentiating teaching to meet the educational needs of diverse learners. Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven address issues related to educating Latina/o Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and Native Americans with special needs. Chapter Eight is a unique chapter that addresses the growing need to educate foreign-born immigrants who are now being referred to as “Today’s Special Learners in Schools”. This chapter delineates the use of the Comprehensive Support Model (CSM) to educate foreign-born learners who are identified by the authors as foreign-born English Language Learners. The CSM is recommended as a culturally sensitive intervention that integrates efforts of the self, (i.e., learner), families, school, community, and government in responding to the needs of diverse learners. Chapter Nine provides a comprehensive discussion of how Culturally Relevant Leadership (CRL) can impact educational theory and practice. The authors delineate how CRL leads to reflective practices which position teachers and administrators to become leaders in school change that can increase student success for diverse learners. Chapter Ten provides the reader with illustrative content regarding the use of technology to educate multicultural learners with special needs. Chapter Eleven delineates the culturally responsive infusion of effective behavior modification strategies that are designed to strengthen and facilitate positive behaviors for culturally and linguistically diverse learners with special needs.

The book is an important addition to the education of multicultural learners with special needs as it provides much needed direction for the effective instructional practices for today’s diverse students. The book can be used as current best practices for special and general educators as well as school administrators.


Autism Spectrum Disorders
Inclusive Community for the 21st Century

Julie A. Deisinger, Saint Xavier University; Sandra Burkhardt, Saint Xavier University; Timothy J. Wahlberg, Wahlberg and Associates; Anthony F. Rotatori, Saint Xavier University; Festus E. Obiakor, Sunny Educational Consulting


Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) has received considerable educational, research, medical and media attention the past ten years. Yet the condition was first described more than a hundred years ago. Due to the disorder being confused with childhood schizophrenia, there was a lack of definitive attention by special educators, medical professionals and mental health clinicians to advance parameters related to: causes; prevalence; identification and diagnosis; education and treatment. Positively, this confusion changed starting in the 1980s with the clarification of the differences between these disorders with the 1980 publication of the “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders” (DSM-III). Soon after, the 1990 federal legislation “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” recognized the disorder as a disability category eligible for special education services. Both of these events lead to an explosion of information related to: finding causes; accurate identification and diagnosis; best educational practices; and social, emotional, and behavioral treatments.

Even with this explosion in the body of knowledge concerned with this disorder, much more needs to be learned and discovered. The successful use of this body of knowledge requires that accurate information be provided to educators, parents, clinicians, medical professionals, and mental health professionals to counter misinformation that exists among the general public, educators and clinical professionals. This is the primary purpose of “Autism Spectrum Disorders: Inclusive
Community for the 21st Century”. It is accomplished by chapters on: the delineation of a blueprint for systems of care for persons with ASD and their families; a model to assist professionals in tackling the challenge of developing employability for individuals with high functioning ASD; best practice and research guidelines that lead to an affirmative ASD diagnosis; a comprehensive and current synopsis of genetic factors associated with ASD; adjustment challenges that may be present for a sibling of an individual with ASD; a comprehensive description of an innovative community-based clinic that provides services needed by individuals with ASD to meet their social, behavioral, educational and mental health needs; and effective treatment strategies and techniques that can be utilized by parents and educators to work effectively with children who have ASD. The chapters are written by researchers, clinicians, business professionals, and university professors who have an extensive knowledge of ASD. The contents of the book are an excellent reference for special education teachers, school psychologists, practicing mental health clinicians, and parents and family members of children and adults with ASD.

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