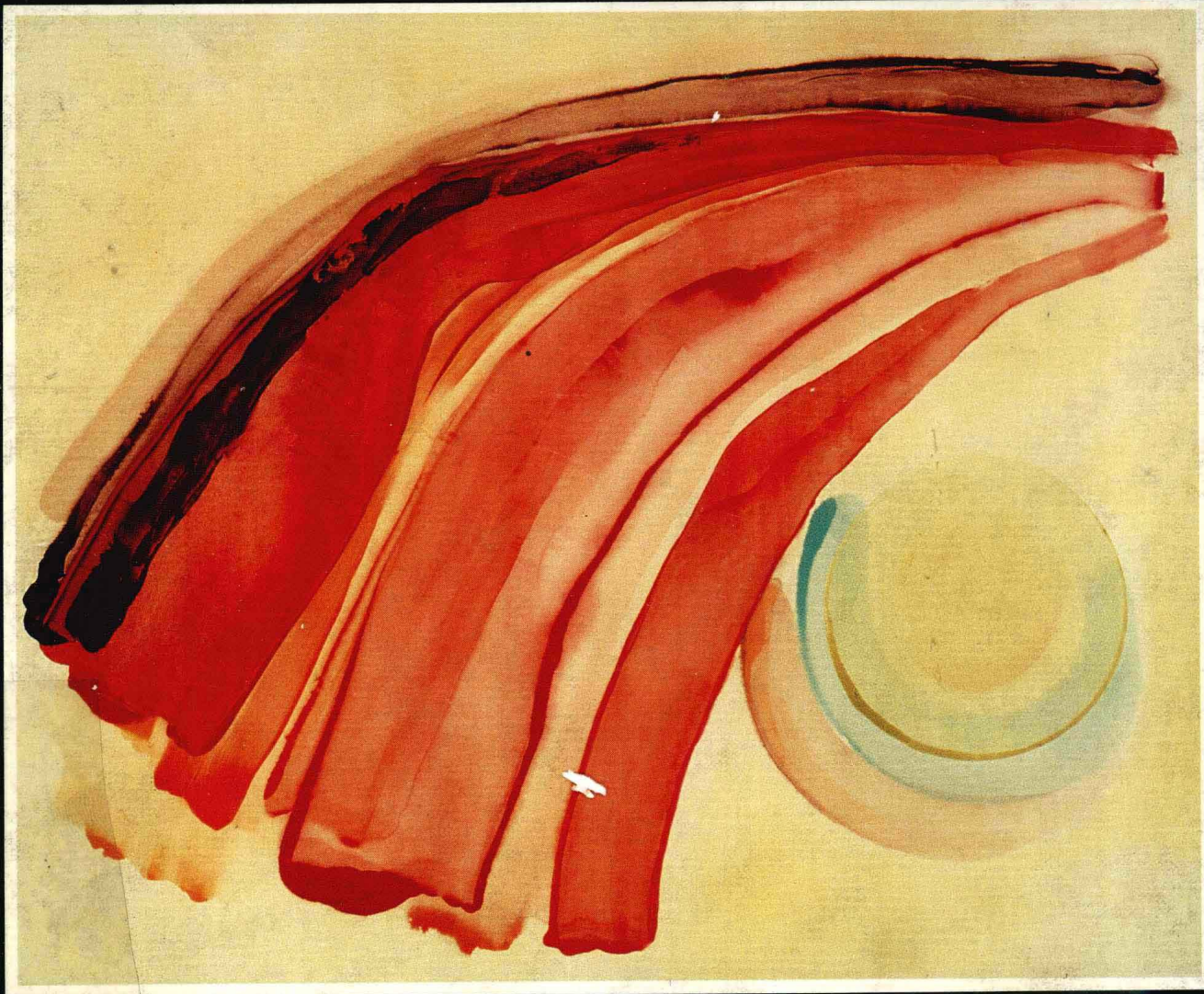


AN INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Second Edition



William H. Berdine A. Edward Blackhurst

*An Introduction
to
Special Education
Second Edition*

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University of Kentucky, Lexington



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This text is dedicated to our students, who have taught us much about teaching.

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Preface

This text is an introduction to, and a comprehensive survey of, the field of special education. Special education is that branch of education responsible for meeting the needs of exceptional children — those who are gifted or who have impairments that affect intellectual, physical, emotional, or sensory abilities. We will examine the body of contemporary literature for each of the traditional areas of special education and strive to develop an understanding of the developmental and learning characteristics of exceptional persons. Also, for each of the areas of exceptionality we will describe the types of educational services that have been found to be effective in helping persons with special needs to reach their potential. Although this book is not a methods of teaching or a curriculum text, we will describe some specific teaching techniques and curricular approaches that are becoming common to special education.

Whether you are a student entering a special education teacher training program, or planning to pursue a career in any of the number of professional areas that have an impact on exceptional persons, or simply interested in broadening your knowledge of exceptional individuals, you will find the information in this text to be current and useful. After completing the reading of the text, you should be able to accomplish the following:

- define the terms that are commonly used in special education
- understand the major issues and trends in special education and explain how these relate to general education and other related fields
- define the various traditional categories of exceptionality and explain reasons for de-emphasizing categorical labels
- describe the developmental and learning characteristics of exceptional children
- describe the various educational services available to exceptional children
- describe the various types of supportive services needed by exceptional persons and their families

ORGANIZATION

The fourteen chapters making up this book are divided into four parts. Part I, the first three chapters, contains information critical to an understanding of all areas of special education. We define major terms and basic concepts and we trace the growth of the field. The role of modern systems and media technology, including the growing use of microcomputer technology in learning settings for exceptional individuals, is also examined. In the second chapter we analyze the critical issues confronting both teachers and special education students in today's society. The chapter focuses on student identification, normalization, individualized instruction, and cultural diversity. Lastly, we explore the basic principles of child development within the context of early childhood special education. It is our contention that knowledge of normal child development is a prerequisite to the understanding of disabilities.

Upon the broad foundation created in Part I, we go on to examine communication and sensorimotor disabilities. Because communication skills lie at the base of much of what we do in special education, we begin Part II with a chapter on communication disorders. We go on to discuss the significant impact that hearing disorders have on learning and development, and we study visual impairments and the ways teachers can assist visually impaired learners to attain maximum benefit from school and society. This section closes with a chapter on the broad array of physical and health-related disabilities.

In Part III we examine individual differences in learning and behavior. Chapters on mental retardation, learning disabilities, behavior disorders, severe developmental disabilities, and the gifted and talented are included. Although we believe that the kind of educational services created should not be determined solely by the type of exceptionality being addressed, we have examined the various categories of exceptionality in separate chapters. This approach not only helps facilitate your understanding of the different developmental characteristics and varying needs of exceptional children, but it also enables us to present information in an organized manner.

The text concludes with Part IV, Complementing Special Education Services. We discuss the development of career and vocational education programs for exceptional learners. Lastly, we consider the rather significant role the families of exceptional persons play in assisting them to achieve their fullest potentials.

FORMAT

This book has a number of distinctive features that will help you master the content.

Competency statements. In each chapter we identify key principles that we believe you should learn in an introductory course in special education. These competency statements, set off in the text by horizontal lines, are followed by discussion of related content. The competency statements will help focus your attention as you read through each chapter.

Page margin questions. Throughout the text's page margins you will find questions pertaining to key content. The questions help call attention to important facts, concepts, and principles and will facilitate your mastery of the content.

Probes. Lists of questions, called probes, appear at various points within the chapters. There is one probe or set of questions for each competency statement. The probes will enable you to check whether you have learned the material that has been presented. We encourage you to answer each probe as you come to it. This will enhance your learning and retention of the material and will become an invaluable tool along with the competency statements and marginal questions for reviewing chapters. Answers to the probes are provided at the end of the book.

Task sheets. Each chapter concludes with a task sheet. The task sheet contains activities that are designed to supplement the information presented in the text. Generally, the activities involve some sort of field experience, such as observing actual special education programs or interacting with people who work with exceptional children. The variety of possible field experiences will depend on your access to children and the

time you will be able to allocate to them. For those of you who are unable to schedule field experiences, an alternative such as a library research project is included. We also urge you to design your own field experiences that can best suit your special circumstances.

Technology in action vignettes. Each chapter features a brief vignette describing how modern technology is playing an active role in the respective areas of special education. The vignettes are intended to provide interesting and educationally relevant information.

Human interest features. Examples, anecdotes, and excerpts from popular literature have been incorporated into the text. They will give you insight into some of the unique problems that exceptional people face in their everyday lives. We hope that these human interest features will help you to develop positive attitudes toward the handicapped and gifted.

Glossary. Because we encounter a rather vast array of terminology in special education, we have included an extensive glossary at the end of the book.

Writing style. The diversity of special education dictates that a great deal of content be covered and we have attempted to deal with the breadth and depth of knowledge without overwhelming you with a tedious encyclopedic style of writing. We have written this text in a relatively informal style that we hope will make your reading of it an enjoyable, as well as educational, experience.

This text, covering an enormous amount of information, is the product of a concerted team effort. We, the editors, would like to thank our contributing authors for their cooperation and willingness to make this book successful. We again wish to thank our colleagues whose reviews were instrumental in developing the first edition: S. C. Ashcroft, George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University; J. W. Birch, University of Pittsburgh; Linda Blanton, Appalachian State University; Carolyn Callahan, University of Virginia; G. M. Clark, the University of Kansas; N. J. Fennick, University of Oregon; Albert Fink, Indiana University; Verna Hart, University of Pittsburgh; Herbert Prehm, Arizona State University; M. I. Semmel, University of California, Santa Barbara; and T. M. Skrtic, the University of Kansas. We also wish to thank professors who adopted the first edition and who answered our users' questionnaire and provided valuable insights into what needed to be changed for this second edition. In addition to users' comments we also benefited from the advice and ideas of our colleagues who read selected chapters or all of the second edition manuscript. They were: Bill Boomer, Wichita State University; Kenneth Kavale, University of California, Riverside; Gale Morrison, University of California, Santa Barbara; Gabriel Nardi, West Virginia University; Douglas Palmer, Texas A & M University; Chauncey Rucker, the University of Connecticut; Frank Rusch, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and Thomas M. Stephens, the Ohio State University. Again, as with the first edition, we wish to express a special note of recognition to Barbara Tymitz-Wolf, Indiana University, for her many recommendations.

We wish to extend our gratitude to Connie Fugate and Delores Henderson, who typed the manuscript and compiled the references, and Debbie Waites, who set up the

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W.H.B.
A.E.B.

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PART

I

Foundations of Special Education

Over the past decade it has become clear that the similarities between regular education and special education are greater than their differences. Gone is the suspicion that the techniques, materials, and technology of special education cannot be used in other areas of education. Regular classroom teachers can no longer disregard the role and contributions of their colleagues in special education. Similarly, special educators can no longer isolate themselves from the mainstream of educational thinking. We now accept the premise that the same principles and procedures, with some modifications, can be used in the instruction of all children.

Special Education grew from the proposition that all children can reach higher levels of their potential given the opportunity, effective teaching, and proper resources. Because of this belief in the power of education, special education has indeed become an integral part of contemporary education. To appreciate what special education is and what it can offer, we begin our study by looking at the growth of the field, the issues and forces that

shaped it, and the emerging importance of early childhood education.

THE GROWTH OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

In this chapter we discuss the terminology, origins, and development of special education. We will also describe the federal legislation that has had an effect on shaping the field as we know it today. Finally, we will describe the impact of systems and media technology and the special potential that microcomputers may have for the pupil with special learning needs.

ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

The special issues that helped to create the field need to be understood by all educators. We describe the process of identifying children who can benefit

from special education, and we analyze issues related to assessment. A vital element in special education is the normalization concept, and we look at it in relation to deinstitutionalization, mainstreaming, and the least restrictive environment. Additionally, we examine the major notions involved in individualizing instruction and accounting for cultural differences.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The field of early childhood education has only recently become a generally accepted and mandated function in education. This recognition occurred in

spite of the fact that research conducted years ago clearly showed that early educational experiences benefitted all children and was of critical importance for exceptional children. In this chapter we examine the rationale for providing special education services to young handicapped children and describe related issues and historical precedents. Of special importance is the discussion of normal child development, accompanied by illustrations of how various developmental milestones relate to exceptional children. Methods of identifying young handicapped children are also presented along with a description of the different methods of delivering special services to preschool children.

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