

Ysseldyke/Algozzine

Introduction to Special Education



Introduction to Special Education

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*To those who devote their time, energy, and effort to the practice
of special education*

Preface

Special education is a subsystem of regular education. It is one of many ways in which educational experiences are provided for students who do not profit from regular education. *Introduction to Special Education* is about what people in special education do and about the system in which they practice.

Audience

This text was written for students enrolled in an introductory course typically called "Introduction to Special Education" or "Education of Exceptional Students." The course is required for all special education majors and for most students who are preparing to become regular education teachers. Some states require all students in teacher certification programs to take an introductory course in special education. As we wrote the book, we also considered students who are majoring in related fields, such as psychology, rehabilitation counseling, school psychology, counselor education, and social work, as well as students who are enrolled in certification programs for teacher aides.

About the Book

Introduction to Special Education is a four-part text that realistically addresses existing practices in the field of special education. Part 1 presents a perspective on normality and exceptionality and an analysis of the historical foundations of special education. Ways of viewing normality, perceptions of and from those who are believed to be abnormal, and the nature and extent of school failure are examined. In Part 2, theoretical views on exceptionality, people and organizations that are part of special education, and the development of classification and treatment practices in special education are discussed. An analysis of these factors provides a framework for understanding what goes on in special education programs. Thorough descriptions of assessment and teaching strategies in special education are presented in Part 3. We believe that a perspective on assessment and teaching is critical to understanding what professionals in special education do and what happens to the stu-

dents they serve. In Part 4, some of the noneducational forces that influence special education are described. Social, political, economic, and legal factors interact to influence education policies in general. As a part of regular education, special education is therefore influenced by the same factors.

Pedagogical Features

We believe that teaching involves a structured presentation of material to be learned. A number of features have been incorporated in the text to facilitate its use by instructors and their students:

1. Material in the text is complemented by "Windows on Practice" that appear at strategic points throughout each chapter and offer first-hand accounts from actual practitioners who share their experiences as teachers, administrators, and specialists in the field.
2. Checkpoints provide brief summaries of major topics at regular intervals in each chapter, thereby enabling students to review and absorb content.
3. Graphs, facsimiles, diagrams, photos, and tables are incorporated in each chapter to facilitate understanding of main concepts.
4. Major concepts and relationships are reviewed at the end of each chapter in a section entitled "Perspective" and in listed summary statements.
5. Activities and suggested readings are provided at the end of each chapter to stimulate class discussions and to encourage review and extension of text material.
6. A glossary in which key terms and important concepts that are boldfaced in text are defined is included at the end of the text.
7. Bibliographical references for all in-text citations appear at the end of the text.

Videotape

A fifteen-minute videotape, entitled "Window on Practice," has been developed and produced by Houghton Mifflin for classroom use by professors. The videotape portrays a day in the life of a special educator and features Lynn Wilcox of Educational Service Unit #9, Hastings, Nebraska, whose Window on Practice is included in the text. This videotaped account follows Lynn Wilcox through a "typical" day on her job in rural Nebraska. The videotape shows her in varied settings and provides insights about her interrelationships with children, teachers, clinicians, peers, and parents of handicapped children. Importantly, the videotape is an ideal complement to our commitment to people who are preparing to practice and who are in the practice of special education. It is thus an excellent way in which to introduce students to the practice of special education. We recommend that you contact your Houghton Mifflin regional sales office for more information about the videotape.

Student Handbook

We have prepared a Student Handbook for use with the text. The handbook provides students with many opportunities for demonstrating their understanding of course content and for practicing what they have learned. All exercises are designed to encourage students to become actively involved in learning about what goes on in special education.

Each chapter in the handbook corresponds to the text chapters and is divided into four sections. The first section presents a brief overview of material covered in the text's chapter and a list of key concepts that students are asked to identify as they read the chapter. The study questions included in the second section are presented in order of their coverage in the text so that students may respond as they read the text. The third section in each chapter consists of activities that enable students to demonstrate their grasp of text content and to extend and apply their knowledge through outside research and projects. The last section in each chapter is a list of key terms that students are asked to define.

Text page numbers on which students may find the answers to most exercises are provided in the handbook. Since responses to many of the activities in the third section of each chapter will depend on the type of information that students are able to gather, only answers to those activities that can be objectively evaluated are included at the end of the handbook.

The Student Handbook also includes four multiple-choice practice tests that correspond to coverage in each of the text's four parts. An answer key to each test is provided at the end of the handbook.

Each section in the handbook provides ample space for students to write their responses. In addition, each section has been designed so that pages may be removed and handed in to the instructor.

Acknowledgments

Very many people were helpful at various stages of the development of this book. The professional assistance of Leila R. Cantara, Marilyn Hyatt, and Audrey Thurlow was invaluable and greatly appreciated. Kate Algozzine prepared the checkpoints, helped write Chapter 3, and provided constructive editorial review of the entire manuscript. Stephen Bagnato provided content drafts for Chapter 11. Martha Thurlow prepared test questions and reviewed each chapter. Sandra Christenson coauthored the Student Handbook and reviewed the manuscript during the developmental stages.

Our colleagues, many of whom teach the introduction to special education course in colleges and universities throughout the country, reviewed the manuscript and helped shape its development. Walter Creekmore, Northeast Louisiana University; Terry Henry, University of Maine at Farmington; Elliott Lessen, Northern Illinois University; and Terry Rose, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, provided suggestions that resulted in a complete revision of

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A Final Note

This book is different from other introductory textbooks in special education in its organization and comprehensive coverage of topics. In order to prepare special education professionals, we believe it is essential that they understand not only the categories, characteristics, and problems of exceptional children, but also the foundations of current practices—the underlying forces that di-

rect policy making and practice. Special education is one among many alternatives through which members of society have addressed the problems of significant numbers of students who do not acquire the content that is taught in America's classrooms. Special education is specialized programs for students who do not profit from the educational menu of experiences provided in regular classrooms. These programs often involve teaching, and teaching is doing. *Introduction to Special Education* is about what people in special education do.

We believe our efforts to approach the introductory course in special education from this perspective have resulted in a text that accurately reflects what is happening in an exciting, dynamic field. Instructors who use the text will find that the table of contents lists topics that are highly useful in introducing students to the field, and students will find a very practical, realistic perspective presented.

The work was truly a collaborative effort and speaks for both of us.

James E. Ysseldyke Bob Algozzine

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