

LYDIA R. SMILEY ♦ STEPHEN B. RICHARDS ♦ RONALD L. TAYLOR

Fourth Edition



EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

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Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century

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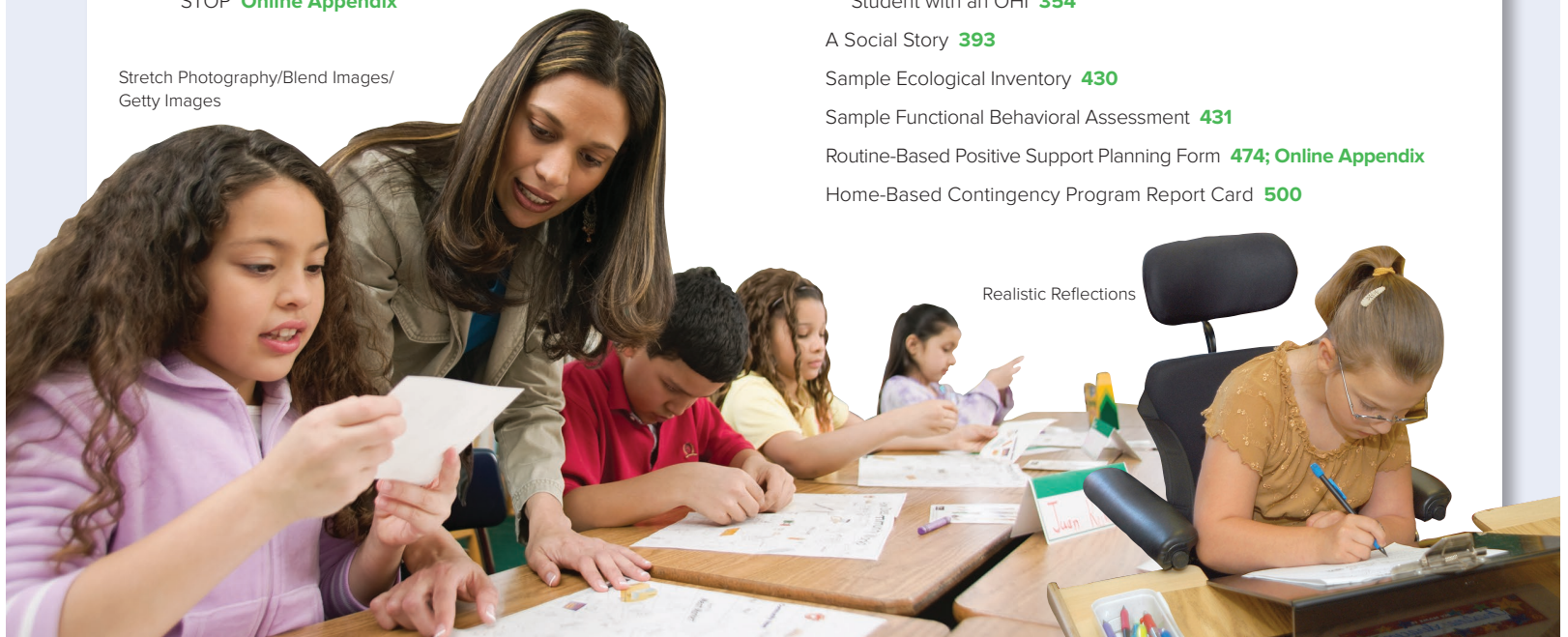
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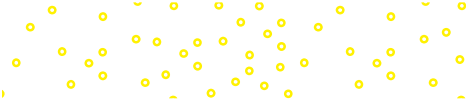
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Exceptional Students

Fourth Edition

Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century

Lydia R. Smiley

Florida Atlantic University

Stephen B. Richards

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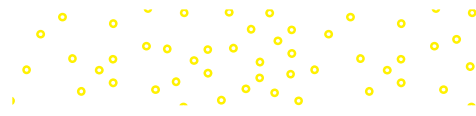
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EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS: PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, FOURTH EDITION

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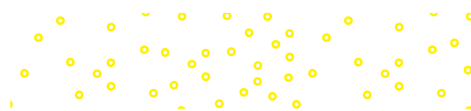
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Courtesy of Lydia Smiley

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Courtesy of Stephen Richards

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Courtesy of Ronald Taylor



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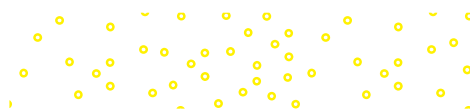
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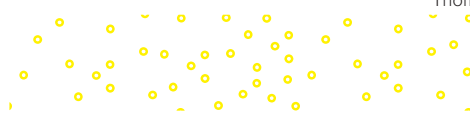
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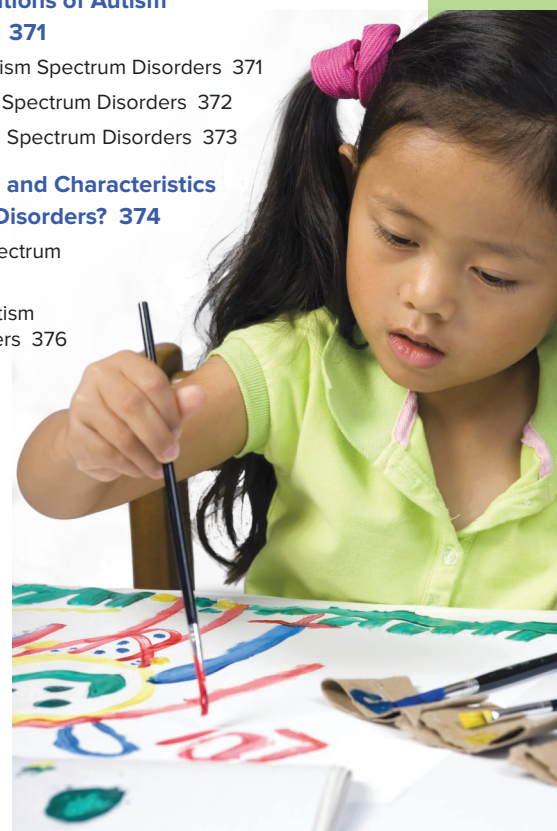
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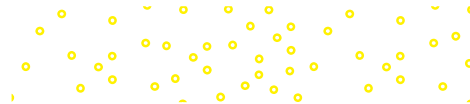
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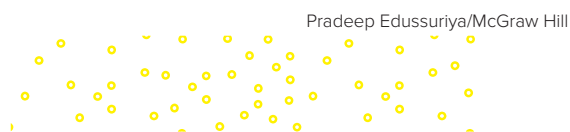
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Preface

We are excited to offer you the fourth edition of *Exceptional Students: Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*. The field of education has evolved into one that requires collaboration among families, communities, and schools. Within schools, special and general educators must collaborate to be effective and efficient in teaching and responding to the demands of new standards, statewide assessments, and calls for education reform. In this fourth edition of *Exceptional Students: Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*, we have refined and updated our content to reflect the role of the special educator while continuing to address the role of the general educator in serving special populations.

The fourth edition includes updated references and photographs, changes to the content emphases and discussions to reflect current thought and practice, and additions/deletions of tables and figures to also reflect current thought. The following section, *New Additions to the Fourth Edition*, outlines more specifics. We would like to stress that this text includes information from *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5)*, the latest from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), and other important publications and references that define and influence the field of special education. We are grateful to the instructors and students who have given us their feedback on the text. Their classroom experiences inspired suggested refinements that we incorporated throughout the fourth edition. Case studies have been updated as needed to reflect current practices.

New Additions to the Fourth Edition

Each chapter of the book has been rewritten and revised to reflect current research. References and photographs have been updated throughout. The content has been refined for clarity and consistency. Case studies have been updated as needed to reflect current practices.

Chapter 1: New research and figures reflect the 41st Annual Report to Congress on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Content has been updated to reflect trends in 21st century schools.

Chapter 2: Content has been reorganized slightly to reflect multitiered system of supports and response to intervention research. Content regarding laws has been updated to reflect the Every Student Succeeds Act.

Chapter 3: Person-centered planning information has been updated to reflect current practice. The co-teaching models have been revised and updated to reflect current practice. The interagency agreement section has been removed to more closely match the actual practice of most teachers. Working with families content has been updated.

Chapter 4: Information on instructional practices has been expanded a bit to reflect the emphasis on STEM programs. The practices section has also been updated to reflect the ever-increasing focus on access to the general education curriculum.

Chapter 5: The terminology has been changed to *intellectual disabilities* from mental retardation (except as when historically appropriate). The definition and identification procedures have been changed to reflect the AAIDD's most recent publications. The supports model of service delivery has been updated as well. The preventive measures section now reflects more current thinking in the field. The academic content and instructional technology sections have been expanded to reflect the more current focus on inclusion while maintaining the need for functional skills and community-based instruction.

Chapter 6: The definition and identification procedures have been changed to reflect the *DSM-5* revisions and a more current focus on evaluation. The instructional procedures sections have been updated.

Chapter 7: The content has been updated to reflect the changes in delivery of services options.

Chapter 8: The characteristics information has been updated to reflect more recent research. The environmental arrangements section has also been updated. There have been updates to the historical information and perspectives.

Chapter 9: Both the national agenda and expanded core curriculum information include more recent changes. The assessment section has been updated to include current practice. The assistive technology section has been updated with outdated material deleted.

Chapter 10: The Individualized Health Care plans section has been revised to better reflect current practice.

Chapter 11: All of the foundation section has been rewritten to reflect changes made in the *DSM-5*. Outdated tables also have been deleted to reflect these changes. The practices section has been updated to reflect more emphasis on accessing the general education curriculum. Instructional technology has been updated and expanded.

Chapter 12: In general, the overall coverage in this chapter has been reduced to better reflect reviewers' preferences. The levels of support discussion have been updated to reflect the new AAIDD publications. The table on various syndromes has been deleted, and readers are referred to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website for detailed information of medical conditions and syndromes. Accessing the general education curriculum discussion has been revised and updated. Information on alternative assessments has been minimized, as the procedures vary from state to state.

Chapter 13: All prevalence and risk factors statistics have been updated to reflect newer definitions and trends. Assessment tools have been updated. Information that was duplicative has been removed. The skills in early literacy identified by the National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), which have replaced the National Reading Panel skills as the areas on which to focus with this age group, are discussed.

Chapter 14: The definition section and tables in the foundations section have incorporated the changes made in the *DSM-5*. The instructional procedures sections have been updated.

Chapter 15: Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) material has been added to expand coverage of research on gifted and talented students. Bloom's Taxonomy has been updated to the newer revision.

An Emphasis on What Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do

The new edition of *Exceptional Students* provides balanced coverage of the foundations of exceptionalities that future teachers *need to know* to understand their students and responsibilities, and the practical information they need to effectively teach their students. Although the general topics addressed are similar to those of other textbooks, coverage of these topics is enhanced within each chapter of *Exceptional Students*, fourth edition.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

FOUNDATIONS	PRACTICE
<p>What Are the Foundations of Learning Disabilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Brief History of Learning Disabilities Definitions of Learning Disabilities Prevalence of Learning Disabilities <p>What Are the Causes and Characteristics of Learning Disabilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Causes of Learning Disabilities Characteristics of Students with Learning Disabilities <p>How Are Students with Learning Disabilities Identified?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response to Intervention The Use of Standardized Testing 	<p>What and How Do I Teach Students with Learning Disabilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Content Instructional Procedures <p>What Are Other Instructional Considerations for Teaching Students with Learning Disabilities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Instructional Environment Instructional Technology <p>What Are Some Considerations for the General Education Teacher?</p>

Coverage of practical information related to instructional content, instructional procedures, the instructional environment, and instructional technology has been expanded from its traditional treatment so that each chapter provides equal amounts of foundational and practical material. In addition, two topics crucial for future teachers to understand in order to best support their students—collaboration and students at risk—are stand-alone chapters.

Foundational Information for Understanding Exceptionalities

The first half of each exceptionality chapter is devoted to the foundational information about exceptionalities that future teachers need to know. This section discusses the history, definitions, prevalence, causes, characteristics, and identification procedures of the specific exceptionality. Devoting the first half of the chapter to foundational content provides future teachers with the groundwork they will need to make informed instructional decisions in the classroom.

Foundational coverage is also highlighted through the *An Important Event* feature, which presents a key event or the publication of seminal research that has helped shape special education today. Reflection questions, designed to help students consider their opinion or the importance of the event, accompany each discussion. Examples of important events include the founding of the Council for Exceptional Children, publication of Wang and Birch's proposal for the use of the Adaptive Learning Environment Model, and publication of the results of the Carolina Abecedarian Project. Even though *Exceptional Students* emphasizes practical applications, we believe it is vital for students to understand how special education has evolved and to consider their place in its continuing development. Foundational content also supports teacher education candidates in passing state licensure exams.

Practical Information to Guide Classroom Planning and Instruction

The second half of each exceptionality chapter provides instructional and pedagogical information future teachers need to know to effectively teach students. This part of the chapter is organized around instructional content, instructional procedures, the instructional environment, and instructional technology, as well as specific considerations for

the general education teacher. In addition, the general education section introduces topics that are important when planning and implementing instruction for students with special needs within the general education classroom. Practical strategies are also highlighted in the following features:

Chapter-opening Case Study and Revisit Opportunities

Each chapter begins with a scenario describing a student with special needs in the context of his or her educational experience. Throughout the chapter, readers are presented with related questions called *Revisits*, which ask students to apply key concepts they have just learned to an actual situation.

INTRODUCING ALLISON

Allison is a 6-year-old girl who has just started the first grade. She has a hearing loss resulting from repeated and severe ear infections in infancy and throughout her early childhood. The infections resulted in a bilateral conductive hearing loss. Her loss is mild to moderate—she does not hear clearly until sounds reach a 40 decibel level. She experiences this hearing loss across all frequencies of sound detectable by the human ear. Prior to entering school, Allison received early intervention services at home from an audiologist and early childhood special educator. Because of her frequent illnesses, she only sporadically attended a center-based preschool program. With time, medical interventions greatly reduced the infections and their severity.

Allison uses hearing aids that make it possible for her to learn using her auditory channel. Her speech and language skills are delayed, likely the result of not hearing adequately in early childhood. Her parents are concerned about her literacy skills development as she begins school. Because she qualified for early intervention, the school and Allison's parents developed an IEP for her. She receives speech and language services regularly. An itinerant teacher for students who are deaf or hard of hearing provides consultation to her general education teacher. The team did not feel they should "pull out" Allison for resource room services if her literacy skills, which will be

monitored and assessed frequently, can be developed in her general education class. Also, an audiologist will provide consultation to Allison's parents, teachers, and speech and language pathologist to ensure her hearing aids are working properly, are being maintained, and are being used as effectively as possible. ■



Carmen Martinez Banus/E+/Getty Images

These cases tie the chapter together, allow for contextual learning, and offer an instructor several additional topics for discussion. For example, in Chapter 8, the reader is introduced to Allison, a student with a hearing loss. Later in the chapter, the reader is asked whether Allison would be considered deaf or hard of hearing, what issues she might have with her identity, and how her teacher might plan for accommodations during literacy instruction.

Classroom Suggestions

As in the previous editions, the emphasis on practical classroom suggestions and strategies is maintained. Each chapter includes several *Classroom Suggestions* with strategies and tips. These clear, concise strategies serve as mini-guides for future teachers, giving them confidence to enter their classrooms ready to handle myriad situations. Examples of *Classroom Suggestions* include Strategies to Promote Family Involvement, Guidelines for Implementing Cooperative Learning, Examples of Instructional Grouping Accommodations for Students with Intellectual Disabilities, and Accommodations for a Student Who Has Difficulty with Self-Control.

Classroom Suggestion Tips for Software Selection	
When selecting software, make sure:	<input type="checkbox"/> There are small increments between levels.
<input type="checkbox"/> Content is free of gender, cultural, and racial stereotypes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Only a limited number of incorrect responses are allowed per problem.
<input type="checkbox"/> Content is interesting, engaging, and encourages exploration and imagination.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are built-in instructional aids (e.g., virtual manipulatives in math).
<input type="checkbox"/> Activities require decision making and judgments.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are minimal keyboard skill requirements and easy-to-understand icons.
<input type="checkbox"/> It has a high degree of interactivity.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are praise and helpful feedback provisions.
<input type="checkbox"/> The screen is not cluttered. The less clutter on the screen, the better.	<input type="checkbox"/> It has a built-in review.
<input type="checkbox"/> Procedures and goals match those being taught in school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Real-life solutions are simulated.
<input type="checkbox"/> Directions are simple to read or have images or speech to guide use.	<input type="checkbox"/> It has good record-keeping capabilities.
<input type="checkbox"/> Software is modifiable (e.g., speed, quantity of problems, levels).	And
<input type="checkbox"/> Programs contain more than one activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Remember software is a learning tool—not the total solution!

Source: Lee (1987), Babbitt (1999), and Hutinger and Johanson (1998).

Classroom Examples

The fourth edition of *Exceptional Students* continues to include classroom artifacts and sample handouts of real and relevant student and teacher work. For example, the text shares a sample Team-Teaching plan, a Contingency Contract, and a Social Story with picture cues to assist with waiting in line in the cafeteria.

Classroom Example Mnemonic Strategy for Teaching Students to Write a Friendly Letter

Purpose: To aid students in writing a friendly letter.

Population: Elementary

LETTER

Let my friend know the date and my greeting.

Express my thoughts and ideas in the letter.

Terminate with a closing and my name.

Take time to reread.

Edit and rewrite if necessary.

Realize that I can write a good letter.

Source: Adapted from Ellen Karger (1998), South Florida teacher of students with learning disabilities.

Practical Considerations for the Classroom

Concluding each chapter, *Practical Considerations for the Classroom: A Reference for Teachers* provides an at-a-glance practical summary the future teacher can take into the classroom. Sections of the feature include What IDEA Says about the Specific Exceptionality, Identification Tools, Characteristics, Indicators You Might See, Teaching Implications, Methodologies and Strategies to Try, Considerations for the General Classroom, and Collaboration. Again, understanding the principles of planning, implementing, and delivering special education and related services is vital to passing state licensure exams.

Coverage of Collaboration

We strongly believe that helping our future teachers to be part of a collaborative team will result in a better educational experience for the exceptional student, the general education teacher, and the special education teacher. We have continued to devote a complete chapter to collaboration and have updated the section on co-teaching in particular. The chapter provides an introduction to collaboration including its history and key concepts and the roles of different team members. It also explores best practices in collaboration among schools and families, between school personnel, and between schools and communities. In addition, we've integrated issues of collaboration in individual chapters where relevant.

Practical Considerations for the Classroom

Students with Learning Disabilities

What IDEA Says about Learning Disabilities: Learning Disabilities is an IDEA category. IDEA defines learning disabilities as “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, spell, or do mathematical calculations.” Disorders included are perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Disorders not included are learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; mental retardation; emotional disturbances or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.	Characteristics	Indicators You Might See	Teaching Implications	Methodologies and Strategies to Try	Considerations for the General Classroom and Collaboration
<p>Identification Tools: The general classroom teacher often makes the initial identification based on classroom observation and performance, and state- or districtwide assessments. <i>Prereferral Assessment and RTI Approaches:</i> Possibly uses criterion-referenced testing, curriculum-based assessment, and criterion-referenced measurement. <i>Formal Identification:</i> Several sources are used for identification. They may include intelligence and achievement tests, tests measuring process skills, and language and academic tests. The response to intervention approach may also be used.</p>	Related to Reading	May have problems with phonological awareness or processing; rapid automatic naming; word recognition (mispronunciation; skipping, adding, or substituting words; reversing letters or words; difficulty blending sounds together); and comprehension (due to lack of background knowledge, difficulty understanding text structure, and vocabulary deficits).	<p>Instructional Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most students with learning disabilities will participate in the general education curriculum. They will most likely need intensive instruction in the process of learning and in the content of learning. Consider need for the curriculum to include declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and conditional knowledge. Support content areas of reading (phonological awareness, decoding and comprehension), written language (teaching writing as a process), mathematics (computation and problem solving), and study skills (such as listening, note taking, time management, comprehending textbook usage and memory strategies). Transition planning should include the development of goal setting and self-advocacy. <p>Instructional Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a structured instructional program with daily routines and expectations; clear rules; curriculum presented in an organized, sequential fashion, and a focus on learning tasks rather than extraneous stimuli. In planning, consider what, how, and when to teach; provide activities for practice, feedback, and evaluation; organize and pace the curriculum, and provide smooth transitions. Consider using task analysis and direct instruction. Consider using cognitive and metacognitive strategies instruction. Consider whether using the Learning Strategies Curriculum would be of use in teaching academics and social interaction. Consider attribution retraining. Effective instructional practices for ELLs include using visuals to reinforce concepts and vocabulary, utilizing cooperative learning and peer tutoring, making strategic use of the native language by allowing students to organize their thoughts in their native language, providing sufficient time and opportunity for students to use oral language and writing in formal and informal contexts, and focusing on rich vocabulary words during lessons to be used as vehicles for teaching literary concepts. Also consider providing simplified, appealing, multisensory lectures; adapting textbooks and assignments; and using supplementary materials. <p>Instructional Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce congestion in high-traffic areas, make sure you can see all students, make frequently used materials and supplies easily accessible, ensure that all students can see whole class presentations. For preschool students, the environment should be structured and promote efficiency, accessibility, independence, and functionality. It should also promote language and literacy development. For elementary and secondary students, the environment should be organized to prevent “dead time.” Structure and routine are important. Space should be available for individual work, large and small group work, peer tutoring, and cooperative learning. Decrease possible distractions. Effective grouping options include one-to-one instruction, small group, whole class, peer tutoring, and classwide peer tutoring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Task Analysis (p. 109) Cognitive Strategies (p. 111) Metacognitive Strategies (p. 111) Mnemonics (p. 113) Attribution Retraining (p. 114) 	<p>Instruction generally occurs in the general education classroom.</p> <p>The general education teacher should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a positive climate that promotes valuing and accepting personal responsibility for learning. Consider accommodations such as changes in presentation of instructional methods or materials, assignments and tests, response modes, the learning environment, and time demands and scheduling. Consider adapting the academic content. Consider a parallel or overlapping curriculum. <p>Collaboration</p> <p>General and special educators should consult on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the Curriculum Developing accommodations Choosing procedures and strategies Planning the physical environment Planning for assistive technology
	Related to Mathematics	Possible problems with basic number facts, calculation, application, language of math, problem solving, oral drills and worksheets, word problems, math anxiety, and retrieving information from long-term memory.			
	Writing and Written Expression Characteristics	Possible problems with handwriting, spelling, or written language/written expression (punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence structure).			
	Expressive and Receptive Language Characteristics	Possible problems with producing and understanding language.			
	Cognitive-Related Characteristics	Possible problems with attention, memory, strategy use, and metacognition.			
	Social and Emotional Characteristics	Possible social skills deficits, and problems with social cognition and relationships with others. May have fewer friends and less social status than peers. Possible behavioral problems include depression, anxiety disorders, and antisocial personality disorder. May also display learned helplessness.			

Coverage of Students at Risk

As part of our belief in including practical and relevant information for all future teachers, we have included a chapter dedicated to at-risk children (see Chapter 13). Regardless of whether they receive services under Part C of IDEA, children at risk may be identified as needing services through Part B of IDEA. If identified early and addressed appropriately, the learning challenges of some of these students can be remediated without formal identification. This chapter enables future teachers to identify students who may be at risk and provide them with the appropriate supports.

Integration of Key Topics

Based on our experience teaching introduction to special education courses, and feedback from readers, instructors, and reviewers, we have updated but maintained integration of topics that include:

- Inclusion:** The inclusive classroom is first introduced in Chapter 2 (The Special Education Process). To further emphasize the importance of this topic, and to discuss it in a relevant and practical manner, the final section of each chapter in Parts Two–Four focuses on the inclusive, general education classroom. As members of the collaborative special education team, both the special education teacher and the general education teacher benefit from fully understanding inclusion. It prepares the future general education teacher for a classroom with exceptional students and enables the future special education teacher to better understand general classroom needs, thereby fostering better collaboration.
- Student Cultural Diversity:** Diversity is first introduced in Chapter 1 (An Overview of Special Education) and then discussed within each chapter. For example, effective instructional strategies for English language learners with learning disabilities are suggested in Chapter 4 (Students with Learning Disabilities); working with families

from diverse backgrounds when implementing assistive technology for students with intellectual disabilities is discussed in Chapter 5 (Students with Intellectual Disabilities); and the underidentification of culturally diverse gifted students is explored in Chapter 15 (Students Who Are Gifted and Talented).

- *Technology*: Technology offers a range of support and learning opportunities for students. With the explosive growth of technology tools, an understanding of how and when to use these tools and their benefits should be discussed. Each chapter in Parts Two–Four presents a section on relevant technologies useful in the instruction and support of students with special needs.
- *Early Intervention and Transition*: Like technology, early intervention and transition issues vary by exceptionality. Coverage ranges from the importance of early intervention with children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, to special transition support, such as for postsecondary education for students with learning disabilities.

Features That Support Student Learning

Students in our classrooms not only need to read textual information but also need to understand, analyze, and synthesize the large amount of material presented to them. The fourth edition of *Exceptional Students* includes the following pedagogical aids as guides for future teachers, resulting in more application and a better understanding of special education.

- *Chapter Opening Outline*: Each chapter begins with a chapter outline designed as an advance organizer to prepare the reader for the content to come.
- *Check Your Understanding*: Concluding each major section are several questions presented to check understanding of key ideas. This allows students to learn and digest material in smaller chunks. By using this tool, students can work through the material at their own pace, checking that they fully understand one concept before moving to the next.
- *Marginal Definitions of Key Terms*: For easy reference, full definitions of key terms are presented in the margin next to where they appear in the chapter. These definitions are also available in the glossary at the end of the text.
- *Chapter Summary*: Key concepts are highlighted to reinforce an understanding of the most important concepts and provide an effective tool for studying.
- *Reflection Questions and Application Activities*: Chapter-ending reflection questions encourage debate, active learning, and reflection, along with application activities that may involve field components and emphasize learning in real environments, with real students and practitioners, and in schools and communities.

Supplemental Offerings

The fourth edition of *Exceptional Students* is accompanied by a wealth of teaching and learning resources.

- **Instructor's Manual**. Each chapter includes an overview, objectives, outline, and key vocabulary list; teaching strategies; classroom activities; alternative assessment activities; possible responses to the Revisit questions asked in the text; and additional case studies and examples.
- **Test Bank** by Kelly Brown Kearney, Florida Atlantic University. Each chapter is supported by multiple-choice and true/false questions categorized by type of question and level of difficulty, and essay questions.
- **PowerPoint Slides**. The PowerPoint slides cover the key points of each chapter and include charts and graphs from the text. The PowerPoint presentations serve as an organization and navigation tool, and can be modified to meet your needs.



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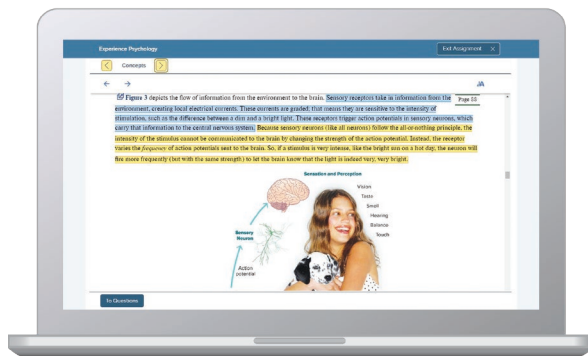
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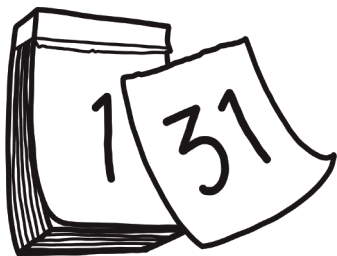
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- Jordan Cunningham,
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Acknowledgments

Just as it takes a team to educate students with exceptionalities, so it does to write a textbook. We gratefully acknowledge the feedback, guidance, and contributions offered by our expert consultants who helped ensure current and comprehensive coverage in their areas of specialty; design consultants who commented on the cover and interior designs; peer reviewers who teach relevant college courses and were able to suggest how chapters or discussions could be improved to best meet the way they teach and their students learn the course content; and especially the reviewers of the new fourth edition. We also wish to thank Kalynn Hall for her research assistance, and new chapter coauthors, Drs. Mary-Kate Sableski, Lisa Finnegan, and Katie Miller.

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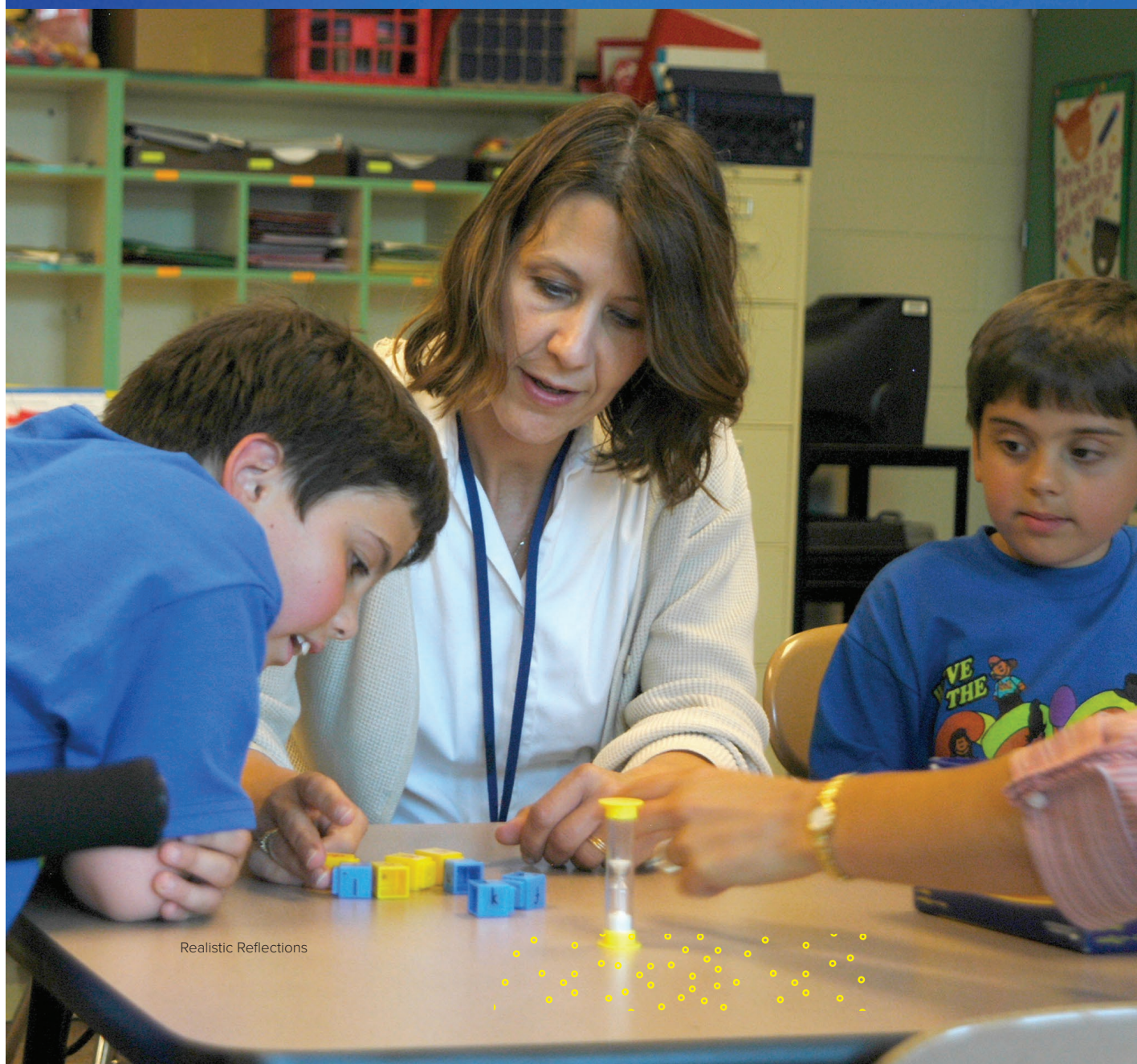
Andrew Wiley, *Kent State University*





An Overview of Special Education

CHAPTER 1



Realistic Reflections



CHAPTER OUTLINE

Who Are Exceptional Students?

How Many Exceptional Students Are There?

What Are Special Education and Related Services?

Special Education
Related Services

What Is the History of Special Education?

Early History
The 17th through 19th Centuries
The 20th Century

How Have Litigation and Legislation Affected Special Education?

Early Court Cases
Early Legislation Affecting Special Education
Post–PL 94-142 Legislation
Current Legislation: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 108-446)

What Are Some Current and Future Issues in Special Education?

Overrepresentation of Students from Culturally or Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds
Education and Transition of Infants and Toddlers
Role of the General Education Teacher

This book is about teaching exceptional students—what both special education and general education teachers, and other professionals, can do to educate students with special needs with their peers without exceptionalities to the maximum extent appropriate. It covers foundational information on the history, definitions, prevalence, causes, characteristics, and identification of exceptional students that teachers need to understand in order to make informed teaching decisions. In this book, we discuss practical information regarding the instructional content, procedures, environment, and technology that teachers will use in their day-to-day activities. Teaching exceptional students is a challenging, rewarding, and sometimes both a frustrating and joyful endeavor. Through research and practical experience, we are constantly discovering more and more about the characteristics, capabilities, and educational needs of exceptional students. Similarly, we have learned a great deal about the educational approaches to use with students with special needs. However, we have also learned that just as each student has individual characteristics, needs, and strengths and weaknesses, there is no single approach, theory, or philosophy that gives us all the answers or will be relevant for all exceptional students. Current federal law requires that students with disabilities be taught using research-based instruction. With this in mind, the approaches, models, and techniques discussed in this text are supported by research. We share this research-based information for you to use as you begin your personal collection of approaches, models, and techniques to meet the needs of all students.

In this first chapter, we provide you with the foundational understanding you need to understand the different categories of exceptionality and to effectively support and teach students with exceptionalities. We first explain how exceptional students are defined and how many exceptional students are being served in the schools. This leads to an explanation of the meaning and intent of special education and related services. Next, we provide an overview of the history of the treatment and education of individuals with exceptionalities. We then discuss the litigation and legislation that define special education today and that will, in many cases, outline your responsibilities in the classroom. We conclude this chapter by introducing you to three issues in special education that we will revisit throughout the text: (1) the overidentification of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in many categories of disability, (2) the need for early intervention and transition of young children with disabilities, (3) the transition of students from high school to adult living, and (4) the important role of the general education teacher.

Who Are Exceptional Students?

In the simplest terms, an **exceptional student** is one whose educational needs are not met by traditional educational programs. Exceptional students include those who are at-risk for delayed development and those actually experiencing disabilities. Exceptional also includes students who have gifts and talents that are outside typical development. Finally, students who are gifted and talented may experience disabilities as well and are therefore, twice-exceptional. Three terms that have historically been used to apply to those with exceptionalities are *impairment*, *disability*, and *handicap*.

An **impairment** refers to a loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function. For example, Devon, who had a diving accident and is paralyzed below his waist, has an impairment. A **disability** is a limitation that is inherent in the individual as a result of the impairment, whereas a **handicap** is caused when an individual encounters a situation based on external factors. For example, Devon has a *disability* due to a lack of mobility caused by his paralysis. Devon would also have a *handicap* if he wanted to enter a building that has stairs but no ramp for his wheelchair. The terms *impairment* and *handicap* are used much less frequently today. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA), an earlier version of the current federal law, first recommended that the term *disability* replace the term *handicap*, which had been used in previous legislation. Today, the term *disability* is used primarily. Some believe that the terms *impairment* and *handicap* are less preferable and in some way demeaning. Even the term *disability* may be considered as demeaning as emphasizing a condition rather than the person, but remains the term used in legislation.

Another recommendation made by IDEA was the use of “person-first” terminology that emphasizes the individual first and then the disability. For example, prior to IDEA an individual might be referred to as “a learning disabled student” or “an orthopedically impaired child.” Now, the appropriate terminology is “a student with a learning disability” and “a child with an orthopedic impairment.”

Students are defined as having a disability, and in need of special education, based on criteria outlined in the most recent federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 that guides today’s special education practices. This law is discussed in depth later in this chapter and will be referred to throughout the text. IDEA identifies the following specific types, labels, or categories of students who are considered as having a disability:

A child with a disability means a child evaluated . . . as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.*

IDEA also states that, as a result of the disability, there must be (1) an adverse effect on educational performance, and (2) requires special education. One student with Type I diabetes may have few effects from the condition. Another may experience more absences, loss of vitality, need for frequent breaks,

*Readers should note that the states may use different terms for the disability categories than those used in IDEA and from one state to another.

Source: [71 FR 46753, August 14, 2006, as amended at 72 FR 61306, October 30, 2007; 82 FR 31912, July 11, 2017]

exceptional student A student whose educational needs are not met by traditional education programs. An exceptional student can have a disability or can have gifts and talents.

impairment A loss or abnormality of a psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function.

disability A limitation that is inherent in an individual as a result of the impairment.

handicap A problem an individual encounters based on external factors.



The challenge for educators is to limit the effects of a disability on a child.

Realistic Reflections

and monitoring by a school nurse. The second child may qualify for special education while the first child may not.

Parts 2 and 3 of this text contain chapters that provide foundational and practical information related to children identified with disabilities. There are 13 categories of disability defined in IDEA and each is discussed in this text. Also discussed are students at-risk for identification for special education, those who experience attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD), and those with gifts and talents. All of these students may be considered exceptional, though not necessarily as having a “disability” under the definitions in IDEA. These exceptional students are discussed in a separate Part 4 of this text. Remember that students with gifts and talents could be twice-exceptional, as well.

Check Your Understanding

1. What is the definition of an exceptional student?
2. What is the difference between an impairment, a disability, and a handicap?
3. Students with which disabilities are served under IDEA?
4. For a student to be identified under IDEA, what two criteria must be met in addition to having a disability?

How Many Exceptional Students Are There?

Two terms are typically used when describing the number of exceptional students. Incidence refers to the number of individuals identified as falling into a particular category for the first time during a specific period. The period of time used to determine incidence figures can vary, although 1 year is frequently used. Prevalence, on the other hand, refers to the total number of individuals who are in a given category at a particular point in time. The prevalence, which is more commonly used when states and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) report data on students who receive special education services. For example, the USDOE reported in 2008, 8.3% of all students aged 6 to 21 years received special education across all states. In 2017, the prevalence had increased to 9.2% (USDOE, 2019). Incidence can be useful as well. For example, if there were to be pandemic that affected unborn children by causing disabilities, the incidence of disabilities may be higher for that year in comparison to previous or subsequent years. For practical purposes, prevalence is more useful than incidence because it gives an indication of the total number of individuals who are actually receiving special education services; therefore, we report prevalence figures rather than incidence figures in this text.

Although prevalence rates are often estimates that have remained relatively consistent over the years, the most pragmatic method of determining the prevalence figures is to identify the percentage of individuals who are actually identified and receiving special education services. In 2017, 9.2% of students aged 6 to 21 years received special education under IDEA (USDOE, 2019). This percentage does not include gifted and talented students (unless twice-exceptional) as they are not served under IDEA. The prevalence of gifted and talented students has been estimated to be between 6% and 10% of all students in school (National Association for Gifted Children, retrieved www.nagc.org, 06/2020). Some of these students might also be twice-exceptional. Because services for gifted and talented services are not mandated by the USDOE, precise prevalence figures may not be precise.

Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of students ages 6 to 21 receiving services in each category of disability as reported by the USDOE as a function of the total population of all students with disabilities. Over 90% of students with disabilities are identified in six IDEA categories: specific learning disabilities (38.2%), speech or language impairments (16.7%), other health impairments (15.8%), autism (10.1%), intellectual disabilities (6.8%), and emotional disturbance (5.5%). The remaining categories combined include 7.1%.

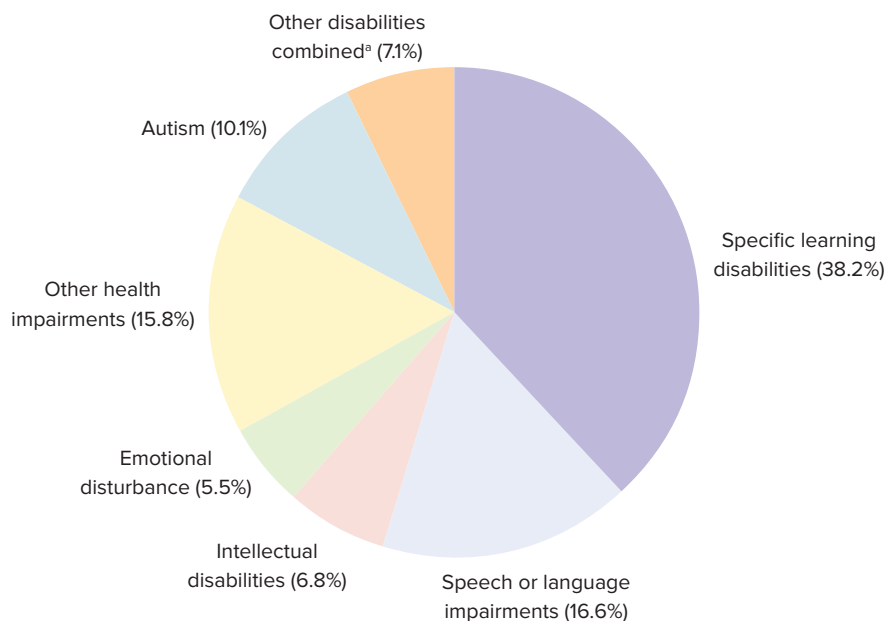


FIGURE 1.1 Percentage of students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, by disability category: Fall 2017.

^a“Other disabilities combined” includes *deaf-blindness* (less than 0.05%), *developmental delay* (2.6%), *hearing impairments* (1.1%), *multiple disabilities* (2.0%), *orthopedic impairments* (0.6%), *traumatic brain injury* (0.4%), and *visual impairments* (0.4%).

Note: Percentage was calculated by dividing the number of students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, in the disability category by the total number of students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B (6,130,637), then multiplying the result by 100.

Source: “Thirty-first Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Parts B and C. 2009.” Home. US Department of Education (ED), November 28, 2012. Web. April 21, 2017.

Bear in mind these are the percentages of students served under IDEA in each category, not the percentage of all students in school. Again, that percentage was 9.2% as of fall 2017.

The percentage of students in different categories receiving special education has changed over the years. Table 1.1 shows the increases and decreases in the various categories of disabilities between 1998 and 2007. Interestingly, only two categories—other health impairment and autism—showed relative increases over that time period. The increase in the other health impairment category may be largely attributed to some states’ use of this category to provide services for students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, which itself is rapidly growing. The probable reason for the increase in autism is that it was not considered as a disability area under federal law until 1990. Substantial interest and awareness, as well as improved diagnostic procedures, have resulted in more students being identified.

There was an overall increase in the percentage of students served under IDEA from 2008 to 2017. Aside from the other health impairment and autism categories, most remained relatively the same. Of some interest is the decrease, albeit small, in the specific learning disability category which is the largest category overall. Only other health impairment, specific learning disability, and speech or language impairment categories exceeded 1% of the overall school population. It should also be noted that these percentages may differ from a state to the overall United States and from state to state. Even within the same state, these percentages may differ from one region/district to another. Readers are encouraged to access the most recent Annual Report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA from the U.S. Department of Education. Finally, these percentages do not include children birth through 2 years served under Part C of IDEA.