

**TRADITIONAL AND INNOVATIVE
ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES FOR
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Jeffrey P. Bakken

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ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION VOLUME 36

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PREFACE

Assessments are critical ingredients, in general, and special education programs. They are legally required and help to define, determine, authenticate, and solidify programmatic integrity and fidelity at all strategic levels. In addition, they are engrained in the foundational workings of educational routines, especially in special education where they form the live wire of programmatic survival. In this book, *Traditional and Innovative Assessment Techniques for Students with Disabilities*, we recognize assessment as integral in the functional existence of special education. Our contributors who are also authorities in assessments elucidate this premise from multidimensional, student-focused, and categorical perspectives. Their chapters focused on students with learning disabilities, students with emotional and behavioral disorders, students with intellectual disabilities, students who are deaf/hard of hearing, students with visual impairments, students with autism/autistic spectrum disorders, students with extensive support needs, students with traumatic brain injuries, students with speech and language impairments, students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, and students with physical and other health impairments.

As indicated, assessments are important informational tools that are usually standardized to buttress generalizability for subjects (in this case, students). This traditional role of assessments has not gone unchallenged. As a result, the cravings for innovative forms of assessments have become necessary. Why? While measurement tools have been used consistently to traditionally assess students and programs, their validity and reliability have also been traditionally questioned. Relevant questions include, but are not limited to: (1) Do these tools produce consistent and reliable results? (2) Do they measure what they validly purport to measure even they produce consistent results? (3) Do they address the concepts of interindividual and intraindividual differences of students? (4) Do they also address situations and circumstances that impinge upon the livelihoods of vulnerable populations? And, (5) do they address CLD backgrounds of students since they are Euro-centrally normalized? Based on these questions, it behooves general and special educators and related professionals to innovate, adapt, and modify assessment tools to do what they are supposed to do.

We do acknowledge that assessment tools can be diagnostically, formatively, and summatively used. We also know that these tools are necessary to meet the needs of students, parents, and teaching and related professionals, and, by so doing, they meet the needs of communities and state and federal governments. There are legitimate questions that come to play in assessments. What skills do students bring before they are tested? What skill and knowledge do they demonstrate during and after tests? What information do parents have about

their students? What roles are ancillary and community services playing to support students? Are assessment tools responding to the civil rights of students as stated by state and federal laws? These questions are critical to the sacred existence of students, teachers, programs, parents, and other related professionals. This means that how the roles of these important entities are tied to the roles of multidisciplinary teams is intensely critical.

On the whole, *Traditional and Innovative Assessment Techniques for Students with Disabilities* is uniquely crucial and written to address current assessment issues. We understand that no assessment is perfect; however, how we use it is important. From our perspective, using assessment tools to label, categorize, and place students defeats the purposes of these tools. In reality, we cannot afford to throw the baby away with the bath water. We can gain lots of important knowledge when we use these tools prudently and productively. As we respect tradition, we must also be innovative.

We believe this book is an excellent required or supplementary text for undergraduate and graduate students majoring in special education, psychology, and related fields. It is apparently beneficial to researchers and practitioners, in general, and special education and other related professions. We thank our contributors for sharing their wealth of knowledge in this book, and we especially thank the professionals at Emerald for their patience and support during this book project. Finally, we thank our family members for their unflinching love and support during this venture.

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