

USING TECHNOLOGY TO ENHANCE SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Series Editors: Festus E. Obiakor and
Jeffrey P. Bakken

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ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION VOLUME 37

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EDITED BY

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PREFACE

Students with disabilities are continuously facing challenges in our educational systems and programs. One area of focus that has been challenging is technology. For many years, the use of technology in the classroom for students with disabilities was nonexistent and then, the focus was on the use of microcomputers and drill and practice activities. Over time, technology has become very important for teachers, parents, and their students with disabilities. Technology has allowed these students to be successful and have access to environments they previously could not participate in because of their disability. For example, during the global COVID pandemic that devastated the world, technology became the livewire of most societies. However, while legislation has mandated the use of technology for students with disabilities, school systems, teachers, and other professionals are sometimes slow to implement changes that will positively impact these students. It could be the training on the use of the technology, cost, or individuals just not being aware of certain technologies that could benefit the learning of students with disabilities. Providing the appropriate technology is definitely an area that has not been addressed to the level that it should for students with disabilities. This journey to improve the use of technology has not been easy for these students and their teachers and families. The use of technology for students with disabilities needs to be a primary focus in the future so students have positive school outcomes that will make them positive contributors for themselves and society.

This book, *Using Technology to Enhance Special Education*, Volume 37 of *Advances in Special Education*, is a logically, thoughtfully organized, and well-sequenced text. It focuses on how general and special educators can use technology to work with children and youth with disabilities. This cutting-edge book involves researchers, scholars, educators, and leaders who are knowledge producers in the field. It is written to respond to today's changing world where technology has become a very powerful force. As it stands, the world is getting smaller and smaller; and what is happening in a location quickly becomes known everywhere. For example, during the tense periods of the global COVID pandemic, technology became the livewire of our world. This book begins with an introduction to technology and students with disabilities; and the remaining chapters focus on the role of technology in the education of students with learning disabilities, emotional and/or behavioral disorders, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, physical and health impairments, hearing impairments/deafness, visual impairments, and traumatic brain injuries. In addition, some chapters focus on the role of technology in achieving equitable and inclusive education, building culturally and linguistically responsive general and special

education, and creatively using digital comics to improve written narratives. This book concludes with a chapter that addresses forward-looking ways to infuse technology in special education.

Even though technology is still rare in some disadvantaged communities, it is here to stay. As a result, it behooves us to use it to advance our future. And, for a brighter future, general and special education must continue to infuse cutting-edge technology in all programs to reach all students regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, cultural difference, ethnic group, disability, or health impairment. When used appropriately, technology can be a positive factor in students' learning, academic, or social processes. The use of computers and other technology must be thoughtfully planned to provide for students' growing needs. General and special education teachers and leaders should (1) develop policies about computer usage, (2) work with parents to provide technological guidance as needed, (3) allow students to be in control without letting technology (e.g., computer) to serve as the babysitter. To a large extent, technology must be used cautiously in special education to positively impact students, educators, and leaders, as well as educational systems.

We feel that *Using Technology to Enhance Special Education* is an excellent resource for special education researchers, scholars, practitioners, and professionals who teach and serve students with disabilities. This book is of great benefit to those teaching required undergraduate and graduate special education courses and those engaged in research on technology for students with disabilities. It can also serve as an excellent supplementary text for advanced students who are looking for detailed, comprehensive, and current information for their research papers or theses.

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