

SPECIAL EDUCATION

ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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ADVANCES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION VOLUME 38

SPECIAL EDUCATION: ADVANCING VALUES

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2024

Editorial matter and selection © 2024 Festus E. Obiakor and Jeffrey P. Bakken.
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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83753-467-8 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-83753-466-1 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-83753-468-5 (Epub)

ISSN: 0270-4013 (Series)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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PREFACE

In all works and professions of life, change is an inevitable consequence; however, it can have a good or bad consequence. When it is good, it can lead to progressive actions; but, when it is bad, it can lead to retrogressive actions. *Special Education: Advancing Values* is a change-oriented book that values the creation and advantages of special education while also doing an evaluative exploration of special education. It is a book that cumulatively reaffirms the authenticity of special education as an important educational phenomenon that is now intertwined with our changing society, and to a large measure reiterates that any society that fails to value people with special needs fails itself in our progressive and civilized world.

Historically, individuals with disabilities were unvalued, undervalued, disadvantaged, and demeaned by their homes, schools, communities, and governments. Visibly, their experiences were loaded with all kinds of vulnerabilities at all levels. However, as people got more enlightened, educated, focused, and dedicated, the society advanced; and as it advanced, rooms began to be created for advocacies, litigations, and protective laws that remediated the plights of persons with disabilities. *Special Education: Advancing Values* authenticates these facts and presents real ideas, real problems, real solutions, and real future perspectives that could help transform the field of special education in good and multiple ways.

This book reiterates the fact that special education is blessed with authentic hard-fought advocacies, litigations, and laws that are inextricably tied to fundamental human rights and human valuing (e.g., *Brown vs the School Board of Topeka*, Kansas Case of 1954 and Public Law 94-142 of 1975 that has been reauthorized and amended several times for good). For example, the fundamental ingredients of Public Law 94-142 have continued to be the major pillars of special education, and they include (a) free and appropriate public education (FAPE), (b) referral and identification of student, (c) parental involvement, (d) multidisciplinary team, (e) nondiscriminatory assessment, (f) due process rights, (g) procedural safeguards, and (h) Individualized Education Program (IEP). While these pillars do not necessarily reflect the concrete order of services provided to learners with special needs, they at least, reveal the multidimensionality of services that they are obligated to receive despite their assigned categories of exceptionality (e.g., learning disability, emotional and behavioral disability, intellectual disabilities, deaf/hard of hearing, visual impairments, students with extensive support needs, traumatic brain injury, and physical and other health impairments). Interestingly, these categories are the central foci of the chapters in this book. And, for the functionality of special education to be futuristically

entrenched, parental voices, voices of people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, and futuristic voices must be heard and considered – fortunately, chapters on these topics are included in this book. Clearly, to a large measure, this transformational book brings to the forefront, “what was,” “what is,” and “what will be” in special education.

Special Education: Advancing Values is a book that is aimed at helping us as researchers, scholars, and educators in the field of special education to positively and intentionally engage in professional reflections. In more ways than one, this book has exposed what special is all about, the values and benefits of special education, the pitfalls that have hampered special education, and what we can do to advance the values of special education. As authors, we believe such reflections have value-added benefits that could develop our students, transform our schools and communities, and advance our future in general and special education and other related fields.

Finally, *Special Education: Advancing Values* is a worth-while book that has historical implications. For sure, it would not have been successful without the supports of our colleagues and well-wishers. In addition, we thank the staff of Emerald Publishing for their commitment throughout this book project. To our families, we especially thank you for lovingly hanging in there with us during this venture.

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