

**Creating Compassionate  
Classrooms:  
Understanding the Continuum of  
Disabilities and Effective  
Educational Interventions**

**Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD**

**Angela Fain, PhD**

**Teresa A. Citro, PhD**

**Series in Education**



**VERNON PRESS**

Copyright © 2019 Vernon Press, an imprint of Vernon Art and Science Inc, on behalf of the author.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Vernon Art and Science Inc.

[www.vernonpress.com](http://www.vernonpress.com)

*In the Americas:*  
Vernon Press  
1000 N West Street,  
Suite 1200, Wilmington,  
Delaware 19801  
United States

*In the rest of the world:*  
Vernon Press  
C/Sancti Espiritu 17,  
Malaga, 29006  
Spain

Series in Education

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018914549

ISBN: 978-1-62273-604-1

Cover design by Vernon Press using elements designed by Pressfoto / Freepik.

Product and company names mentioned in this work are the trademarks of their respective owners. While every care has been taken in preparing this work, neither the authors nor Vernon Art and Science Inc. may be held responsible for any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in it.

Every effort has been made to trace all copyright holders, but if any have been inadvertently overlooked the publisher will be pleased to include any necessary credits in any subsequent reprint or edition.

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgement</b>		v
<b>Preface</b>		vii
Chapter 1	<b>Introduction to Special Education</b> <i>Angela C. Fain, Ph.D., University of West Georgia</i>	1
Chapter 2	<b>The Potency of the Response to Intervention Framework</b> <i>Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD, American International College, Kara Johnson, MEd, Endicott College</i>	11
Chapter 3	<b>Creating Meaningful and Measurable Individualized Education Plans</b> <i>Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD., American International College, Michaela F. Rice, MEd, Endicott College</i>	23
Chapter 4	<b>Emotional Disturbance</b> <i>Angela C. Fain, PhD, University of West Georgia</i>	33
Chapter 5	<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder</b> <i>Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD, American International College, Elizabeth Jean, EdD, Endicott College</i>	45
Chapter 6	<b>Speech and Language Impairments</b> <i>Katherine B. Green, Ph.D., University of West Georgia</i>	63
Chapter 7	<b>Intellectual Disabilities</b> <i>Jessica L. Bucholz, Ph.D., Sarasota County Public Schools, FL, Janet I. Goodman, Ph.D., Haralson Public Schools, GA</i>	77

Chapter 8	<b>Specific Learning Disabilities</b>	89
	James R. Schwab, Ph.D., <i>University of West Georgia</i> , Angela C. Fain, Ph.D., <i>University of West Georgia</i>	
Chapter 9	<b>Other Health Impairments with an Emphasis on ADHD</b>	99
	Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD, <i>American International College</i> , Jennifer M. Innocenti, MA, <i>American International College</i> , Kristen Bonanno-Sotiropoulos, EdD, <i>Bay Path University</i>	
Chapter 10	<b>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</b>	119
	Michelle A. Gremp, PhD, <i>Eastern Kentucky University</i>	
Chapter 11	<b>Visual Impairment and Deaf-Blindness</b>	137
	Nicholas D. Young, <i>American International College</i> , Kara Johnson, MEd, <i>Endicott College</i>	
Chapter 12	<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	145
	Ann Marie Leonard-Zabel, D.Ed., <i>ABSNP, Curry College and NEALAC Clinic</i>	
Chapter 13	<b>Multiple Disabilities</b>	161
	Rachel L. Seaman-Tullis, Ph.D., BCBA-D, <i>University of West Georgia</i> , John M. Schaefer, Ph.D., <i>Cleveland State University</i>	
	<b>About the Authors</b>	179

# Acknowledgement

We wish to extend our deepest appreciation to Mrs. Suzanne “Sue” Clark for her imaginative and proficient editing of this tome. Sue is well known to her friends and family as being a strong advocate for those less fortunate or in need of extra support or assistance. It made perfect sense to us, then, when she readily volunteered to serve as the editor for this project focused on capturing, in one volume, all thirteen disability categories contained in the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004. We will be forever grateful for Sue’s careful attention to every word in this manuscript, which undoubtedly made it both stronger and more reader-friendly. As if this were not enough, her lifetime advocacy for others warrants a public note of gratitude as well.



# Preface

*Creating Compassionate Classrooms: Understanding the Continuum of Disabilities and Effective Educational Interventions* was written for pre-service teachers, seasoned teachers, school psychologists, related service providers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, policy-makers, and families of children who have one or more identified disabilities under the categories determined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Center for Parent Information & Resources, 2017). Throughout the chapters of this book, the reader will be introduced to the thirteen disability categories included in IDEA (specific learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, autism, other health impaired, intellectually disabled, multiple disabilities, speech or language impairments, traumatic brain injury, hearing impairment, deaf/blind, deafness, visual impairment, and orthopedic impairment), using the legally established definitions. Lengthy descriptions of best practices, modifications and accommodations follow, offering a complete picture of each disability and how educators and parents collaboratively can assist the struggling student. This book, then, is meant to be a resource for all those whose path crosses with students in special education.

Our motivation for writing this book comes from several concerns:

- *Our belief that students in these disability categories deserve the highest quality education that both schools and educators have to offer, which can only occur when essential information on best practices is shared;*
- *Our knowledge that there is currently a special education teacher shortage in the District of Columbia and 48 out of 50 states, and that this shortage leads to classrooms where special education students may receive sub-par learning experiences (Carver-Thomas, 2017);*
- *Our concern that approximately 13% of our student population receives some sort of special education support, preferably in an inclusion classroom, and that not all staff will be ready and able to support these students (Salem, 2018);*
- *Our interest in sharing strategies and practices that will enhance student outcomes, and these must be taught explicitly to all staff members, not just to special education teachers;*

- *Our passion in providing recent and relevant research that will move the discussion forward on how to support our most needy students.*

To set the stage, the book begins with chapters that discuss special education in general, response to intervention as an intermediary step in the academic continuum of support, and the individualized education plan process. Subsequent chapters examine each of the thirteen aforementioned IDEA disability categories, which have not been commonly incorporated into one comprehensive resource; however, for the sake of brevity, some disability categories have been combined when doing so did not impact practice implications. Emphasis is placed on effective classroom strategies and interventions associated with each disability category with the intent of providing practitioners and those who support them with the information and tools necessary to support students with identified educational needs. To the extent possible, the primary authors sought to ensure this resource was practical and user-friendly for educators who work directly with students with the range of recognized disabilities.

This book was written by an experienced team whose members, at one time or another, was a special education teacher, licensed psychologist, special education administrator, superintendent of schools, recreation therapist, parent, college professor, department chair, dean of doctoral programs, and international learning disabilities advocate. Collectively, they have over seventy years of experience working with families and students in a variety of settings to include both the general education and substantially separate classrooms, central office, and the college classroom. This wealth of knowledge has made this book possible. In a world where special education is bursting at the seams and staffing is not keeping up with classroom demand, it is imperative that all educators are well-prepared to meet the needs of today's students.

This book demystifies the special education process and disability categories as well as offers educators and their families the tools to help our students, who have one or more disabilities, find life-long success. Ensuring the best for our students with disabilities requires that we first acknowledge and support the hard work and deep commitment of those professionals and parents/guardians who devote their lives to teaching, reaching, mentoring and advocating for those most vulnerable in our classrooms. It is to those individuals, and they know who they are, that we offer our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. In the pages to follow, we trust you will find essential information that will help you in your most noble endeavors.



## References

- Carver-Thomas, D. (2017). *The special education teacher crisis: Who's teaching our most vulnerable students?* Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/special-education-teacher-crisis-whos-teaching-our-most-vulnerable-students>
- Center for Parent Information & Resources. (2017). *Categories of disability under IDEA*. Retrieved from <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/categories/#ld>
- Salem, T. (2018). *Special education students on the rise*. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/education-news/articles/2018-06-06/special-education-students-on-the-rise>



## Chapter 1

# Introduction to Special Education

Angela C. Fain, Ph.D.,  
*University of West Georgia*

Today, more than ever before, many students with disabilities are served in inclusive educational settings alongside their non-disabled peers. Pre-service teachers, school psychologists, related service providers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, policy-makers, and families of children who have one or more identified disabilities determined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) all play important roles in special education.

### Definition of Special Education

Special education is not a place where students go to get services. Special education is specifically designed instruction, services and supports provided to individual students with disabilities to help them make progress in school. IDEA ensures that all eligible students, ages 3 through 21, are provided a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and receive special education and related services (DoDEA, 2018; American Psychological Association, 2018). To be eligible for special education, a child must have an identified disability, the disability must adversely affect the child's educational performance, and the child must require a specifically designed instructional program (American Psychological Association, 2018). A student must meet the criteria of one of the following 13 identified disabilities categories to include

1. Specific learning disability (SLD)
  - a. Dyslexia
  - b. Dysgraphia
  - c. Dyscalculia
  - d. Auditory processing disorder
  - e. Nonverbal learning disability
2. Other health impairment (OHI)
3. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD or AU)

4. Emotional disturbance (ED)
5. Speech or language impairment (SLD)
6. Visual impairment, including blindness (VI)
7. Deafness
8. Hearing impairment (HI)
9. Deaf-blindness (B/D)
10. Orthopedic impairment (OI)
11. Intellectual disability (ID)
  - a. Mild intellectual disability (MID)
  - b. Moderate intellectual disability (MOID)
  - c. Severe intellectual disability (SID)
  - d. Profound intellectual disability (PID)
12. Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
13. Multiple disabilities (MD)

Related, or supplementary, services are provided to students on an individualized basis and may be the only service a student receives. Examples of related services include interpreting services, psychological services, therapeutic recreation, counseling services, occupational and physical therapy, orientation and mobility, medical services, and social work services (Center for Parent Information & Resources, 2017). If a student does not qualify for special education, they may still meet the requirements for related services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a federal law that provides services and changes to the learning environment to meet the needs of students (United States Access Board, n.d.). To be eligible for Section 504, a student must have a disability and the disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in the general education classroom (Understood, 2018). This is a much broader definition than the IDEA definition of disability.

### **Accommodations and Modifications**

Accommodations and modifications are considered and may be provided when a student has a disability. Accommodations are tools or procedures that provide students with disabilities equal access to instruction and assessment (Conderman, Liberty & DeSpain, 2017). Accommodations change how a child learns and can be provided for any student (Strom, 2018). Examples of accommodations include preferential seating, extended time, frequent

breaks, highlighted materials, listening to audio recordings instead of reading a text, using a calculator, and providing guided notes.

Modifications are not the same as accommodations. Modifications are changes to what the student is taught and expected to do in school (Strom, 2018). Assignment modifications include writing shorter papers, completing fewer or different problems than peers, answering fewer or different test questions, and creating alternate assignments, while examples of curriculum modifications include learning different material, being assessed using different standards than peers, and being excused from participating in specific projects or assignments. Only a student with an IEP or 504 Plan can have modifications (Strom, 2018).

### **Key Vocabulary and Acronyms**

Special education has many important terms and acronyms that teachers need to be familiar with. Aside from the acronyms for the disability categories, below are some of the most common acronyms teachers often refer to when discussing students with disabilities.

- IEP – Individualized Education Plan
- RTI – Response to Intervention
- FAPE- Free Appropriate Public Education
- IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act
- ESY – Extended School Year
- NCLB – No Child Left Behind
- ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act
- FBA – Functional Behavioral Assessment
- BIP – Behavior Intervention Plan
- LRE – Least Restrictive Environment

### **High-Incidence and Low-Incidence Disabilities**

High-incidence disabilities occur with a relatively high frequency and include learning disabilities (LD), speech and language disorders (SLD), emotional disturbance (ED), and mild intellectual disabilities (MID) (Gage, Lierheimer, & Goran, 2012). Autism (AU), which is categorized as a low-incidence disability, has seen a dramatic increase in the last couple of decades, as have other health impairments and orthopedic impairments (OI); thus, it is possible that

PAGES MISSING  
FROM THIS FREE SAMPLE

## About the Authors

### **Nicholas D. Young, PhD, EdD**

Dr. Nicholas D. Young has worked in diverse educational roles for more than 30 years, serving as a teacher, counselor, principal, special education director, graduate professor, graduate program director, graduate dean, and longtime psychologist and superintendent of schools. He was named the Massachusetts Superintendent of the Year; and he completed a distinguished Fulbright program focused on the Japanese educational system through the collegiate level. Dr. Young is the recipient of numerous other honors and recognitions including the General Douglas MacArthur Award for distinguished civilian and military leadership and the Vice Admiral John T. Hayward Award for exemplary scholarship. He holds several graduate degrees including a PhD in educational administration and an EdD in educational psychology.

Dr. Young has served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserves combined for over 34 years; and he graduated with distinction from the U.S. Air War College, the U.S. Army War College, and the U.S. Navy War College. After completing a series of senior leadership assignments in the U.S. Army Reserves as the commanding officer of the 287<sup>th</sup> Medical Company (DS), the 405<sup>th</sup> Area Support Company (DS), the 405<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, and the 399<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Hospital, he transitioned to his current military position as a faculty instructor at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA. He currently holds the rank of Colonel.

Dr. Young is also a regular presenter at state, national, and international conferences; and he has written many books, book chapters, and/or articles on various topics in education, counseling, and psychology. Some of his most recent books include *Acceptance, Understanding, and the Moral Imperative of Promoting Social Justice Education in the Schoolhouse* (in-progress); *The Empathic Teacher: Learning and Applying the Principles of Social Justice Education to the Classroom* (in-progress); *Educating the Experienced: Challenges and Best Practices in Adult Learning* (in-press); *Securing the Schoolyard: Protocols that Promote Safety and Positive Student Behaviors* (2019); *Sounding the Alarm in the Schoolhouse: Safety, Security and Student Well-Being* (2019); *The Soul of the Schoolhouse: Cultivating Student Engagement* (2019); *Embracing and Educating the Autistic Child: Valuing Those Who Color Outside the Lines* (2019); *From Cradle to Classroom: A Guide to Special Education for Young Children* (2019); *Captivating Classrooms:*

*Educational Strategies to Enhance Student Engagement* (2019); *Potency of the Principalship: Action-Oriented Leadership at the Heart of School Improvement* (2018); *Soothing the Soul: Pursuing a Life of Abundance Through a Practice of Gratitude* (2018); *Dog Tags to Diploma: Understanding and Addressing the Educational Needs of Veterans, Servicemembers, and their Families* (2018); *Turbulent Times: Confronting Challenges in Emerging Adulthood* (2018); *Guardians of the Next Generation: Igniting the Passion for Quality Teaching* (2018); *Achieving Results: Maximizing Success in the Schoolhouse* (2018); *From Head to Heart: High Quality Teaching Practices in the Spotlight* (2018); *Stars in the Schoolhouse: Teaching Practices and Approaches that Make a Difference* (2018); *Making the Grade: Promoting Positive Outcomes for Students with Learning Disabilities* (2018); *Paving the Pathway for Educational Success: Effective Classroom Interventions for Students with Learning Disabilities* (2018); *Wrestling with Writing: Effective Strategies for Struggling Students* (2018); *Floundering to Fluent: Reaching and Teaching the Struggling Student* (2018); *Emotions and Education: Promoting Positive Mental Health in Students with Learning* (2018); *From Lecture Hall to Laptop: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Continuing Evolution of Virtual Learning in Higher Education* (2017); *The Power of the Professoriate: Demands, Challenges, and Opportunities in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Higher Education* (2017); *To Campus with Confidence: Supporting a Successful Transition to College for Students with Learning Disabilities* (2017); *Educational Entrepreneurship: Promoting Public-Private Partnerships for the 21st Century* (2015); *Beyond the Bedtime Story: Promoting Reading Development during the Middle School Years* (2015); *Betwixt and Between: Understanding and Meeting the Social and Emotional Developmental Needs of Students During the Middle School Transition Years* (2014); *Learning Style Perspectives: Impact Upon the Classroom* (3rd ed., 2014); and *Collapsing Educational Boundaries from Preschool to PhD: Building Bridges Across the Educational Spectrum* (2013); *Transforming Special Education Practices: A Primer for School Administrators and Policy Makers* (2012); and *Powerful Partners in Student Success: Schools, Families and Communities* (2012). He also co-authored several children's books to include the popular series *I am Full of Possibilities*. Dr. Young may be contacted directly at [nyoung1191@aol.com](mailto:nyoung1191@aol.com).

### **Angela Fain, PhD**

Dr. Angela C. Fain has worked in the field of special education for the past 20 years. She received her Ph.D. and M.Ed. in special education at Georgia State University, as well a B.S. in Therapeutic Recreation. She earned national certification as a Nationally Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (TRS) and worked as a therapist for several years with children who had severe



emotional/behavioral disorders (SEBD) and/or autism. Dr. Fain has worked in some of the most restrictive educational environments that students with disabilities are served, as a both a TRS and special education teacher. She worked as a clinical instructor at Georgia State University while earning her doctorate and at the University of North Georgia while concurrently serving as an assistant professor. She is now an assistant professor at the University of West Georgia.

Dr. Fain is a regular presenter at state, national, and international conferences and she is an active board member of Learning Disabilities Worldwide. She has authored several book chapters and articles on various topics in special education ranging from classroom management to successful academic interventions for students with disabilities.

### **Teresa Allissa Citro, PhD**

Dr. Citro is the Chief Executive Officer, Learning Disabilities Worldwide, Inc. and the Founder and President of Thread of Hope, Inc. She is a graduate of Tufts New England Medical School and Northeastern University, Boston. Dr. Citro has co-edited several books on a wide range of topics in special education and she co-authored a popular children's series *I Am Full of Possibilities*. Dr. Citro is the co-editor of two peer review journals including *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal and Insights on Learning Disabilities from Prevailing Theories to Validated Practices*. She is the mother of two beautiful children and resides in Boston, Massachusetts.