

PREFACE

Special Education International Perspectives is divided into two volumes; Volume 27, Biopsychosocial, Cultural, and Disability Aspects and Volume 28, Practices Across the Globe. There is limited literature examining the origins, practices, and challenges in special education from an international perspective as such these volumes add considerably to the knowledge base across the globe. While an analysis and direct comparisons of the development of special education across different countries are extremely complex and beyond the scope of these volumes, there are common themes about meeting the special needs of students with disabilities across the globe. First, an examination of the origins of special education in different countries illustrates the society's general concern, support, assistance, and welfare for persons with disabilities such as those with significant sensory and intellectual deficits. Secondly, the practice of special education within countries evolved and was influenced by religious, cultural, and political contexts as well as citizens with philanthropic, humanitarian, and parental concerns. Thirdly, while the philosophy of identifying and educating students with disabilities has taken different routes (e.g., medical, environmental, segregation, and inclusion), there appears to be a prevailing societal belief that students with disabilities have a fundamental right to access education to enhance the quality of their life. Fourthly, to ensure and protect this right, it was necessary to put into place governmental protective legislation, policies, and monetary funding. Lastly, while there is no single global association that evaluates and monitors special education internationally, there are a number of agencies, organizations, and councils that have been extremely influential in providing countries with best practices related to special education policies, standards, guidelines and educational interventions such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASIE), and the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The purpose of *Special Education International Perspectives* is to examine in detail these themes across countries and exceptionality areas.

Volume 27 is divided into three parts. Part I presents an overview on disability that focuses on two major themes, namely, the biopsychosocial approaches to disability and diversity and disability. This overview is followed by Part II which examines five main high incidence exceptionalities: cognitive impairment, learning disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, autism spectrum disorders, behavioral/emotional disabilities, and speech and language disorders. The examination of each exceptionality domain includes international perspectives from major global regions, research and intervention issues, information from national and international organizations, and a detailed introduction and summary by an expert in that exceptionality area. Part III delineates technological advances and research endeavors in special education.

Volume 28 provides a comprehensive discussion of special education across the globe that includes chapters from countries in the following geographic areas: North and Central America (the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Guatemala), Europe (the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Iceland, Ukraine, and Russia), Africa (Nigeria, South Africa, and Ghana), the Middle East (Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey), South Asia (India and Bangladesh), the Far East (China and Thailand) and Australasia (Australia and New Zealand). Discussions related to these countries includes information on the following: origins and early beginnings of special education specific to that country, prevalence rates, trends in legislation and litigation, educational interventions, working with families, teacher preparation, perspectives on the progress of special education and challenges that remain.

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