

**SPECIAL EDUCATION,
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION,
AND SCHOOL REFORM**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cheryl A. Utley is currently an Associate Research Professor in the Schiefelbusch Institute of Life Span Studies, The Juniper Gardens Children's Project, University of Kansas, Kansas City, Kansas. Her graduate degrees are from the University of Arizona and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Utley is a researcher, teacher educator, and scholar. Her specific areas of interest include multicultural education and teacher education, assessment, observational learning, and effective instructional practices (e.g., peer-mediated instruction).

Festus E. Obiakor is currently a Professor of Special Education in the Department of Exceptional Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His graduate degrees are from Texas Christian University and New Mexico State University. Dr. Obiakor is a teacher, scholar, consultant, and poet—his specific areas of interests include self-concept, multicultural education, comparative/international education, retention of at-risk students and educational reform/program evaluation. He is author of *The Eight-Step Multicultural Approach: Learning and Teaching with a Smile*.

On the cover: Joycelyn Strickland, a fourth grade teacher, is pictured with a second and fourth grade high-achieving multicultural learners in her classroom at Benjamin Banneker Elementary Science & Technology Magnet School, Kansas City Kansas Unified School District (USD) #500, located in Kansas City, Kansas.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION, MULTICULTURAL
EDUCATION, AND SCHOOL REFORM:
COMPONENTS OF QUALITY EDUCATION
FOR LEARNERS
WITH MILD DISABILITIES**

Edited by

Cheryl A. Utley

*The Juniper Gardens Children's Project
University of Kansas
Kansas City, Kansas*

and

Festus E. Obiakor

*University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin*

logo here

Published and Distributed Throughout the World by

CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.
2600 South First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62704

This book is protected by copyright. No part of
it may be reproduced in any manner without
written permission from the publisher.

©2000 by CHARLES C THOMAS • PUBLISHER, LTD.

ISBN 0-398-07118-7 (hard)
ISBN 0-398-07119-5 (paper)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 00-060773

With THOMAS BOOKS careful attention is given to all details of manufacturing and design. it is the Publisher's desire to present books that are satisfactory as to their physical qualities and artistic possibilities and appropriate for their particular use. THOMAS BOOKS will be true to those laws of quality that assure a good name and good will.

*Printed in the United States of America
CS-R-3*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Special education, multicultural education, and school reform : components of quality

education for learners with mild disabilities / edited by Cheryl A. Utley and Festus E. Obiakor.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-398-07118-7 -- ISBN 0-398-07119-5 (pbk.)

1. Multicultural education. 2. Children of minorities--Education.
3. Handicapped children--Education. I. Utley, Cheryl Anita Rose.
- II. Obiakor, Festus, E.

LC1099 .S64 2000
370.117--dc21

00-060773

To my mother, Bertie M. Utley; to my sister, Beverly Briter-amos, and immediate family members for their support and encouragement throughout my professional career. To Soka Gakkai International (SGI) President Daisaku Ikeda for his efforts in promoting peace, culture, and education throughout the world.

To my wife, Pauline; to my children, Charles, Gina, and Kristen; and to Mama and all my family members in Nigeria for their unconditional love and kindness. To my well-wishers and friends, thanks for hanging in there with me!

CONTRIBUTORS

Dale P. Blesz

Department of Reading & Special Education
Southwest Missouri State University
Springfield, Missouri

Ellen A. Brantlinger

Department of Special Education
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana

William J. Carter, Jr.

Department of Special Education
University of Kansas Medical Center
Kansas City, Kansas

Vivian C. Correa

Department of Special Education
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Martha J. Coutinho

Department of Human Development & Learning
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee

Vera I. Daniels

Department of Special Education
Southern University and A & M College–Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Ingrid L. Draper

Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative
Education Development Center, Inc.
Newton, Massachusetts

Edgar G. Epps

Department of Urban Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Bridgie Alexis Ford

Department of Counseling and Special Education
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

Kathleen C. Harris

College of Education
Arizona State University West
Phoenix, Arizona

Simon Kim

Division of Educational Psychology, Research, and Evaluation
University of Missouri-St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri

Sue Ann Kline

Department of Special Education
University of Kansas Medical Center
Kansas City, Kansas

J. Ruth Nelson

National Center on Educational Outcomes
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Ann Nevin

College of Education
Arizona State University West
Phoenix, Arizona

Festus E. Obiakor

Department of Exceptional Education
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Alba A. Ortiz

Department of Special Education
University of Texas-Austin
Austin, Texas

Donald P. Oswald

Department of Psychiatry
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia

Cynthia Reynolds

Department of Counseling and Special Education
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio

Zaline Roy-Campbell

Department of Education Theory and Practice
State University of New York (SUNY)–Albany
Albany, New York

Robert Rueda

Department of Educational Psychology
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, California

Richard L. Simpson

Department of Special Education
University of Kansas Medical Center
Kansas City, Kansas

Brenda Smith Myles

Department of Special Education
University of Kansas Medical Center
Kansas City, Kansas

Ellen Teelucksingh

National Center on Educational Outcomes
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Martha L. Thurlow

National Center on Educational Outcomes
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cheryl A. Utley

Juniper Gardens Children's Project
Schiefelbusch Institute for Life Span Studies
University of Kansas
Kansas City, Kansas

FOREWORD

Schools are experiencing dramatic demographic shifts and are now serving an increasing number of students who are multicultural; in fact, in many urban school districts, multicultural learners are already the majority student enrollment. Unfortunately, though, there is abundant evidence that general and special educators are not prepared to respond to this changing student population as evidenced by widespread academic underachievement, high retention and dropout rates, and disproportionate representation of multicultural learners in remedial and special education programs. Too many students, in both general and special education, experience instructional programs and services which are inconsistent with their linguistic, cultural, socioeconomic and other background characteristics and which emphasize low-level, basic skills with insufficient attention paid to developing higher order thinking, problem-solving skills, and creativity. These educational practices can have long-term, negative consequences for students in terms of their self esteem and their academic, social, and economic outcomes. The very programs designed to improve student performance, in actuality, maintain their low performance, a situation which has stimulated a plethora of standard-based school reform efforts.

While the rhetoric suggests that educational reform movements are to include all students, the reality is that school improvement activities are developed and implemented without specific attention to the needs of multicultural learners. Reform efforts have met with limited success because policymakers, researchers, teacher educators, and general and special educators do not understand how important variables such as language, culture, poverty, and/or disability influence the teaching-learning process and student outcomes. Consequently, multicultural learners are not provided with what they need to be academically successful—high expectations and a challenging curriculum presented in ways that are compatible with their background characteristics so they can meet high academic standards.

The challenge for educational reformers, then, is to ensure that all students have equal access to quality education and it is precisely this challenge that is addressed by Cheryl A. Utley, Festus E. Obiakor, and their contributors in their cutting edge book, *Special Education, Multicultural Education and School Reform: Components of Quality Edu-*

cation for Learners with Mild Disabilities. The authors have done an outstanding job of helping educators understand the importance of integrating the philosophy and knowledge base of multicultural education into educational programs and services. The information presented in this text can contribute significantly to building a shared knowledge base relative to multicultural education among general and special educators. Such a knowledge base is fundamental not only to ensuring that educators understand multicultural learners, but it is the foundation for designing comprehensive educational programs and services which meet the needs of multicultural learners in all of the programs in which they are served.

The authors address essential elements of school reform and improvement, including establishing positive school climates for multicultural learners, ensuring that teachers use instructional programming options known to be effective for multicultural populations, and designing multicultural special education programs which address students' linguistic and cultural characteristics *and* their disability-related needs simultaneously. Among the authors' most important messages are the following:

- *All* educators must understand the interrelationships among language, culture, socioeconomic status and values and the ways in which these influence academic and social behaviors of students.
- Multicultural education must be aimed at increasing respect for diversity, decreasing prejudice, improving interethnic group relations, understanding intraindividual and interindividual differences, and resolving cultural incompatibilities between students' styles of learning and behavior and educators' styles of instruction.
- Teaching is a cross-cultural encounter. Consequently, a fundamental component of creating a supportive and accepting learning environment for multicultural learners is helping general and special educators acquire the skills they need to assess the unique academic and social characteristics of multicultural learners, including those with mild disabilities, and to accommodate student diversity in the teaching-learning process. Teacher education programs, at the preservice and inservice levels, must thus infuse multicultural knowledge and skills into their curricula.
- Improving educational outcomes for multicultural learners cannot happen without restructuring general and special education in response to the changing student demography and the individual and specific needs of multicultural learners.
- Among the most important elements of successful school reform are inclusion, multiculturalism, consultation, teamwork, cooperation, partnership, and empowerment. A key reform strategy is building collaborative relationships among stakeholders, including teachers, students, administrators, and families.

As we advance in this new millennium, we must find ways to effectively serve students who have been historically ill-served by the public school education system.

This text provides an excellent resource for designing programs and services to ensure that multicultural learners are able to achieve their maximum potential in general and special education programs. When multicultural education is successful, everyone, students and teachers alike, learn to understand and value their own cultural identities, have opportunities to experience other cultures and learn to interact successfully cross-culturally, and they learn the value of working together to create a society which accepts, respects, and values diversity. The messages in this text can serve as cornerstones of standards-based reform and school improvement. They are keys to successful multicultural education.

Alba A. Ortiz, Ph.D. Professor,
Department of Special Education
Director, Office of Bilingual Education
H.E. Hartfelder/The Southland Corporation
Regents Chair in Educational Leadership
College of Education
The University of Texas at Austin
Austin, Texas
March 2000

PREFACE

General and special educators are consistently challenged to respond to school reform programs. Because of current demographic changes and shifts in powers and paradigms, it has become imperative for the fields of multicultural education and special education to address issues of reform. As a result, one critical question deserves our immediate attention. How can an equitable and culturally responsible education be provided for multicultural learners with mild disabilities in inclusive classroom settings? This book addresses this issue and bridges gaps between the school reform movement in special education and multicultural education.

Our premier concern is that the school reform movement has ignored educational challenges and dilemmas facing multicultural learners with mild disabilities, their families, and teachers. Many special education advocacy groups, researchers, and scholars have had similar concerns in spite of traditional reform programs. We believe the school reform movement in special education is caught up in a “rat race” and in its half-hearted pursuit for “equality and equity.” It has become increasingly apparent that general and special educators have ignored and overlooked the cognitive, behavioral, and affective needs of multicultural learners with mild disabilities.

This book acknowledges the complexities of different cultures within the family, community, and society. Not only does it recognize multiethnic or global relationships between multicultural groups, it also recognizes cultures, ethnicities, symbols, languages, values, and learning and behavioral styles of different groups of individuals. We state unequivocally that a multicultural education framework is multidimensional and aims at increasing respect for diversity, reducing prejudice, improving interethnic group relations, understanding intraindividual and interindividual differences, and resolving cultural incompatibilities between students’ learning and behavioral styles. Realizing one’s learning potential through scholarship and achievement are important components of quality education for multicultural learners with and without disabilities. We challenge researchers and scholars to translate research into practice so that general and special education practitioners and policymakers can make decisions and recommendations that provide an effective education for multicultural learners.

We are glad that leading researchers and scholars in the fields of multicultural education and special education were instrumental in putting this visionary book together. Chapter One describes the effects of race, culture, and poverty on multicultural learners with disabilities. Chapter Two challenges the underlying assumptions and rationale for serving multicultural learners in special education settings. In Chapter Three, trends in the disproportionate representation of multicultural learners with mild disabilities are examined. Chapter Four presents cultural and linguistic diversity as a central component for understanding multicultural learners with disabilities. Chapters Five, Six, and Seven discuss the multidimensional problems and prospects facing multicultural learners with learning disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, and gifts and talents. In each of these chapters, we examine contemporary perspectives related to issues of definition, assessment, and intervention in order to better understand and provide solutions for educating multicultural learners and their families. In Chapter Eight, the role of multicultural education in a results-based education system is evaluated. Chapter Nine explains collaborative consultative endeavors that enhance multicultural learning. In Chapter Ten, a culturally responsible teacher education program is discussed in terms of standards, knowledge bases, and skills. Chapter Eleven addresses the restructuring of public schools to form school and community partnerships. And, Chapter Twelve summarizes new directions for the field of multicultural special education. On the whole, this book brings contemporary issues, concerns, and perspectives related to multicultural learners to the school reform debate. As a result, researchers and scholars will find it useful. In addition, it will be an important text for undergraduate and graduate courses in multicultural special education.

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to the contributors for their commitment to school reform for multicultural learners and for sharing their ideas in this book. We are very grateful to Drs. Alba A. Ortiz and Edgar G. Epps for their scholarly contributions in the Foreword and Summary Comments. We would like to acknowledge Dr. Charles R. Greenwood, Director of the Juniper Gardens Children's Project, for his support in this venture. We are especially grateful to Bernadine Roberts and Mary Williard, members of the Juniper Gardens Children's Project Support Staff for their assistance in this project.

Cheryl A. Utley
Festus E. Obiakor

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Foreword by Alba A. Ortiz</i>	<i>.xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>.xv</i>
 <i>Chapter</i>	
1. Multicultural Education and Special Education: Infusion for Better Schooling	3
<i>Cheryl A. Utley and Festus E. Obiakor</i>	
2. Dispelling Myths and Stereotypes Confronting Multicultural Learners with Mild Disabilities: Perspectives for School Reform	30
<i>Ellen A. Brantlinger and Zaline Roy-Campbell</i>	
3. Trends in Disproportionate Representation in Special Education: Implications for Multicultural Education	53
<i>Donald P. Oswald and Martha J. Coutinho</i>	
4. Cultural and Linguistic Diversity as a Theoretical Framework for Understanding Multicultural Learners with Mild Disabilities	74
<i>Robert Rueda and Simon Kim</i>	
5. Learning Problems or Learning Disabilities of Multicultural Learners: Contemporary Perspectives	90
<i>Cheryl A. Utley and Festus E. Obiakor</i>	
6. School Reform and Multicultural Learners with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders: Issues, Challenges, and Solutions	118
<i>Sue Ann Kline, Richard L. Simpson, Dale P. Blesz, Brenda Smith Myles, and William J. Carter, Jr.</i>	
7. Responding to the Learning Needs of Multicultural Learners with Gifts and Talents	140
<i>Vera I. Daniels</i>	
8. Multiculturalism and Disability in a Results-Based Educational System: Hazards and Hopes for Today's Schools	155
<i>Martha L. Thurlow, J. Ruth Nelson, Ellen Teelucksingh, and Ingrid L. Draper</i>	

9. Collaborative Consultation Between General and Special Educators
in Multicultural Classrooms: Implications for School Reform173
Ann Nevin, Kathleen C. Harris, and Vivian C. Correa

10. Culturally Responsive Teacher Preparation Programming for the
Twenty-First Century188
Cheryl A. Utley and Festus E. Obiakor

11. Connecting with Community Resources: Optimizing the Potential
of Multicultural Learners with Mild Disabilities208
Bridgie Alexis Ford and Cynthia Reynolds

12. Race, Class, Social Inequality, and Special Education:
Summary Comments228
Edgar G. Epps

Author Index237

Subject Index249