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Foreword

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When I taught special education, always in “Title 1” schools in areas considered by many to be challenging and distressed, I was always the department’s only Black man, though minoritized students dominated my caseload and classes. I was constantly called upon to be the disciplinarian for a wide array of students. This gave me a view of my colleagues’ failures of cultural responsiveness, as students frequently arrived with accounts of behavior I could easily recognize as appropriate within the cultural norms that we shared. My singularity as a Black man in Individualized Education Program meetings also required me to compensate for colleagues who would speak in such a way that was often difficult to understand by parents of different cultural backgrounds. As one of the few teachers who grew up in similar environments as my students and their parents, I often became the social justice advocate and cultural broker for all minority students. This was a heavy burden and I hope this book will help others handle similar situations.

I was honored to be asked to write this Foreword. The title of the book indicates that *all* educators have the responsibility to implement culturally sustaining practices. The editors could have chosen a title such as, *Guidance for Those Who Want to Be Culturally Responsive* or *Guiding Principles in How to Be Culturally Responsive*. But it is clear that *all* students, especially the most vulnerable, such as the minoritized students receiving special education services I once taught, deserve cultural responsiveness from *all* their teachers. The few teachers of color in schools deserve to work with colleagues with these skills as well; we never received any recognition or extra pay for the extra responsibilities we assumed. Taking on the role of lead disciplinarian often interfered with my own teaching.

For too long school practices that are touted as culturally neutral (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, Response to Intervention, or Universal Design for Learning) have produced unequal results; minoritized students of color are still suspended at higher rates than their White counterparts and are disproportionately identified and qualified for special education services. These practices are not working, and it is vital to respect the culture of the students.

Researchers have long known of the need for cultural awareness and responsiveness, particularly in special education, and the work of scholars documents the dire impact of our ongoing failure to do so. The contributors to this book continue this discussion while providing relevant contemporary examples to help open the minds of the teaching population. They explore the complexities of intersectional identities of those with disabilities, identify practices to not only advocate for families but to allow parents to feel empowered as they advocate

for the success of their children, and challenge assumptions about culturally diverse students' abilities.

In a time of greater awareness of racialized experiences, especially those of Black Americans, I hope this book will soon be part of the standard curriculum in every preservice general and special education program and used in professional development at all the districts in the country – or even around the globe. There is reason to hope that this book will help more teachers, administrators, students, and parents recognize the benefits of culturally responsive teaching for all students regardless of background, as an increasingly diverse nation moves beyond White-dominated expectations and practices and learns to value all the backgrounds of all its students while positioning every student for success.

Introduction

The PRISM series, developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) – Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), is a collection of volumes that highlight evidence-based, research-to-practice teaching strategies and interventions geared toward supporting students with developmental disabilities (DD) including autism and intellectual disability (ID). The volumes in the PRISM collection address interventions in the classroom, home, and community and focus on how to help students build needed skills.

The chapters in this PRISM volume help practitioners become more culturally competent by identifying and examining beliefs about their own and their students' cultures, including disability, race, ethnicity, language, gender, and sexuality diversity. The book offers practical strategies and prepares practitioners to create positive integral connections with students and their families from diverse communities while infusing culturally sustaining practices. This volume discusses teaching socio-political consciousness and self-advocacy and explains why it is important to coach cultural competency.

This book consists of nine chapters written by 29 authors. We sought to include authors who represent a variety of diversity amongst social identities such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. In addition to their social identities, we sought authors with expertise related to the subject of each chapter. While we strived for a diverse representation of voices, we recognize that some chapters do not represent a full intersectional spectrum. We also recognize that there are greater risks for people who may identify as part of some social groups and therefore this may inhibit their participation in these projects.

In this publication, the word diversity is used very broadly. Throughout the text, we have adopted the term “diverse” to describe groups of individuals who share similar identities. Diversity doesn't mean one thing (e.g., race, culture, ethnicity, gender). Just because we possess a social identity doesn't mean we think or act exactly the same as others who share our backgrounds. Our individual differences influence the way we think about social and cultural norms within the inclusive groups we are members of. People who ascribe to a particular identity can have very different experiences and, therefore, outlooks.

The target population highlighted in this book is individuals with DD and ID. We use the terms individuals, people, youth, and students interchangeably. We also use person-first language. Rather than defining people primarily by their disability or racial or cultural backgrounds, we use people-first language in this book to convey respect by emphasizing the fact that people are—first and foremost—people. We respect that some individuals and communities may

prefer other terminology such as identity-first language. For example, people with autism see their disability as an intrinsic part of their identity and view being autistic as a different way of perceiving and interacting with the world with benefits. Although autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a common diagnostic term (e.g., American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013), the word “disorder” is increasingly viewed negatively, thus we use the term “autism” to describe individuals across the spectrum. In this publication, we will also use respectful gender terminology involving individuals who self-identify with a non-binary gender (something other than “male” or “female”).

The target audience for this volume include practitioners (e.g., special education teachers, general education teachers, educational administrators, related service providers, school psychologists, Department of Education personnel, and other school professionals) and special education stakeholders (e.g., school personnel plus the community, mental health providers, medical professionals, individuals with disabilities along with their families). Throughout this book, you will see references to practitioners which includes the aforementioned professionals. At the end of each chapter, we provide guiding questions for practitioners that are linked to chapter objectives and meant to guide reflexive practice.

The following descriptions highlight the contents of the chapters in this volume.

Chapter 1 *Introducing cultural competence in the context of disability and additional social identities* introduces the topic of cultural competence as it relates to youth with DD, including those with autism and ID. This chapter presents the importance of culturally sustaining practices used by practitioners and describes cultural competence through the lens of disability and another social identity. Readers will learn key terminology related to culturally relevant pedagogy and special education.

Chapter 2 *Interrogating assumptions about culture and disability: Becoming a critical and reflexive educator* introduces the topic of the cultural mismatch between teachers and students and the adoption of a “culturally minded and reflexive stance,” (Artiles, 2011)--one that promotes cultural relevance, reciprocity, and competence. This chapter presents a process of how to interrogate one’s own assumptions about disability and difference and what it means to develop habits of cultural reflexivity and critical consciousness in our work with students with developmental disabilities, including those with autism and intellectual disability.

Chapter 3 *Acknowledging other cultural identities and their beliefs around culture and disability* introduces knowledge and skills related to acknowledging one’s own cultural identity, the identities of the students and families we work with, and how to learn to accept the differing beliefs related to disability that are different

than one's own. This chapter presents practical skills to learn how to acknowledge the cultural beliefs of others different from one's own around culture and disability and discusses the impact of these beliefs on their interactions with individuals of other cultures including individuals with disabilities. Readers will examine the ways an individual with a disability is viewed by various cultures.

Chapter 4 *Working with diverse languages and disability* introduces the benefits of multilingualism for students with developmental disabilities such as autism and ID. This chapter presents strategies for working effectively with multilingual students with disabilities and their families. Readers will learn about the challenges associated with educating multilingual students with autism and ID.

Chapter 5 *Supporting the right to gender and sexuality diversity and disability* introduces how a rights-based model of disability can be used to understand issues related to sexual identity and disability and rationalizes the importance of sexuality education as a right for individuals with DD, including autism and ID. This chapter presents issues related to the intersection of sexual identity and disability, explains and dispels common myths related to sexuality education and DD, and defines key terms in regard to sexuality and gender identity.

Chapter 6 *Creating positive relationships with diverse students with disabilities and ensuring academic success through culturally sustaining pedagogies* introduces relationships and why they matter for students with disabilities. The chapter presents how relationships are pivotal to student success and barriers to developing student relationships. Readers will learn ways practitioners can develop relationships in culturally sustaining ways to influence academic success and social emotional well-being.

Chapter 7 *Empowering families by utilizing culturally sustaining strategies in the education of children with multi-layered identities* introduces culturally sustaining strategies, rooted in empowerment, to address identified needs of families who have children with disabilities. This chapter presents how to support empowerment among all families, including those who identify with historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States.

Chapter 8 *Teaching diverse students with disabilities socio-political consciousness and self-advocacy* introduces the sociopolitical constructs that impact people from oppressed populations ability to advocate for themselves and others. This chapter presents how the intersection of multiple sociopolitical constructs further impacts students with DD, including autism and ID. The chapter identifies teachers' biases that may impact how they teach students with developmental disabilities to self-advocate. Readers will learn ways in which to teach self-advocacy while addressing the sociopolitical constructs using a cultural competency approach.

Chapter 9 *Preparing practitioners and coaching cultural competence and disability awareness* introduces practices and strategies to use during coaching sessions on culture, diversity, and disability awareness. This chapter describes how the Cultural Proficiency Continuum (CPC; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009) can be used as a coaching component in assessing where classroom practices and behavior fall on the continuum, as well as how to move along the CPC. Readers will learn how to provide clear expectations between the coach and coachee and create and maintain a culturally proficient relationship during the coaching experience.

Chapter 1

Introducing cultural competence in the context of disability and additional social identities

Marcus Fuller, Elizabeth A. Harkins Monaco, L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, and Endia J. Lindo

Objectives

- Develop an understanding of cultural competence in the context of disability and a second social identity.
- Rationalize the importance of culturally sustaining practices utilized by culturally responsive special educators.
- Explain key terms related to culturally relevant pedagogy and special education.

This book is relevant to practitioners who wish to better understand cultural competence and intersectionality and how issues of race, culture, and other differences shape lived experiences with disability in American society. Throughout this book, we discuss membership in dual social identities and the consequences of double marginalization. Chapter 1 introduces the topic of intersectionality, which is the multidimensionality of disability and at least one other social identity, such as a child with a disability who also identifies as Black or gay or Somali. Cultural competence is the ability to be firmly grounded in one's own culture of origin and fluent in at least one other culture. We include disability and other identities in this lens, as constructions with social meaning rather than biological phenomena (Hartlep, 2009; Hosking, 2008). We also introduce terminology, frameworks, and concepts that will lay the foundation for understanding the important topics raised throughout this text. Each chapter focuses on youth with developmental disabilities (DD), including those with autism and intellectual disability (ID), who experience the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, disability, language, sexual identity, and gender. The key terminology introduced in this chapter will be utilized throughout the other chapters in this text.

Chapter 2

Interrogating assumptions about culture and disability: Becoming a critical and reflexive educator

Phillandra Smith, Christine Ashby, and Beth A. Ferri

Objectives

- Consider how you are situated in terms of identity and culture and how those positionalities may align with or differ from those of individuals with developmental disabilities, including autism and intellectual disability.
- Understand your own cultural assumptions about disability and culturally responsive and sustaining education for individuals with developmental disabilities, including autism and intellectual disability.
- Examine how your cultural identity informs your “habitus” (internalized ways of knowing, being, and acting), which influence your views about disability and neurodiversity.
- Examine your practice for the development of cultural reflexivity and critical consciousness using a list of considerations.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of culture and disability. Given the diversity present in our classrooms and the frequent cultural mismatch between teachers and students there remains an urgent need to support all teachers in adopting a “culturally minded and reflexive stance,” (Artiles, 2011)—one that promotes cultural relevance, reciprocity, and competence. As defined in Chapter 1, culture is a combination of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, and practices that are shared by racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups. Culture is dynamic, multidimensional, and imbued with power and complexity (Artiles, 2015). This chapter presents a process of how to interrogate one’s own assumptions about disability and difference and what it means to develop habits of cultural reflexivity, reflexive practice, and critical consciousness in our work with students with developmental disabilities, including those with autism and intellectual disability.

Chapter 3

Acknowledging other cultural identities and their beliefs around culture and disability

Tracy McKinney, Nigel P. Pierce, and Nanette Missaghi

Objectives

- Summarize key terms associated with one's beliefs and practices around acknowledging cultural identities and beliefs different from one's own.
- Develop an understanding of culturally responsive acknowledgment.
- Generate skills for navigating multiple perspectives regarding beliefs different from one's own.
- Describe interventions related to increasing one's acknowledgement of representation and culturally relevant pedagogy.
- Review case study through the use of key terms and interventions.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine several unfavorable constructs and how they are based on one's cultural beliefs and are ingrained in policies and practices. In this chapter we offer knowledge and skills related to acknowledging one's own cultural identity, the identities of the students and families we work with, and how to learn to accept the differing beliefs related to disability that are different than one's own. While the role of one's racial identity, racism, and one's beliefs around skin color and ability are critical for a practitioner as well, it will not be examined in this chapter. Rather, we aim to provide practical skills to learn how to acknowledge the cultural beliefs of others different from one's own around culture and disability. Additionally, we will discuss the impact of these beliefs on their interactions with individuals of other cultures including individuals with disabilities. Finally, we will examine the ways an individual with a disability is viewed by various cultures. Practitioners will be able to use this chapter as a guide to navigate and challenge their thoughts surrounding cultural and ability diversity. The question at hand is it the cultural mismatch or is it racism? We believe the answer is both.

Chapter 4

Working with diverse languages and disability

Diana Baker, Tian (Jessie) Jiang, Hyejung Kim, Helen McCabe, and Calvin Stanley

Objectives

- Explore the benefits of multilingualism for students with developmental disabilities including autism and intellectual disability (ID).
- Learn about challenges associated with educating multilingual students with developmental disabilities including autism and ID.
- Gain strategies for working effectively with multilingual students with developmental disabilities and their families.

Chapter 4 provides information for working with students with disabilities from diverse language backgrounds. Often, practitioners and clinicians advise families to speak just one language to multilingual children with autism and/or intellectual disabilities (ID). As both neurodevelopmental disabilities present communication-related challenges in early childhood and often co-occur, many practitioners assume that navigating multiple languages would be too confusing for children who have been working so hard to communicate at all. In fact, research shows that many children with autism and ID can and do learn more than one language (Baker, 2017; Ware, Lye, & Kyffin, 2015), that interventions that incorporate a student’s heritage language may be more effective than monolingual instruction (Lim et al., 2019), and that familiarity with languages spoken at home and in the community supports inclusion for neurodiverse children who in turn feel less isolated (Yu, 2013). Yet, the American special education model presents an array of challenges for multilingual children with autism and ID and their families. This chapter aims to: 1) inform practitioners about the benefits of multilingual exposure and interventions for students with autism and ID and their families; 2) outline the current challenges impeding effectiveness in working with multilingual students with autism and ID; and 3) provide practical tools and strategies for working with linguistically diverse children with autism and ID and their families.

Chapter 5

Supporting the right to gender and sexuality diversity and disability

Meaghan M. McCollow, JoDell R. Heroux, and Talya Kemper

Objectives

- Explore how a rights-based model of disability can be used to understand issues related to sexual identity and disability.
- Rationalize the importance of sexuality education as a right for individuals with developmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability.
- Develop an understanding of issues related to the intersection of sexual identity and disability.
- Explain and dispel common myths related to sexuality education and developmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder and intellectual disability.
- Define key terms in regard to sexuality and gender identity.

Chapter 5 focuses on the intersection of gender identity and sexuality and disability. Many continue to hold the belief that individuals with developmental disabilities (DD), including autism and intellectual disability (ID), do not have sexual identities (Swango-Wilson, 2011). Individuals with developmental disabilities face many barriers to accessing their own sexuality. One barrier is the common misconception that individuals with disabilities are incapable of being sexually active, incapable of understanding the complexities of gender identity and sexuality or deny the existence of sexuality as part of their lives (Murphy & Elias, 2006). This leads to the sexual and gender identities of this population being ignored or overlooked (Löfgren-Mårtenson, 2008), and to the erroneous conclusion that sexuality and gender identity are irrelevant to this population. This chapter begins with a rights-based perspective and then discusses the ways in which gender and sexual identity intersect with disability, focusing on those with developmental disabilities. Implications for practice will then focus on providing appropriate information to this population and strategies for ensuring all identities are recognized.

Chapter 6

Creating positive relationships with diverse students with disabilities and ensuring academic success through culturally sustaining pedagogies

Shelley Neilsen Gatti, Martin Odima Jr., and Kathlene Holmes Campbell

Objectives

- Unpack the importance of building authentic relationships with students with developmental disabilities including autism and intellectual disability through culturally sustaining pedagogy.
- Describe the contributing factors promoting and interfering with building effective relationships with students with developmental disabilities including autism and intellectual disability.
- Apply relationship strategies and academic frameworks to ensure social emotional learning (SEL) and academic success for diverse students with developmental disabilities including autism and intellectual disabilities.

I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or de-humanized (Ginott, 1972, p. 15).

Chapter 6 provides an overview of how students rely on teachers and school communities to create and sustain effective, caring, and engaging classroom communities where all students are valued, accepted, loved, and are learning. The research is clear that the single greatest effect on student achievement is the effectiveness of the teacher (Goodlad, 1990; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001) and having a great teacher is the single most important school-based factor in

Chapter 7

Empowering families by utilizing culturally sustaining strategies in the education of children with multi-layered identities

Jamie N. Pearson, Megan-Brette Hamilton, L. Lynn Stansberry Brusnahan, and Deeqaifrah Hussein

Objectives

- Explain legislation in regard to family involvement in special education.
- Describe the intersectional experiences and identify the needs of families participating in the special education process.
- Describe culturally sustaining strategies to effectively empower families to facilitate parent-professional collaboration, and promote self-determination in families.

This chapter provides culturally sustaining strategies to address the identified needs of families who have children with developmental disabilities, such as autism and intellectual disability (ID). Many families of children with disabilities share commonalities with several communities and thus have multiple layered social identities (e.g., an African American male student with autism). This chapter describes the legislation that mandates family involvement in special education and highlights the intersectional experiences of families participating in the special education process. The purpose of this chapter is to provide culturally sustaining practices that are rooted in empowerment and address multidimensionality to strengthen student outcomes. This chapter focuses on supporting empowerment among all families, including those who identify with historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States. This chapter uses the term “diverse” broadly to describe inclusive groups of individuals across racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, we use the term “caregiver” to refer to fathers, mothers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, foster parents, legal guardians, and others who serve in the primary care role for a child with a disability.

Chapter 8

Teaching diverse students with disabilities socio-political consciousness and self-advocacy

Peggy J. Schaefer Whitby, Elizabeth A. Harkins Monaco, Djanna Hill, and Kelly McNeal

Objectives

- Understand the sociopolitical constructs that impact people from oppressed populations' ability to advocate for themselves and others.
- Articulate how the intersection of multiple sociopolitical constructs further impact people with disabilities' ability to advocate for themselves and others.
- Identify their own bias that may impact how they teach diverse students from traditionally oppressed populations to self-advocate.
- Identify ways to teach self-advocacy while addressing the sociopolitical constructs using a cultural competency approach.

Chapter 8 provides information on the intersection of sociopolitical constructs as it affects one's ability to self-advocate. The intersection of multiple sociopolitical constructs affects youth with developmental disabilities (DD), including those with autism and intellectual disability (ID). The intersection of sociopolitical constructs and disability as a marginalized population has a significant impact on their ability to be heard and treated equitably by mainstream institutions such as schools. The skills needed to advocate for oneself within sociopolitical constructs can be taught to practitioners as well as students. However, many practitioners do not understand the impact of these constructs or how their own biases may affect how they practice and teach self-advocacy to a diverse population. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the sociopolitical constructs that impact a person's ability to self-advocate, impact a practitioner's ability to practice and teach self-advocacy skills, and to provide recommendations for increasing practitioners' abilities to teach self-advocacy skills to people with disabilities from marginalized populations.

Chapter 9

Preparing practitioners and coaching cultural competence and disability awareness

Marcus C. Fuller, Kelly M. Carrero, and William Hunter

Objectives

- Understand how the Cultural Proficiency Continuum can help identify healthy and unhealthy behaviors when conducting coaching.
- Learn how to provide clear expectations between coach and coachee.
- Identify practices and strategies to use during coaching sessions on culture and diversity and disability awareness.

Chapter 9 discusses how developing culturally proficient or sensitive practitioners requires clear guidance and coaching (Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Raymond, 2002). However, coaches often face challenges finding (a) strategies that can move their coachees to the next space along the *Cultural Proficiency Continuum* model (CPC; Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2009), and (b) ways to assess and provide feedback to their coaches about the CPC. The cultural proficiency of the coaches themselves plays a contributing factor in creating and maintaining culturally proficient educators. This chapter will guide the coach through (a) understanding how the CPC can help identify *healthy* and *unhealthy* behaviors, (b) providing clear expectations between coach and coachee, and (c) identifying practices and strategies to promote cultural, diversity, and disability awareness while constructing successful coaching experiences.