

# CHAPTER 1

## HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL CHANGES IN THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH EXCEPTIONALITIES

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Although the first public use of the term *special education* appears to have occurred at a presentation by Alexander Graham Bell at a National Education Association meeting in 1884 (Winzer, 1998), the historical and philosophical underpinnings of the field of special education emerged long before that event. Forged by a mixture of philosophical, political, economic, legal, and sociocultural factors (Fleischer & Zames, 2001; Giordano, 2007; Osgood, 2007; Reynolds, 1989), the history of special education is characterized by ongoing challenges, successes, and debates related to: (a) What are the goals and desired outcomes of special education? (b) Who should be served by special education? (c) How can a specially designed research-based pedagogy be best provided? and (d) Where should students with exceptionalities be educated? Although different from the history of people with disabilities, the field of special education has been inextricably linked to the treatment of individuals with exceptionalities and the societal perceptions and cultural and philosophical views of disability (Smith, 1998; Winzer, 1993).

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### History of Special Education

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## THE EARLY ROOTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The history of special education has been influenced by changing societal and philosophical beliefs about the extent to which individuals with disabilities should be feared, segregated, categorized, and educated. Prior to the 1700s, individuals with exceptionalities were largely ignored or subjected to inhumane treatment, ridicule, isolation, and at times put to death (D'Antonio, 2004; Winzer, 1993, 1998). However, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries ushered in rational philosophical beliefs about human dignity, which led to changes in the treatment and societal perceptions of individuals with exceptionalities (Winzer, 1998). These changes also were supported by efforts of pioneering special educators and advocates who began to experiment with various individually designed approaches to educating individuals with exceptionalities and to disseminate their work to others (Winzer, 1993).

In the 1500s and 1600s, the education of individuals with exceptionalities was influenced by European intellectuals seeking philosophical knowledge and a more egalitarian society (Winzer, 1993). In France, the Enlightenment led to changes in core beliefs about human nature, human reason, human rights and dignity, and self-sufficiency. These philosophical changes led to calls for the questioning of long held views and established socio-political structures and a society that recognized the rights of all of its citizens (Knight, 1968; Safford & Safford, 1996; Winzer, 1986, 1993).

In England, developing philosophical beliefs combined with the emerging research on language development conducted by scholars at the Royal Society of London, contributed to the movement to provide educational opportunities to individuals with exceptionalities (Winzer, 1993, 1998). For instance, John Wallis published a book examining the origins of language which served as an important guide that fostered the provision of educational opportunities to deaf individuals (Hoolihan, 1985; Winzer, 1993).

### *Initial Focus on the Sensory Disabilities*

The initial efforts to deliver special education and to develop specially designed instruction were focused on individuals with sensory disabilities (Best, 1930; Winzer, 1998). During the mid-sixteenth century, Pedro Ponce de Leon, a Spanish Benedictine monk, created oralism, an alternative to sign language that involved the teaching of lip-reading and speech, to teach

wealthy deaf individuals to speak in order to obtain their inheritance (Buchanan, 1999; Burch & Sutherland, 2006; Lane, 1989; Winzer, 1998). The work of Pedro Ponce de Leon was enhanced by the pedagogical efforts of Jacob Rodrigue P  reire, who was considered one of the first educators of the deaf. Subsequently, the use of oralism grew and became the dominant mode of communication taught in schools for the deaf from the 1890s to the 1920s (Burch & Sutherland, 2006; Winzer, 1998). However, Michel Charles de l'  p  e, a French priest, challenged the use of oralism and fostered the belief that the use of written characters and sign language was the most effective way to educate the deaf, which resulted in the use of sign language as the prevailing deaf education pedagogy during the first half of the 1800s (Winzer, 1998).

Successful instructional practices for the deaf led to efforts to develop effective specially designed approaches and techniques for blind individuals (Winzer, 1998). In 1784, Valentin Ha  y, the founder of a school for the blind in Paris, devised a system of raised print and embossed books to educate blind students (see Winzer, 1998). In 1829, Louis Braille, a former student at the Paris Blind School, created a raised dot method for reading and a stylus for writing, which led to the creation of a tactile alphabet that provided blind individuals with access to reading materials and allowed them to be more fully included in French society (Koestler, 1976).

As word of the successes of these efforts to educate individuals with sensory disabilities spread outside of Europe, educators traveled to learn about these effective special education practices and to implement and expand on them in their countries (Winzer, 1993). For instance, in 1817, after studying in Europe, Thomas Gallaudet established the first institution for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut, USA (Osgood, 2005). Similarly, building on his studies in Paris, Dr. John D. Fischer, created the New England Asylum for the Blind in 1829, which was later renamed the Perkins Institute for the Blind and is now called the Perkins School for the Blind (Fleischer & Zames, 2001; Winzer, 1993).

At the Perkins institute, Samuel Gridley Howe worked with Laura Bridgman, a deaf-blind student. Employing an individually designed approach based on her ability to identify letters by distinguishing shapes, Howe showed that Laura Bridgman could be educated. The groundbreaking work of Howe and Bridgman challenged accepted beliefs that deaf-blind individuals could not learn and served as a forerunner for the ensuing accomplishments of Helen Keller and her teacher Anne Mansfield Sullivan (Osgood, 2005; Smith, 1998).

## THE EMERGENCE OF SPECIALIZED INTERVENTIONS, PROGRAMS, SCHOOLS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Whereas initial efforts to design and provide specially designed instruction were focused on individuals with sensory exceptionalities, the provision of a special education began to be expanded to include individuals with cognitive disabilities. Although this period in the history of special education saw the development of specialized interventions for this group of individuals, it also was characterized by the rise of institutions and specialized schools.

### *Institutional Settings*

Influenced by negative stereotypes and perceptions and fears of individuals with disabilities, especially toward those with cognitive and emotional and behavioral challenges, the mid-nineteenth century saw the growth of institutions and asylums for individuals with disabilities (Armstrong, 2002). Although some institutions viewed their purpose as providing educational and vocational programs and fostering moral and religious development (Giordano, 2007), many of them saw their role as delivering medical, vocational, and custodial care and serving as a vehicle to separate, mend, and control disabled and “defective” individuals who were perceived as deviant and threatening (Armstrong, 2002; Humphries & Gordon, 1992; Winzer, 1998). As a result of the humanitarian, legal, and economic issues associated with institutional settings, community-based day care and occupation centers that offered custodial care and limited levels of vocational preparation also began to emerge (Giordano, 2007; Read & Walmsley, 2006).

### *Specialized Interventions for Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities*

In the early 1800s, the work of Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard with Victor, who was referred to as the wild boy of Aveyron, served as a seminal event in the field of special education (Safford & Safford, 1996). Itard developed a specially designed pedagogy that enhanced Victor’s language and cognitive

development, which showed that individuals previously considered uneducable could learn (Safford & Safford, 1996). Itard's work served as a springboard for other European scholars and educators (Hinshelwood, 1900; Ireland, 1877; Morgan, 1896) to disseminate their efforts to study and validate a collection of effective special education instructional practices. The most prominent of these efforts was Édouard Seguin's publication, *Treatise on Idiocy*, which presented a set of specialized instructional principles, techniques, and devices that provided others with a pedagogical model for teaching individuals with cognitive disabilities (Giordano, 2007).

### *Specialized Programs, Schools, and Classes*

The success of and attention received by the specialized pedagogies of Itard, Seguin, and other European educators helped to change societal viewpoints with respect to whether individuals with cognitive disabilities could learn and gave rise to laws and efforts to educate these students in specialized schools and classes (Giordano, 2007; Read & Walmsley, 2006). In the early 1900s, France established a law that created special improvement classes for students with learning difficulties that were associated with schools that educated students without disabilities (Armstrong, 2002). In 1913, Great Britain passed the Mental Deficiency Act which promulgated policies for defining and educating students with exceptionalities and mandated that educational and governmental agencies be responsible for administering them (Giordano, 2007).

### *Advocacy Groups*

The rise of specialized schools and classes and the legislation in Europe led families and professionals to form advocacy groups that called for greater inclusion of individuals with exceptionalities into all aspects of society including providing them with increased educational opportunities (Yell, Rodgers, & Rodgers, 1998). These groups included the Council for Exceptional Children, a professional organization that was founded in 1922, and the Cuyahoga County Ohio Council for the Retarded Child, one of the initial groups of families who banded together to advocate for their children in 1933.

## THE IMPACT OF INTELLIGENCE TESTING AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

### *Intelligence Testing*

While initially designed to help identify individuals who needed special assistance to learn, the advent of intelligence testing in the early twentieth century hindered efforts to deliver a special education to students with exceptionalities (Armstrong, 2002; Safford & Safford, 1998). The movement toward universal intelligence testing resulted in intelligence being seen as a fixed, inherited, and highly desired scientific concept that guided schools in planning, delivering, and evaluating their instruction. The emphasis on intelligence testing also prompted rigid societal beliefs of normality and aptitude which led to individuals with lower IQs being viewed as “feeble-minded,” “mentally defective,” “ineducable,” and the cause of societal problems, and therefore segregated from society via placement in institutions and exempted from compulsory education laws (Read & Walmsley, 2006; Yell et al., 1998).

These fixed and genetic notions of intelligence also were used to establish a cultural and racial basis for the learning potential of different groups and fostered the promulgation of the Eugenics movement in the early twentieth century (Bursztyn, 2007; Humphries & Gordon, 1992). A social movement which called for the selective reproduction of humans with the purported goal of enhancing the species, the Eugenics movement led to limits on immigration and the sterilization of individuals viewed as “defective” (Gould, 1981). Furthermore, the Eugenics movement coupled with the misuse of intelligence testing led to the segregation of “feebleminded” individuals in institutions and state schools where they were subjected to forced labor, abuse, and experimental surgical procedures (D’Antonio, 2004). Eventually, the Eugenics movement fell out of favor and was abandoned by the end of World War II (Black, 2003).

### *Educational Research*

The setbacks of the intelligence testing movement started to be countered by groundbreaking educational research showing that the learning of students with exceptionalities was enhanced when they were provided with a stimulating environment (Skeels & Dye, 1939). Starting in the 1930s, scholars and researchers such as Orton, Monroe, Kirk, and Myklebust

experimented with and applied clinical teaching practices to examine and document effective instructional practices that contributed to the field's legacy of empiricism (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Stecker, 2010). These studies helped alter the purpose of special education from providing custodial care to educating students. These pioneering educational research studies also demonstrated the benefits of early intervention and helped establish the commitment of the field of special education to the development and dissemination of research-based interventions (Morse, 2000).

## THE LEGALIZATION AND INTEGRATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Since the 1960s and 1970s, special education has undergone significant growth and changes that has been marked by the legalization of the field. In addition, special education has gone from being a separate system to being integrated into the general education system and serving an important role in advocating for and ensuring the inclusion of individual with disabilities into the larger society.

### *The Civil Rights Movement and Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*

The growth, purpose, and legal precedents for the field of special education were established in the early 1950s by the civil rights movement and the 1954 Supreme court decision in the case of *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* (Blanchett, Brantlinger, & Shealey, 2005). This landmark civil rights case, establishing that "separate but equal is not equal," became the foundation for legal actions brought by families of children with disabilities to guarantee that their children had the right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The Supreme Court decision also contributed to the inclusive education movement, which sought to educate students with disabilities in general education classrooms (Blanchett, Mumford, & Beachum, 2005; Morse, 2000; Salend, 2011).

### *Special Education-Related Court Cases*

Following *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, court decisions have upheld and expanded on the educational rights of student with exceptionalities. Table 1 provides a brief summary of court decisions that impacted special

**Table 1.** Historical Court Decisions that Impacted Special Education  
(Litton et al., 1989; Schwenn, 1991).

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1919	<i>Beattie v. State Board of Education</i> – Court ruled that students with physical impairments could be excluded from school if their presence was deemed depressing and nauseating to other students.
1967	<i>Hobson v. Hansen</i> – Court ruled that the track system of placing students based upon standardized test scores was unconstitutional because it discriminated against African-Americans and poor children.
1970	<i>Diana v. State of California</i> – Court ruled that students must be assessed in their primary language to avoid overrepresentation of minorities in special education.
1972	<i>Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Pennsylvania</i> – Court ruled that a free appropriate education must be provided for all children with exceptionalities regardless of severity of their disability.
1972	<i>Maryland Association for Retarded Citizens v. Maryland</i> – Court ruled that all children with intellectual disabilities have a right for a free and appropriate education.
1972	<i>Frederick v. Thomas</i> – Court ruled that children with learning disabilities are not receiving an appropriate education if their teachers are not qualified.
1972	<i>Mills v. Board of Education in the District of Columbia</i> – Court ruled that the district must provide a free and appropriate education for children with exceptionalities regardless of the severity. Recommended timely reevaluations. Listed rights of parents to appeal, be notified of testing and placement, and have access to child's records.
1972	<i>Guadalupe v. Tempe Elementary District</i> – Delineated standards for placing students with mild cognitive impairments into special education classes such as: scores two standard deviations below the mean; the need to assess adaptive functioning of students; and the testing of students in their primary language.
1972	<i>Larry v. Riles</i> – Court ruled that some IQ tests discriminated against African-American children as they were not validated procedures to accurately assess these children's cognitive abilities resulting in their misplacement into special education classes.
1973	<i>LeBanks v. Spears</i> – Court ruled that Louisiana schools must educate its students with exceptionalities appropriately, and these students have the right to be educated with their peers without disabilities, if appropriate.
1975	<i>Lora v. Board of Education of City for New York</i> – Court ruled that students with emotional impairments must be educated with their peers without disabilities.
1982	<i>Rowley v. Hendrik Hudson School District</i> – Court ruled that each child with a disability has a right to an individualized instructional plan and necessary supports.
1984	<i>Irving Independent School District v. Tatro</i> – Court ruled that the school must pay for catheterization which was necessary for a student with a physical impairment.
1984	<i>Smith v. Robinson</i> – Court ruled that the state had to pay for a student with a disability for placement in a residential school.
1988	<i>Honig v. Doe</i> – Restricted suspension for students with disabilities even for violent and disruptive behavior to ten days. Schools had to prove why these students should not be in school.
1989	<i>Timothy v. Rochester School District</i> – Court ruled that schools must provide an educational program and services that meet the needs of the child regardless of the extent of the disability and even if the child appears unable to profit from existing programs.

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education prior to and after the passage of Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975. The historic outcomes in *Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* in 1972 established the right of students with exceptionalities and their families regarding the delivery of an appropriate education that included special education services (Hulett, 2009; Yell, 2006).

Several court cases focused on the inclusion of students with exceptionalities in general education settings including *Daniel R. R. v. State Board of Education* (1989), *Sacramento City Unified School District v. Rachel H.* (1994), and *Oberti v. Board of Education of the Borough of Clementon School District* (1993) (Hulett, 2009; Murdick, Gartin, & Crabtree, 2007; Yell, 2006). In addition to encouraging school districts to educate all students in general education settings, these cases provided guidelines for placing students in the least restrictive environment (LRE). These guidelines involved: (a) comparing the anticipated educational, behavioral, social, and self-concept outcomes of being taught in inclusive classrooms to the anticipated outcomes associated with special education classrooms; (b) examining the impact of students with disabilities on the education of their general education peers and on teachers; and (c) considering the costs of educating students in inclusive classrooms and the effect of these costs on the district's resources for educating all students.

### *Advocacy and the Disability Rights Movement*

In addition to the Brown decision, the triumphs of the civil rights movement ushered in a time of greater acceptance and possibilities, which strengthened efforts by groups of individuals with disabilities, family members, and professionals to form coalitions to advocate against discrimination, segregation, and marginalization, and to seek equity, opportunity, and greater inclusion into all aspects of society (Giordano, 2007). Guided by the principle of *normalization*, which originated in Scandinavia, these advocacy groups lobbied for educational, housing, employment, social, and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities that paralleled those available to people without disabilities (Wolfensberger, 1972). The actions of these advocacy groups also provided the underpinnings of the disability rights movement and the creation of a disability culture and disabilities studies, which affirmed and celebrated disability, and challenged society's traditional beliefs about disability and whether, where, and how to educate students with exceptionalities (Fleischer & Zames, 2001; Burch & Sutherland, 2006).

### *Special Education-Related Legislation*

Advocacy groups succeeded in lobbying for legislative actions that ensured and directed the delivery of special education services and gave students with exceptionalities increased access to society and educational opportunities (Giordano, 2007; Yell et al., 1998). The passage of the 1970 Education (Handicapped Children) Act in England, the Loi d'Orientation en Faveur des Personnes Handicapées in France in 1975, and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in the United States in 1975 (which was renamed the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** and reauthorized numerous times) provided students with exceptionalities with access to public schools (Armstrong, 2002). The IDEA also mandated that students with exceptionalities be taught in the LRE and have an individualized educational program (IEP) that guides the delivery of special education services, addresses academic and functional goals, and fosters students' education, postsecondary options, employment, and independent living (Ferretti & Eisenman, 2010; McLaughlin, 2010).

As a result of research starting in the 1960s and continuing today that demonstrates the effectiveness of early intervention for infants and young children with exceptionalities, programs, services, and interventions for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers have become an integral part of special education with the passage of P.L. 99-457, Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Act of 1986 (Bruder, 2010). P.L. 99-457 extended many of the rights and safeguards of the IDEA to children with exceptionalities from birth to 5 years of age and encouraged the delivery of early intervention services and the development of an individualized family service plan.

## **THE RISE OF SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED DISABILITY CATEGORIES**

The mandates and movements to educate students with exceptionalities contributed to a concomitant increase in the numbers of students identified, and changes in the types of students with exceptionalities served by special education. Whereas special education initially focused on serving students with sensory disabilities and then cognitive disabilities, students with socially constructed disabilities now make up the vast majority of students served by special education. These changes were fostered by the creation of such socially constructed disability categories as *emotionally disturbed* and *learning disabilities* (Armstrong, 2002). In particular, the category of

learning disabilities, a term that was initially used by Kirk and Bateman (1962) that related to students who performed poorly but did not have sensory, physical, or severe cognitive disabilities, led to a significant growth in the number of students served by special education and the thrust toward a noncategorical approach to structuring the delivery of special education services (Brownell, Sindelar, Kiely, & Danielson, 2010). There also has been a surge in the number of students receiving special education services who are identified as having an autism spectrum disorder, or an attention deficit disorder (Salend, 2011).

## **THE PERSISTENT PROBLEM OF DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION**

The creation of socially constructed disabilities and the use of unreliable and invalid procedures to identify students with exceptionalities, as well as the intersection of issues of class, gender, age, language background, and geography contributed to growing concerns about the overidentification of students in special education, and the persistent problem of disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010; Black, 2010; Dyches & Prater, 2010; McCall & Skrtic, 2009; Obiakor, 2007). The ongoing overrepresentation of students of color in special education as well as their underrepresentation in programs for gifted and talented students have raised concerns about the racialization of disability, and special education as a program that resegregates students, lowers expectations for students and denies them access to the general education curriculum, and undermines the 1954 Brown decision (Artiles, 2009; Ferri & Connor, 2005; McCall & Skrtic, 2009; Waitoller, Artiles, & Cheney, 2010).

### *Response-to-Intervention (RtI)*

The overidentification of students in socially constructed disability categories and the disproportionate representation of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has led to the creation of new models for identifying students in need of special education such as Response-to-Intervention (RtI) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2006; Wheeler & Mayton, 2010). The RtI process seeks to lessen the number of students identified in need of special education by ruling out poor instruction or lack of

instruction as causes of their poor school performance by using a multitiered instructional model for examining the extent to which students respond to and need more intensive and individualized research-based interventions to learn. Although a relatively new methodology, RtI has the potential to dramatically alter the field of special education (Brownell et al., 2010; Fuchs et al., 2010).

## THE MOVEMENT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Concerns about the growth and segregated nature of special education initially expressed by Lloyd Dunn (1968) and supported by the ongoing research questioning the efficacy of special education programs (McLeskey, 2007), legislative and judicial actions, the persistent problem of disproportionate representation of students of color, and the work of advocacy groups led the field of special education to initially focus on mainstreaming during the 1970s and early 1980s. Litton, Rotatori, and Day (1989) stressed that mainstreaming was concerned with the integration of students with disabilities into the general education schools and classes, however, for mainstreaming to work successfully, the student's program needed to be individualized, and supportive services were necessary. Litton et al. stated that while mainstreaming greatly impacted and increased the number of students with disabilities receiving education in general education classrooms, the following problems arose: the special education programs were poorly designed; the students were confronted with competing sets of instructional goals; there was a lack of coordination between general and special education personnel; negative attitudes of general education teachers and peers toward students with disabilities sometimes developed, leading to students with disabilities being poorly accepted; the curriculum for the students with disabilities was too difficult; and the students with disabilities began having problems with their self-concept and self-image.

Due to problems with mainstreaming, the Regular Education Initiative (REI) movement started in the late 1980s and continued into the 1990s (see Rotatori, Schwenn, & Litton, 1994). The REI, which was attributed to Madeline Will, assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (Will, 1986), advocated that general education should assume unequivocal and primary responsibility for all students including those with disabilities and other special needs (Rotatori et al., 1994). Proponents of the REI emphasized that the dual system of education should be dissolved because it was cost inefficient and ineffective, and it

discriminated against students with disabilities (Schwenn, 1991). In contrast, opponents of REI stressed a more cautious approach in which evaluative research would be conducted to assure that regulating classroom education is appropriate for all students (Schwenn, 1991). A prime emphasis of the REI was the reduction in *pull-out or resource room classes* in which students with disabilities were given instruction in small groups outside their classroom.

The REI movement was the major special education controversy of the 1990s and led to the implementation of *Inclusive* education programs that educate *all students* together in the general education classroom (Obiakor, Harris, Rotatori, & Algozzine, 2010; Osgood, 2005; Salend, 2011; Valle & Connor, 2010). In general, the research findings suggest that inclusive education can benefit students with and without exceptionalities when their teachers use differentiated instruction and assessment as well as curricular and teaching accommodations within the general education setting (Black-Hawkins, Florian, & Rouse, 2007; Cushing, Carter, Clark, Wallis, & Kennedy, 2009; Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 2007). Because inclusive education is a relatively new philosophy and inclusion programs are multifaceted and varied in their implementation and the services provided (Ainscow, 2008; Idol, 2006), research and models that enhance its implementation, effectiveness, and long-term impact continues to be a focus for the field (Sindelar, Shearer, Yendol-Hoppey, & Liebert, 2006).

## THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The work of advocacy groups, the passage of special education-related legislation, and the movement toward inclusion also served as a framework for an increased global commitment to disability rights, and the education of students with exceptionalities and inclusive education (Bui, Fletcher, & Keller, 2010; Forlin, 2008). In 1994, the Salamanca statement was adopted by 92 countries and 25 international organizations. This groundbreaking statement called upon all countries to educate all of their students together in inclusive classrooms. As a result, nations throughout the world have established inclusive education initiatives tailored to their country's educational philosophy and history as well as a range of social, political, cultural, and economic factors (Alur & Bach, 2008; Brown, 2005; Fletcher & Artiles, 2005; Heng & Tam, 2006; Mitchell, 2005; Mitchell & Desai, 2005). The implementation of inclusive education in many countries has expanded beyond disability to also address individual differences related to race,

linguistic ability, economic status, gender, learning style, ethnicity, cultural and religious background, family structure, and sexual orientation (Mitchell, 2005; Slee, 2005; Verma, Bagley, & Jha, 2007). In 2008, the United Nations expanded on the Salamanca statement and adopted a groundbreaking international agreement that called upon nations throughout the world to take efforts to provide individuals with disabilities with equal access to educational, employment, and social opportunities.

## **THE ONGOING COMMITMENT TO RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES**

Consistent with the field's inception and continuing efforts to develop and disseminate empirically based interventions, the commitment to create and use research-based practices that fosters equality, quality instruction, and educational opportunities for all students continues to be a hallmark of the field of special education (Anderson, Marchant, & Somarriba, 2010; Crockett, Gerber, Gersten, & Harris, 2010). The 1960s and 1970s was characterized by debates over effective models (e.g., the medical model, diagnostic-prescriptive teaching model, and the behavioral model), pedagogical approaches (e.g., perceptual and modality training, dietary changes, motor patterning, and aptitude-by-treatment interaction (ATI) approach) (Mostert & Crockett, 2000; Van Acker, 2006), and the emergence of the precision teaching model that was predicated on examining teaching effectiveness by collecting data related to students' mastery of specific behavioral objectives (Brownell et al., 2010).

The inclusive education movement has led researchers to continue to conduct and share research regarding the efficacy of general education placements for students with exceptionalities (McLeskey, 2007; Salend, 2011). The growing body of research has resulted in the development and validation of innovative practices that have become integral parts of general education such as universal design for learning, collaborative teaching arrangements, cooperative learning, family involvement and empowerment techniques, learning strategy instruction, positive behavioral supports, self-management strategies, and culturally responsive teaching (Salend, 2011). The technological advances of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have also led to widespread use of a range of assistive and instructional technologies that enhance student learning and socialization, foster individualized instruction, expand access to all aspects of society, and transform views of

exceptionality (Beard, Bowden Carpenter, & Johnston, 2011; Blackhurst, 2005; Bouck, 2010; Brownell et al., 2010; Parette & Peterson-Karlan, 2010).

## SUMMARY

This chapter presented some of the important historical and philosophical events, factors, and movements that have influenced the development of special education. Linked to the treatment of individuals with disabilities and marked by ongoing debates about purposes, groups served, effective practices and programmatic models, and desired outcomes, special education today has become an integral part of the educational system that is based on providing and monitoring the effectiveness of a set of specially designed, coordinated, comprehensive, and research-based instructional, social, behavioral, curricular, and assessment practices and related services (Heward, 2009). From its initial focus on providing custodial care in segregated settings to students with sensory and cognitive exceptionalities, special education today has been transformed into a program that seeks to educate students with learning, behavioral, emotional, physical, health, and sensory disabilities in inclusive settings with their peers. Consistent with its empirical legacy, special education today strives to identify a distinctive research base that shapes its policies, practices, and procedures and addresses where, when, and how students with exceptionalities should be educated. While special education also has evolved into a program that seeks to foster equity and access to all aspects of schooling, the community and society, challenges remain. Eliminating disproportionate representation, expanding postsecondary options, closing achievement gaps, helping all students access and succeed in the general education curriculum, improving the implementation of inclusive education, and becoming a cohesive international movement continue to exist and have future implications for enriching the vibrant and dynamic field of special education.

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