

Preface

This new edition of *Exceptional Children in Today's Schools* provides an exciting learning experience for students in introduction to special education courses, taking into account the importance of interactivity, efficiency and effectiveness, and varying learner preferences. Information science has moved beyond access and storage of information to interactive systems for teaching and learning. The population of students enrolled in introductory courses includes a much larger proportion of individuals who are enrolled in alternative teacher education programs, pursuing certification while also employed in a related career. Emerging policies such as those embedded in No Child Left Behind carry greater accountability implications for general education, and the public is becoming more assertive in communicating its expectations about public education to policy makers. Aspiring teachers like you in special education today have many pressing matters competing for your time, and your teaching and learning preferences vary. This new edition is designed to help future teachers learn new skills and acquire needed knowledge, in the way that suits you best.

Our responses to the changing preferences in how adult learners prefer investing their time and energy in professional preparation and the conditions surrounding the education of students with exceptional learning needs are evident as you begin to use the many resources designed as integral features of this edition. We updated policies and concerns related to public enlightenment. We integrated content throughout the chapters to reflect the growing number of students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in our schools, as changes in student demographics have implications for how teachers plan for instruction and collaborate with parents and families. Challenges presented by advancements in information science in the form of instructional technology and the changing needs of those aspiring to be special education teachers were difficult but interesting, allowing the author team to be creative and to step out and experiment with some ideas whose time had come. And we put you, the aspiring teacher, in the driver's seat.

This new edition includes both the print copy and the companion e-book with a wide array of activities, handouts, self-tests, interactive features, case studies, glossary items, and audio recordings of each chapter. The print version contains updated content and a focus on what beginning teachers need to know, opening the door to a broader set of resources in the form of the e-book. All of the content in the print version is included in the e-book, but the e-book is far more than a digital text. What is most significant about the e-book is that it is in an online self-instructional format. You can assess your understanding at any time with practice tests, search for definitions, apply what you have learned by responding to training activities, modify prepared notes, review content whenever you wish, and access any aspect of the e-book by a mere click on the table of contents. You can print out any part of the e-book, building your own customized print version in the sequence and manner that serves you best now as a student and later as a

teacher. And because you have the print version in your hands now, you can decide the balance you wish to find with this book, the e-book version, and anything you create from both models.

After researching the experience of adults engaged in online instruction to learn from them what features enhance their learning, we designed a print version and an e-book with maximum options to match your learning styles. You can access the content of *Exceptional Children in Today's Schools* in four forms—the hard-copy textbook, an illustrated text version with direct links to all features in the e-book, a multimedia version that allows you to listen to the text being read aloud while you view picture slides, and a download of the MP3 files for your own player. And across all options, when you move from one mode to another, the content remains the same. But with the companion e-book the content is enhanced, supplemented, and made more accessible depending on your choices of use. You control your own learning.

Welcome to the fourth edition. We have designed it for you.

Ed Meyen and Yvonne Bui