

SIXTH EDITION

# TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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## PREFACE

As with the previous editions of this textbook, we have attempted to provide useful information about a complex topic in a form that can be readily consumed and applied. In preparing the sixth edition of this comprehensive textbook, we have drawn upon the current research literature, best practices, strong values, and our own experiences working with students with severe disabilities. We are active researchers, teacher educators, and former teachers who have personally enjoyed the rewards and challenges of educating students with severe disabilities.

There are many notable changes in this edition, beginning with the addition of two new authors: Dr. M. Alexandra Da Fonte of Vanderbilt University and Dr. Jennifer A. Kurth of the University of Kansas. They have made significant contributions to this edition and their expertise is well represented in its pages.

Our primary goal in this edition has been to present concise information that helps readers develop an understanding of the strengths and needs of individuals with severe disabilities, current service philosophies, and effective instructional practices for teaching these students. In comparison to previous editions, we have tried to reduce unessential narrative and increase material that can be applied by current and future professionals. The result has been to shorten some chapters and combine others, with a final product consisting of 17 chapters, a reduction of four chapters from the previous edition. We made this change without sacrificing critical information while preserving the content that would be of the greatest value to readers.

As in previous editions, this book is divided into four major parts. In Part 1 (Chapters 1–3), we provide important considerations for teaching students with severe disabilities, including descriptions of students with disabilities and their potentials; philosophies that direct services and instructional practices; and the importance of and effective procedures for collaboration. In Part 2 (Chapters 4–7), we present general procedures that are relevant to all aspects of instruction, including assessing and planning for instruction, instructional methods (with a focus on systematic instruction), evaluating student progress, and supporting students in inclusive classrooms.

Part 3 (Chapters 8–14) drills deeper into instructional strategies for specific areas, including addressing health and medical needs of students and teaching communication skills; personal care skills; academics; home and community skills; and social, leisure, and recreational skills. The final chapter in Part 3 discusses providing supports to improve challenging behavior. In Part 4 (Chapters 15–17), we provide information about three key topics: using assistive technology, meeting the needs of young children, and transition planning and adult issues.

We would like to thank our families for helping us once again to survive as we entered the solitary world of textbook revision and hunkered down over our notes, journals, and keyboards. They were faithful and understanding enough to stay with us until we finally broke the surface and shared their worlds once again.

We are also grateful to our colleagues, students, and readers who have given us their opinions about earlier editions and suggestions for this revision. We are especially thankful for support from our colleagues at Western Carolina University (including Karena Cooper-Duffy, Kelly Kelley, David Shapiro, and Bill Ogletree), to

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At Pearson, we thank Kevin Davis, our editor, for providing insight, direction, and assistance for this new edition. We hope this textbook will be helpful to those who read it. The lives of people with severe disabilities, as well as those of their parents and families, can be complex and difficult for others to understand. Similarly, teachers and other service providers often face challenges and considerable rewards, many of which cannot be fully appreciated by their friends or even some of their coworkers. Helping to make life better for other people doesn't necessarily make one's own life worse, but it also doesn't make it simpler or easier. We don't expect this book to achieve this outcome either, but if it moves readers in a positive direction and helps them expend their energy more effectively, we will have been successful.

D. L. W.  
E. W. C.  
M. A. D.  
J. A. K.



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