



Positive Side of Special Education: Minimizing Its Fads, Fancies, and Follies

Kenneth A. Kavale, Mark P. Mostert

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Special education often goes astray because of a continuing failure to see events in historical context. The failure to resolve issues means that special education has developed a tendency to enact interventions without any regard to past success or failure. Here, authors Kavale and Mostert provide a description of special education practices that have had significant impact but lacked scientific validation. The history of special education shows a number of instances where practices were initiated more for ideological rather than scientific reasons. When scientific standards of evidence are applied, these practices are found to verge on being fraudulent, worthless, or sometimes harmful. Although these practices were initiated with good intentions, the logic and rationality emanating from a scientific foundation quickly made them highly questionable. The authors describe many of these examples and show how a more scientific attitude can avoid beliefs that potentially undermine the integrity of special education. The Positive Side of Special Education: covers past and present intervention activities, describes scientific method and what it means, describes the influence of ideology, special education practice, and how science can overcome it, describes the notion of "fallible judgment" and pseudoscience. A must read for special education professionals, special education undergraduates, graduate students, psychologists, parents, and teachers of students with disabilities.

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