
Preface

Research with people with disabilities has always presented its own set of challenges. The first book that we wrote to address those challenges was *Research Methods in Special Education*, published by Sage in 1995. As we planned a revision of that text at the request of Corwin Press, we knew that many more challenges had been introduced for the researcher in this context. At the same time, we were aware of the additional resources and perspectives that had developed in the research community that could aid people doing such research.

We wrote the initial volume for persons who intend to conduct or critically analyze research conducted with special education populations. That purpose has been extended, and consequently the content of the book has been expanded as well. *Research Methods in Special Education* was intended to be used only as a supplementary text along with more comprehensive research methods texts. In this new text, the audience continues to be those who intend to conduct or critically analyze research with special education populations; however, it has been broadened to focus on addressing the need for empirically-based data for decision making in a variety of settings including federal, state, and local governments as well as the private and not-for-profit sectors. The book includes a discussion of the implications of the No Child Left Behind Legislation, program evaluation, and methods of providing information for decision making for those who set policy, implement and administer programs, teach students, and advocate for people with disabilities. While the reader may still find supplementary texts on specific topics such as psychometrics or statistics useful, this book is written in a more applied way, providing step-by-step guidance in the planning of research and evaluation. It is also redesigned to include resources available through the World Wide Web and in electronic formats.

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Additional developments in the research world have provided us with guidance, especially writings related to resilience theory, positive psychology, the transformative paradigm, and empowerment. The shift in paradigm from a medical model to a cultural model for individuals with disabilities is more fully recognized as an important factor in the research process in this volume. The approaches to research are presented with the intention of: (1) changing people's views of people with disabilities to understand that the problem is not located in the individual, but rather in the societal response to the disability and (2) examining the ways that research can contribute to understanding how people with disabilities can better learn the skills and knowledge they need to have successful lives and how those who work with them can support this process through the application of research-based practice.