About the Contributors

**Nava R. Silton**, Ph.D., received her B.S. from Cornell University and her M.A. and Ph.D. from Fordham University. Silton has worked at Nickelodeon, Sesame Workshop, and Mediakidz. She has taught both undergraduate and graduate psychology courses at Fordham University, Hunter College, Touro College, and began a tenure-track line in the Department of Psychology at Marymount Manhattan College in the fall of 2010. She was a Postdoctoral Templeton Fellow at the Spears Research Institute at the Healthcare Chaplaincy from 2009-2010, and she has conducted research at the Autism Seaver Center at Mount Sinai Hospital and at Sesame Street Workshop. Her primary research interests include determining how best to enhance typical children’s sensitivity to children with disabilities, how to teach social emotional skills to children on the spectrum, and looking at the interface between religion and health. She is currently producing a children’s television show and a graphic novel series with disability awareness and stop bullying as primary platforms. She has written numerous peer-reviewed articles and chapters in the area of disabilities.

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**Kari A. Andersen** is School Psychology Ph.D. student at Fordham University. She is a licensed school psychologist with a Master’s degree from Touro College. Her research interests concern technology-based interventions for children in the context of academic and non-academic learning situations. Additionally, she holds interests in the development and employment of attentional strategies among preschool children.

**Senada Arucevic** is a senior of Marymount Manhattan College double majoring in biology and psychology. She is passionate about working with children and is working towards becoming a pediatric nurse practitioner. She has a strong interest in research and has worked alongside Nava Silton for the past three years. When Silton proposed the idea of Realabilities, Arucevic was eager to seize this opportunity. She has aided in the development of the characters, edited and written episodes, as well as contributed to the research design. Arucevic was selected to present her research projects at numerous conferences such as the American Psychological Association Conference and the Eastern Psychological Conference. Arucevic won the Professor-Student Collaboration Award in 2012 due to her work on the four-part intervention and Realabilities. She is also a member of the Psi Chi Honors Society in Psychology. Arucevic currently volunteers at Lenox Hill Hospital and spends her free time with her family.


**Angela Barber** (Ph.D. – Florida State) is an assistant professor of Communicative Disorders at the University of Alabama and the Research Director of the UA Autism Clinic. Her research focuses on early identification and social communication interventions for children with autism and improving access to services for children with autism in underserved communities.

**Michael Ben-Avie**, Ph.D., was the data analyst for Connecticut General Assembly Special Act 08-5: An Act Concerning the Teaching of Children with Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities (2008-2009). He is a senior researcher with the Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders, and conducted research with his co-authors on a federal grant addressing “Handheld Technology to Improve Educational Outcomes for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders” (2010-2013). He worked as a job coach at a school that serves students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disorders. As Principal Investigator and Co-P.I., he conducted outcome evaluations of federal grants, including grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Center for Substance Abuse Treatment; U.S. Department of Education; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s Center for Mental Health Services; and a collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. Dr. Ben-Avie is a nationally recognized expert on public education as co-editor of six books on educational change and youth development with James. P. Comer, M.D., Associate Dean of the Yale School of Medicine. He is chair of Tag Institute for Social Development.

**Fran C. Blumberg** received her Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from Purdue University in 1988. She is an Associate Professor and in the Division of Psychological and Educational Services within Graduate School of Education at Fordham University. Her research interests concern the development of children’s attention and attention strategies in the context of academic and non-academic learning situations. She has published and received funding for her research concerning children’s attention and learning while playing video games and is editor of the forthcoming “Learning by Playing: Video Gaming in Education,” to be published by Oxford University Press.

**Terry Cumming** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. She has earned her PhD and MEd in Special Education (EBD) from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and her BSED Special Education from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests include: educational technology, emotional and behavioural disorders, positive behavioural interventions, intellectual disabilities, and inclusive practices. Recent research projects include: using iPads to support students with language-based disabilities, using iPads to support adults with intellectual disabilities in being researchers, teachers’ perspectives on student misbehavior, and using technology to enhance social skills instruction for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. She has published a book and several journal articles and presented her work at both national and international conferences. Prior to her university and research work, Dr. Cumming has many years experience as a special educator and behaviour mentor.
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Cathi Draper Rodriguez, Ph.D., NCSP, is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at California State University, Monterey Bay. Dr. Draper Rodriguez teaches curriculum, assessment, and introduction to research in the Special Education and Masters programs. Since earning her doctorate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, she has focused her research on using technology with English learners with and without disabilities, the diagnosis of disabilities in English learners, assessment in education and multicultural education. Dr. Draper Rodriguez is a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Her previous work experience includes serving as a bilingual school psychologist in a public school setting and as an early interventionist providing services to young Latina mothers.

Gary Edwards (Ph.D. - Alabama) is the Chief Executive Officer of United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Birmingham, which provides a wide range of educational, therapeutic, medical, and vocational services to children and adults with disabilities. Gary is an expert on disabilities issues such employment and inclusion for people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

Jeff Gray (Ph.D. – Vanderbilt) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Computer Science at the University of Alabama. Jeff is a recipient of the NSF CAREER award and was named the 2008 Alabama Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation. His research into assistive technologies and human-centered computing has been funded recently by Google and NSF. For more information, please see http://gray.cs.ua.edu/.

Julie E. N. Irish, M.Sc., is a Ph.D. student in the design graduate program in the College of Design at the University of Minnesota focusing on evidence-based design. Her previous graduate studies in Inclusive Environments from Reading University, England, U.K., have augmented her work as an interior designer of environments for people with disabilities. Projects in Wales, U.K., include the Ty Gwyn Special School, an environment for children with severe disabilities and autism. During her involvement with this project she became more keenly aware of the difficulties facing children with autism, particularly as they process and deal with their surroundings, and the effect on their parents, caregivers, and teachers. This prompted her desire to do more for this population and in Fall 2011, accompanied by her family, she moved to the States to pursue a research goal of exploring how the design of the educational environment affects children with autism in an adverse way, why that might be and how that environment could be improved to make their lives easier. She is also intrigued by virtual environments and the potential they could have as a design tool, particularly for those with ASD.

Allison Krupko, M.Ed. is an Educational Specialist (Ed.S.) student in the school psychology program at Kent State University. Currently, Ms. Krupko is completing her yearlong internship in school psychology in Ohio. Throughout her graduate training, Ms. Krupko has been active in assisting with research focusing on technology-based interventions for students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and assessing the efficacy of social skills interventions. Her professional interests include incorporating preschool and early elementary school students into a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and assisting students who have experienced Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) in transitioning back to the school setting.

Lauren Lambert is a Psychology student at the University of Alabama who has a passion for helping children with disabilities.
About the Contributors

Cassidy Lamm is a student at the University of Alabama in the Department of Computer Science. She is currently supported by an NSF and College Board grant that is investigating the use of mobile computing as a context for a new Advanced Placement exam in collaboration with the College Board.

Lauren Levenson is a School Psychology Ph.D. student at Fordham University. Her research interests concern how family environment characteristics affect both behavioral and social-emotional outcomes in children with autism and other developmental disabilities. Other research interests are related to intervention techniques that may alleviate some of the difficulties associated with autism. She is currently working on a research project that will assess the relationship between parenting style and attachment style on the social-emotional outcomes of children ages three to five with autism.

Toby Mehl-Schneider, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist in New York City. She received a Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, in speech-language pathology and audiology and a Master of Science in speech-language pathology from Brooklyn College, The City University of New York. Toby is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences at The Graduate Center, The City University of New York. Toby Mehl-Schneider served as the lead researcher for the analysis, translation and standardization of the Preschool Language Scale (PLS-4) Hebrew Edition, adapting the PLS-4 English assessment materials to reflect the appropriate cultural and linguistic aspects of the Hebrew language. She has been providing therapeutic intervention to school-age children with various speech and language disorders in the New York City Department of Education for eight years.

Mary Lynn Mizenko, M.Ed. is a second year doctoral student in the school psychology program at Kent State University. Ms. Mizenko is currently analyzing and conducting research that utilizes technology to improve academic, behavioral, and social skills of students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). She has been actively involved in Kent State University’s student school psychologist organization (SASP), and will assume the role as president for the upcoming school year. Ms. Mizenko also is a member of the Dean’s Graduate Advisory Board for the School of Lifespan Development. She continues to hone her research and professional skills in the area of technology utilization for students with ASD.

Brenda Smith Myles, Ph.D., a consultant with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) and the Ziggurat Group, is the recipient of the Autism Society of America’s Outstanding Professional Award, the Princeton Fellowship Award, and the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Developmental Disabilities Burton Blatt Humanitarian Award. Brenda has made over 1000 presentations all over the world and written more than 200 articles and books on ASD. In addition, she served as the co-chair of the National ASD Teacher Standards Committee; was on the National Institute of Mental Health’s Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee’s Strategic Planning Consortium; and collaborated with the National Professional Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, National Autism Center, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services who identified evidenced based practices for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and served as Project Director for the Texas Autism Resource Guide for Teachers (TARGET). Myles is also on the executive boards of several organizations, including the Scientific Council of the Organization for Autism Research (SCORE) and ASTEP – Asperger Syndrome Training and Education Program. Further, in the latest survey conducted by the University of Texas, she was acknowledged as the second most productive applied researcher in ASD in the world.
Nigel Newbutt, BSc, MA, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer at Bath Spa University (UK) in Digital Cultures. His research interests are in the areas of autism, technology and the sociology of technology. His Ph.D. was completed at University College Dublin, Ireland, where he investigated the views of young people with autism and their engagement with a virtual world. His research to date has focused on participatory input and user-centered design approaches, as well as a qualitative approach to gathering data. His work sees him engaged in classrooms, working with children and teachers to design and develop virtual worlds, to help provide a platform that in many ways helps to provide a setting where social communication can be explored.

Deborah Newton, Ed.D is the interim dean of the School of Education at Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU). She continues as coordinator of the Master Degree concentration and Sixth Year Diploma specialization in adaptive technology, and serves as a member of the internal advisory board for SCSU’s Center of Excellence on Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Newton holds teaching certifications in Elementary Education and Special Education and is a former assistive technology specialist. She continues to consult in assistive technology. Dr. Newton is a frequent presenter on a variety of assistive technology-related topics at national, regional, and state conferences. She is a co-author of Assistive Technology in the Classroom: Enhancing the School Experiences of Students with Disabilities, 2nd Ed.

Zandile Nkabinde is an associate professor and a chair person for the Department of Special Education at New Jersey City University. She was born and raised in South Africa. Dr. Nkabinde’s areas of research interest include inclusive schooling for children with behavior disorders, high stake testing and its impact on minorities and persons with disabilities, and experiences of immigrant women scholars in higher education. Nkabinde has presented her scholarship throughout the world in both national and international professional gatherings. She has served in varied capacities in her field of interest including being a consulting editor for The Journal of the International Association of Special Education. She also served as a guest reviewer of Multiple Voices, the Journal of Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learner (DDEL), the Council for Exceptional Children. She is currently a reviewer of multicultural Learning and Teaching. Dr. Nkabinde is affiliated with many professional organizations including: the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, and the International Association of Special Education. Nkabinde is the author of many articles in peer reviewed scholarly journals such as: The Journal of Special Education, European Journal of Special Needs, Journal of International Special Needs, International Encyclopedia of Education, Multicultural Learning and Teaching and The Negro Educational Review. Dr. Nkabinde has also written several book chapters on varied topics including one titled: Using assistive technology to educate students with developmental disabilities and autism in a book titled: Autism and Developmental Disabilities: Current practices and issue edited by Anthony F. Rotatori, Festus E. Obiakor and Sandra Burkhardt. Dr. Nkabinde is an active scholar who also enjoys doing community work and spending time with her family.
Vanessa Ioana Norkus graduated from Marymount Manhattan College with a B.A. in psychology in December of 2011. She has always had a keen interest in working with children who require extra attention. She has assisted Dr. Nava Silton since 2012 in researching how to improve typical children’s behaviors towards children with disabilities. At the same time, Norkus has interned in social work with seniors at DOROT, a non-profit organization geared towards integrating people of different generations by helping provide services for the older generations. Norkus has also worked as a substitute teacher for a preschool. She has presented at the Hunter College Research Conference and looks forward to continue conducting research. Norkus holds that learning about different cultures is important in understanding human nature and hopes to use this to broaden her knowledge and improve the lives of people with mental and physical limitations.

Christine Ogilvie was a middle school teacher in Massachusetts and Vermont for 11 years before making the jump into higher education. A Ph.D. graduate of the University of Central Florida in Orlando, FL, Dr. Ogilvie has established a notable presence in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Her specific focus is working with adolescents with High Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome in the area of social skills instruction. An avid supporter of the use of video modeling and simulation technology for social skills instruction, Dr. Ogilvie continues to pursue an active research agenda in order to impact the number of adolescents on the Autism Spectrum, their teachers, families, and the community at large.

Jody Marie Pirtle is an Assistant Clinical Professor at Northern Arizona University and completed her Ph.D. in Disability and Psychoeducational Studies with a major in early childhood special education and a minor in Family Studies and Human Development at the University of Arizona. As the aunt of two nephews with autism and a former special educator, Jody is known as a strong advocate and is passionate about ensuring inclusive educational opportunities, especially for children with significant support needs. Her research agenda includes studying the effects of family involvement as well as the impact of educational, community, medical, and familial collaboration on outcomes for children with special health care needs and disabilities.

Brian Reichow, Ph.D., BCBA-D, is an Assistant Professor in Community Medicine and Health Care and Director of Research at the AJ Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the University of Connecticut Health Center. He completed his doctoral studies in Special Education at Vanderbilt University, where he received the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. Dr. Reichow completed his Undergraduate training in Elementary Education and Psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and was a public school teacher for children with autism spectrum disorders for many years in the Durham Public Schools. As a researcher, Dr. Reichow has led numerous investigations of interventions for young children with autism and has led numerous systematic reviews and meta-analyses of autism interventions. Dr. Reichow’s current research interests include methodological issues of meta-analytic techniques, identifying evidence-based practices and treatments for children with autism, and the translation of clinical and laboratory research findings into practice.
Jan Rogers, MS, OTR/L, ATP is currently the Program Director of the OCALI Assistive Technology Center. She is an occupational therapist and is also a RESNA certified ATP who has worked in a variety of agencies serving the needs of individuals with disabilities. She has taught assistive technology courses at The Ohio State University and currently teaches in the on-line AT certification and Master’s program at Bowling Green State University. Additionally, she is a frequent presenter at local, state and national conferences on the topic of assistive technology.

Rebecca Ruchlin is a senior at Marymount Manhattan College, studying Speech-Language Pathology. She has been a part of the Realabilities project as of March 2012, and has aided in conducting research for the show. She has maintained her status on the dean’s list throughout her undergraduate career and has presented at Marymount Manhattan College’s Honors Day in 2012 and 2013. Ruchlin created a children’s story, Chicken Nuggets in the Freezer, discussing what life is like having a brother with autism. She draws much of her interest and passion for disability awareness, especially autism, from her brother Matthew who has autism. When she is not at school, Ruchlin can be found volunteering her time with the special needs community. Upon graduating, Rebecca hopes to attend graduate school and to pursue her degree in Speech-Language Pathology. She hopes to become certified in Applied Behavioral Analysis.

Frank J. Sansosti, Ph.D., NCSP is an Associate Professor and Coordinator of School Psychology at Kent State University. He has extensive experience working with individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in both school and clinic settings. As a practitioner he provided coaching and technical assistance for early intervention and best practice approaches for students with ASD in inclusive settings, and coordinated efforts between parents, teachers, administrators, and district level personnel. Currently, Dr. Sansosti’s primary research and professional interests focus on the development and implementation of behavioral and social skills interventions for individuals with ASD and best practice approaches for the inclusion of students with low-incidence disabilities. In addition, Dr. Sansosti has been active in conducting professional workshops for educators working with students with ASD at local, regional, national, and international venues and he serves as a consultant to multiple school districts/agencies.

Peggy J. Schaefer Whitby is an assistant professor in special education and Program Coordinator for the graduate certificate in Autism Spectrum Disorders at the University of Arkansas. Prior to coming to Fayetteville, Dr. Whitby was an assistant professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and the director of the Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Whitby is a board certified behavior analyst at the doctoral level. Her research interests include the education and academic achievement of children with autism spectrum disorders. She has multiple publications in peer reviewed journals and book chapters on educating children with autism.

Amie Senland received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Saint Joseph in West Hartford, Connecticut. She earned her M.A. in Applied Developmental Psychology at Fordham University in Bronx, New York, where she is now a Ph.D. Candidate, working under the mentorship of Dr. Ann Higgins-D’Alessandro. Her research interests include autism spectrum disorder and moral development. More specifically, her dissertation investigates moral reasoning, empathy, and the transition to adulthood in young adults with high functioning autism spectrum disorder. Amie’s master’s thesis research on a similar topic, but with adolescents, was recently published in a flagship moral development journal, Journal of Moral Education.
**About the Contributors**

**Shimon Steinmetz** is a historian, editor, bibliographer and researcher.

**Iva Strnadová** is a Senior Lecturer in Special Education at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. She is also an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney, Faculty of Education and Social Work, Australia. Iva has a strong history in securing national and international research grants. She has published two professional books in the field of special education, co-authored eight other books and co-edited two books. She has also written thirty-six book chapters and twenty-five peer-refereed journal articles in prestigious journals in this area. Iva’s previous research and ongoing research interests include ageing with intellectual disabilities, women with intellectual disabilities, well-being of people with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities and autism) and their families over the life span, and transitions in lives of people with developmental disabilities.

**Joo Tan** holds a B.A. in Computer Science from the University of New Mexico and the M.S. and a Doctoral degree from Kansas State University. Prior to academia, Dr. Tan worked at various companies such as BELLCORE and Lucent Technologies for over 6 years. He had a previous teaching stint at Mansfield University before moving to Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in 2005. Dr. Tan has a strong background in Software Engineering and Web Design. His current research interest is primarily in the latest technology that can be adapted in Web design and programming of user interfaces for special needs groups.

**Elizabeth West** is an Associate Professor at the University of Washington in the Area of Special Education. Dr. West’s research agenda focuses on transforming communities to increase access and to improve outcomes for students with low incidence disabilities. Specific research interests include: a) identifying instructional variables that will facilitate and enhance skill acquisition and generalization by students with low incidence disabilities, b) developing effective practices to positively influence outcomes for students with low incidence disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse, c) online course development, implementation, and use of technology to facilitate teacher and student learning and, d) establishing positive behavioral supports for a diverse society. Dr. West has established an exciting and productive scholarly agenda with numerous published articles on diversity, skill acquisition for individuals with autism, assistive technology and teacher learning. Dr. West has a wide range of experience in a variety of instructional settings, both in the private sector and in the public school setting.

**Joshua Wolfe** is a student at the University of Alabama in the Department of Computer Science. Works at Science Application International Solution (SAIC) as an Engineering Co-op/intern in Huntsville, Alabama developing mobile applications systems.