James M. Kauffman
by Christopher Carter

James M. Kauffman (born December 7, 1940 in Hannibal, MO) is an American who has made significant contributions to the field of education, specifically special education. He has authored or co-authored several books and many journal articles in the fields of special education, child psychology, and child development and has served in various editorial capacities. The topics he has written about include behavioral disorders, learning disabilities, mental retardation, instructional and behavior management techniques in the classroom, and ethical and policy issues. He has also made presentations in multiple countries. He currently is Professor Emeritus of Education at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. He has had an active career since the 1960s.

Early Professional Life

James M. Kauffman received a BS in Elementary Education from Goshen College (Goshen, Indiana) in 1962. He later received a Masters in Education in elementary teaching from Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas and his Ed.D. in special education from the University of Kansas in 1969. Dr. Kauffman became interested in working in the field of special education after his experience teaching youngsters with emotional disturbance at the Menninger Clinic’s Southard School. His dissertation was

Contents

1. Early Professional Life
2. Influences
3. Professional Positions
4. Career
5. Work in Special Education
6. Selected Books
7. Selected Presentations
8. Honors and Awards
9. Personal Life
10. Selected Publications
11. External Link
a descriptive study of the perceptions of their families and schools of typical children, those with school difficulties, and those in institutions.

Influences

Dr. Kauffman was influenced by many people throughout his career. These people include especially his advisor/mentor, Richard J. (Dick) Whelan. James O. (Jim) Smith was another important influence when he was a beginning doctoral student at the University of Kansas. Norris G. Harring, a co-author of the first book he read about special education for emotionally disturbed children, *Educating Emotionally Disturbed Children*, was also an influence. Others, to name only a few, include Mike Nelson, a fellow doctoral student at the University of Kansas, Dick Shores, Ivar Lovaas, Sig Engelmann, Barbara Bateman, Barbara Keogh, Frank Wood, Doug Carnine, and Wes Becker. Several of his colleagues were important influences, including especially Dan Hallahan and John Lloyd. Other influences include many students who were once in the doctoral program at the University of Virginia. (J. Kauffman, personal communication, October 20, 2009).

Professional Positions

Kauffman has taught a variety of elementary and middle school students. He taught general education elementary/middle school students in Indiana and Kansas and emotionally disturbed elementary/middle school students in Kansas. He has been a member of the University of Virginia faculty since 1970. Before becoming Professor Emeritus of education at the University of Virginia, he held the Charles S. Robb Chair from 1999-2003. He previously held positions as the William Clay Parrish, Jr. Professor, Associate Dean for Research, and Chair of the Dept. of Special Education in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia.
Career

Kauffman’s career has spanned nearly four decades and has included many publications and presentations. His career has focused on the field of special education. His most significant work is *Characteristics of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and Youth*. It was first published in 1977, and it is currently in its 9th edition (released in 2009 and co-authored with one of his former doctoral advisees, Timothy J. Landrum) (J. Kauffman, personal communication, November 1, 2009). The books he currently is working on include *The Tragicomedy of Public Education: Laughing, Crying, Thinking, Fixing*, the *Handbook of Special Education* (co-edited with Dan Hallahan), as well as *Science and Rogue Science in Education*.

He has recognized that the child with special needs should not be the only focus but needs to include others with whom the child interacts, such as teachers and parents. His writings can be helpful to colleagues, teachers, and parents in the field of special education. He is co-editing the *Handbook of Special Education* (with Daniel P. Hallahan, scheduled for publication by Routledge in 2011). This comprehensive reference book discusses children and disabilities, including learning, behavioral, intellectual, and physical disabilities. It also presents various aspects of special education, including special education administration and policy, international and cultural issues, curriculum, teaching methods, and behavior management. He co-authored *Exceptional Learners: An introduction to Special Education, 11th edition* (2009) with Daniel P. Hallahan and Paige C. Pullen. This introductory textbook discusses categories of disability, current issues in special education, and gifted students.

Kauffman also co-authored a book about behavior management. *Managing Classroom Behavior* (5th edition, 2011) discusses how to identify, analyze, and change children’s behavior. The book also discusses talking with the students, utilizing peers to influence change in behavior, and working with other educators and the parents in
handling the child’s behavior. Ideas for the teachers include modeling communication skills with the student, using positive or negative reinforcement, and teaching social skills. This book also includes case studies for application of the principles discussed.

**Work in Special Education**

Kauffman has high interest in how public policy affects special education and other educational issues. Along with colleagues, he has received several grants from the U.S. Dept. of Education and Bureau of Education for the Handicapped to investigate various areas of special education, including school-based interventions, how to educate children with disabilities, especially those with emotional disturbance, and how to manage disturbed or retarded children. He has been a critic of No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), signed by President George W. Bush in 2002. He believes that NCLB sets unrealistic goals, lacks clear definitions, and makes it a challenge for special educators to keep or find employment (Gelman, Pullen & Kauffman, 2007; Kauffman, 2010). NCLB also does not address individual differences or measurement adequately. One of the books he co-edited, *The Illusion of Full Inclusion* (2nd edition, 2005) has a major section about policy analyses. This includes analysis of educational policy during the Reagan administration and possible special education reform. In *The Least Restrictive Environment* (1999, co-authored with his former doctoral advisee, Jean Crockett), the authors argue that placement became the main issue in special education at the end of the last century. Major aspects of this book include the politics of placement and legislation involving special education.

**Selected Books**

- Characteristics of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders of Children and Youth (9th ed. 2009, co-authored)
- Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education (11th edition 2009, co-authored)

The Tragicomedy of Public Education: Laughing, Crying, Thinking, Fixing (2010)

Working with Troubled Children (2009, co-authored)

Science and Rogue Science in Education (forthcoming)

Selected Presentations


How special education is honorable, just, pleasing, and commendable. Presentation, Goshen College, Goshen, IN. (2005)


Honors and Awards

Perhaps the greatest recognition that James M. Kauffman has received is when three of his former doctoral students edited a Festschrift in his honor: Jean B. Crockett, Michael M. Gerber, and Timothy J. Landrum (2007), Achieving the radical reform of special
education: Essays in honor of James M. Kauffman. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Other awards include:

- Outstanding Leadership Award, Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, 2002
- Outstanding Faculty Award, Curry School of Education Foundation, 1997
- Research Award, Council for Exceptional Children, 1994
- Outstanding Service Award, Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavioral Disorders, 1991

Personal Life

In his free time, Dr. Kauffman enjoys hiking, cooking, and playing music. He plays the upright bass with a band at a local senior center. He also likes reading and writing. He is currently married and has two children, a son and daughter, from a previous marriage. He has four grandchildren (J. Kauffman, personal communication, October 20, 2009).

Selected Publications


**External Link**

[http://people.virginia.edu/~jm9t/](http://people.virginia.edu/~jm9t/)