



**Book Review—**  
***The Clinical Practice  
of Educational  
Therapy: Learning  
and Functioning with  
Diversity, 2nd Edition***

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**Maxine Ficksman & Jane Utley Adelizzi, Editors (2017)**  
**New York, NY: Routledge**  
**373 pages, \$59.51 (paperback)**

*Noting the importance of this book, the authors explain that it “explores the impact of the therapeutic process on the internal world of the educational therapist and the interpersonal dynamic between the client and therapist” (Dann, Burnstein, Ashton, & Sears, 2017, p. 337).*

This is my second time reading *The Clinical Practice of Educational Therapy: Learning and Functioning with Diversity*, edited by Maxine Ficksman and Jane Utley Adelizzi. The first time was as a graduate student, beginning my training as an educational therapist, when I read the first edition. To re-read a good book, or watch a movie again, is a unique pleasure. You are familiar with the material or story, yet you have changed in the interim. Part of the pleasure is seeing how much you have learned and grown in the intervening years. The second edition remains an engaging, informative, and important book for the profession of educational therapy.

This new edition has most of the original chapters, each written by a different expert and organized by themes: the history of educational therapy, the clinical practice of educational therapy, perspectives on assessment and intervention, case management, and future perspectives. All chapters have been updated and revised with current research to support the efficacy of educational therapy. In fact, the new subtitle, “Learning and Functioning with Diversity,” conveys these updates perfectly. As co-editor Maxine Ficksman states, the new edition “reflects the next decade and expands the boundaries of educational therapy” (personal communication, November 30, 2017).

The excellent writing of all of the authors, such as George McCloskey, Ann Kaganoff, Maxine Ficksman, and Jane Utley Adelizzi, includes both broad frameworks and intimate gems. The framework of the treatment alliance, described in the opening chapter, “The Dynamic of Educational Therapy: Theoretical Framework and Model” by Maxine Ficksman and Jane Utley Adelizzi, is pictured as a puzzle with 16 interconnected pieces: Perception, Socio-Cultural Context, Development, Memory, Empathy, Temperament, and so on (Ficksman & Adelizzi, 2017, p.

13). A lot of thought went into designing this illustration, as explained on the opening page.

It was determined that the puzzle pieces should all be different shapes and colors, as the work of educational therapists (ETs) is unique with each client and situation, and dependent on the ET’s own background, development, and experience ... The colors were selected with a great deal of thought: green for Development to symbolize growth, purple for Deep Learning to indicate wisdom and inspiration, orange for Socio-Culture to demonstrate balance, warmth, and relationships, sky blue for Emotion to convey harmony, and turquoise for Empathy to suggest the association amongst heartfelt spoken words, thoughts and gestures. (Ficksman & Adelizzi, 2017, p. i)

This framework shows the multi-dimensional aspects of educational therapy, going beyond labels of “executive functioning deficit” or other learning disabilities. This superb framework remains in both editions as the foundation of understanding educational therapy.

Chapter 10, “Cultivating Character Development” by Maxine Ficksman, uses vignettes to distinguish more concretely the work of educational therapists compared to tutors. It reports the significance of research supporting “character development, collaboration and positive social interactions” as some of the previously difficult-to-capture benefits of educational therapy (Ficksman, 2017, p. 205). The author describes many important skills which are important for human development as well as academic achievement: motivation, self-talk, and becoming one’s own cheerleader. These skills are both beneficial and teachable. Yes, even empathy, compassion, curiosity, and love of learning can be developed with a population of people who have not experienced success in these areas before. A beautiful example of this is a vignette about a middle school student who was upset because the Black history unit at his school was going to be cut short:

... his teacher decided to shorten it because of the insensitive behavior of some of the students in his class. Perhaps what disappointed this struggling student the most was that these students belonged to a minority group that had experienced prejudice, and he was of the same ethnicity. We brainstormed about other minority groups who had experienced similar situations in the past and present. By the end of the session, my student could better express his frustration towards his classmates. (Ficksman, 2017, p. 209)

Chapter 10 also addresses additional pathways for reaching those who cannot afford educational therapy, including the homeless, veterans, people who have been abused, and people from lower socio-economic incomes. The value of social justice through education can be seen in the

practice of educational therapy. Both this chapter and Jane Utley Adelizzi's new chapter, "Women and Girls Who are Disenfranchised: A Global and Interdisciplinary Approach to Educational Therapy," are especially timely in today's political climate.

In Ann Kaganoff's chapter, "The Management of Private Practice in Educational Therapy," she notes, "The idea of 'progress' connects closely to one of the most important elements of the relationship between client and educational therapist. The ongoing job of the educational therapist is to be a careful observer and a trusted witness" (Kaganoff, 2017, p. 270). This chapter along with Karen Kass's chapter on the "Developmental Stages of the Educational Therapy Process" delineate essential ways we create meaningful relationships with our clients and their families and evoke healing in private practice. These chapters also provide practical information, such as the charts in Kass's article outlining the typical questions, goals, and paperwork a professional educational therapist will generate as the relationship with the client develops (Kass, 2017, pp. 46-51).

Today, this book is the required textbook at both the Holy Names and CSUN educational therapy training programs. As a graduate of the CSUN program myself, I read the chapter "Examining the Efficacy of Graduate Programs in Educational Therapy at CSUN: Educational Therapy Intern, Graduate and Parent Perspectives" by Marcy Dann, Nancy Burnstein, Tamarah Ashton, and Sue Sears with great interest. The success that this rigorous program produces comes from its scholarly and research-based paradigm infused with two internships with clients. The data collected on parents' understanding of the usefulness and efficacy of educational therapy is impressive. All areas were statistically rated at 4.7 or above on a 5-point Likert scale on items such as "The ET helped build confidence and a sense of self-competency in my child" and "I learned about my child's areas of strengths and weaknesses" (Dann et al., 2017, p. 341).

This book is part of the future of educational therapy. It provides theoretical frameworks of learning, memory, and the integration of the intellect and emotions for both the client and the educational therapy professional. It provides practical information on running a private practice so educational therapists can offer a professional service to those in need. Each article gives depth and insight to its topic. It can be used to improve knowledge in a particular area, such as "Applying an Executive Function Framework in Educational Therapy" by George McCloskey, Sarah Allen, and Alex Harne, or "Empathic Intelligence in Educational Therapy: An International Perspective" by Roslyn Arnold. This wonderful book bridges the fields of pedagogy and psychology, and provides our profession with a much-needed resource for continuing and developing our work for generations to come.

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