

Exceptional Children and Youth



An Introduction

Second Edition / Edward L. Meyen

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Exceptional Children and Youth an Introduction

Second Edition

Edward L. Meyen
University of Kansas



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Preface

In developing a revision of a book, there is a temptation to create a new book with little resemblance to the original edition. There also are areas in which it is difficult to determine what should be revised and if a revision seems necessary. Certainly much has been learned about the education of exceptional children and youth since release of the first edition of this text. The original edition coincided with the implementation of Public Law 94-142. The interim years have given the authors opportunities to observe the responses of the public schools to this law and, in turn, to determine the need for new content in specific areas. On the other hand, substantive information on learner characteristics and causes of handicapping conditions has remained relatively constant. To determine the direction this revision should take, a user study was conducted. The following guidelines resulted from this survey.

1. Chapters on early intervention and career and vocational education were added.
2. Discussion of least restrictive environments and examples of appropriate placement were integrated into each chapter. This resulted in the elimination of the original Chapter 2 on least restrictiveness.
3. The introductory chapter now focuses on the current status of the education of exceptional children and youth. Attention also is given to emerging trends.
4. Chapter 3 was rewritten to reflect the instructional planning practices that have emerged as schools gain experience in implementing the required individualized educational program (IEP). Examples of comprehensive planning systems were replaced with illustrative material acquired from public schools.
5. A chapter on program needs and instructional alternatives was added.
6. Case histories introduce each chapter to provide the reader with an applied frame of reference.
7. While the impact of PL 94-142 has been significant and remains an important study for students in introductory courses, a shift in the emphasis on this law and related legislation was made. This edition emphasizes the applications of the laws and responses they have elicited.

Chapter 1 still contains definitive discussion of legislation, but the general attention to requirements has been translated into concern for accepted practices.

8. Literature reviews were conducted to insure current citations and to give readers direction for further study.
9. A major investment was made to increase consistency across chapters to enhance readability. At the same time, emphasis remains on providing a comprehensive text. Each chapter was examined by independent reviewers to aid authors in contextual and organizational decisions.
10. As is always true in fields such as special education, important events occur late in the production stage of a book and may subject it to immediate change. If they are discussed, they may change again before the book is released. What was considered new information may now be perceived by some as dated. The trend toward deregulation and cuts in federal support of social programs are important examples of current change. It was decided that these topics, though underdeveloped at the moment, likely will become patterns of the future and so have been included. The issue of deregulation has the effect of repeal and warrants attention as an issue in introductory courses.

Hopefully an appropriate balance has been achieved in this revision between the incorporation of new information and the addition of appropriate responses to contextual and organizational suggestions from users. The development team below endeavored to adhere to the guidelines provided in relating their professional and personal observations.

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Barbara Sirvis, *San Francisco State University*

Nicholas W. Bankson, *Boston University*

Carson Y. Nolan, *American Printing House for the Blind*

Alfred D. Larson and June B. Miller, *University of Kansas Medical Center*

The book remains organized by categorical chapters supplemented by chapters on generic topics. It is our belief that this structure is most compatible with how introductory courses are taught. It also provides easy access to information on exceptionality. We have invested heavily in planning and coordination to make the book more than a collection of chapters. Our intent has been to combine the merits of a single-authored text with the merits of

a comprehensive team approach. We hope we have provided a comprehensive and substantive resource for instructors and students alike.

There is no substitute for initiative in seeking information—this book does not exhaust the study of exceptional children and youth. As a basic reference for introductory courses, this book gives special attention to the stimulation of reader interest and encourages students to further their study in this important area of social and educational concern.

Edward L. Meyen

1982

Lawrence, Kansas

Acknowledgments

To the many teachers, researchers, parents, and concerned citizens whose advocacy has made quality services for exceptional children and youth a public goal, appreciation is expressed. It is through the legislative and judicial process that advocacy and the provision of quality services come to fruition. The study of exceptional children and youth is made both substantive and challenging by the climate of the advocacy movement.

Appreciation is expressed to my colleagues who shared their talents and energies in a team process to produce this new edition. Their professionalism enhanced the quality of the book and made my editorial responsibilities a rewarding experience. Gratitude also is due to the many readers of the first edition who shared their comments and suggestions and to individuals who offered independent reviews.

As was true in the first edition, I am indebted to my students for their feedback on the manuscript. As usual, their insights were very helpful. A personal note of appreciation is due Jane Sorensen for her assistance in keeping me organized.

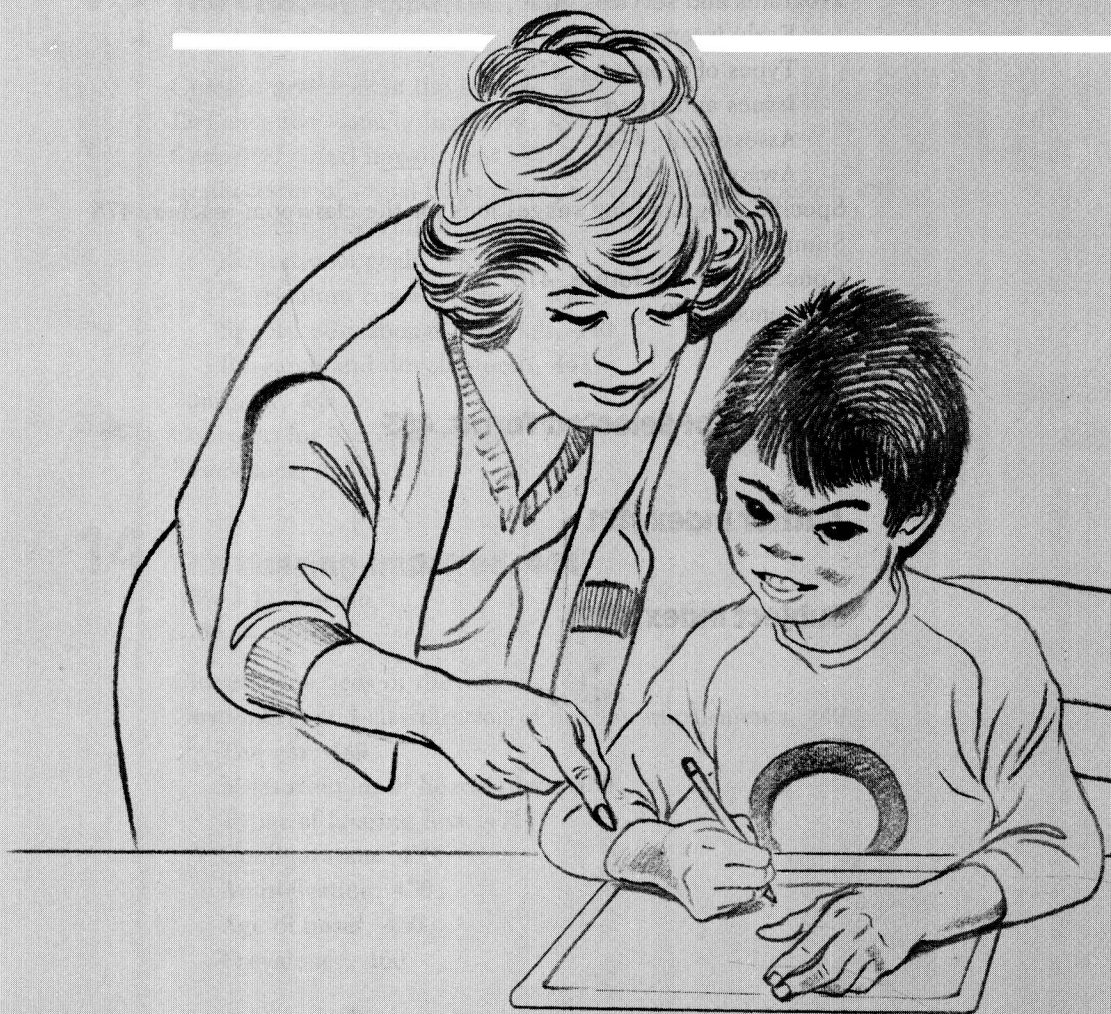
To my family—thanks again!

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An Introductory Perspective

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A congressman from an eastern state, caught up in the public concern about federal control through excessive regulations, decides to introduce legislation to amend Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The amendment would eliminate requirements related to public access. He confers with a committee of supporters from his district and seeks their counsel. They primarily represent large industries and employ very few persons with disabilities, viewing the requirements as expensive and unnecessary. One cites an example of having to renovate six entrances to a factory and four restrooms for only 5 employees who have disabilities out of 430. The congressman feels he is demonstrating good judgment and is responding to public concerns about excessive federal regulations when he announces his intention, through a general mailing to his constituents, to sponsor such legislation. Within 72 hours he receives letters, phone calls, and visits from groups expressing great displeasure with his decision, such as the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association for Retarded Citizens, United Cerebral Palsy, several veterans' groups, senior-citizen organizations, the National Association of State Directors of Special Educators, the Children's Defense Fund, the State Mental Health Association, and two commissions from his home state. A week later he is visited by coalition groups representing 20 national organizations, each with affiliates in his district. Being a first-term congressman concerned with reelection, he is faced with how to respond to a large block of potential voters, as well as to his counselors, who represent his major source of financial support.

Sarah age 12, has attended a self-contained special class for the mildly mentally retarded for the past 3 years. Her reading and math skills are at the fourth grade level. She has excellent social skills and makes friends easily. Her parents are very pleased with her progress and hesitate to change her present program. The special teacher feels that Sarah should be integrated into the fifth grade mainstream and recommends that she receive supplemental instruction in reading and math from a resource teacher. Rather than surprise Sarah's parents by waiting until the scheduled IEP meeting to inform them of her views, the teacher, with the concurrence of the special education supervisor and school psychologist, holds a conference with her parents to discuss Sarah's program and the possibility of a mainstream placement. Sarah's mother visits the special class to observe her participation in reading instruction. Arrangements are also made for her mother to observe in two regular fifth grade classes. Mrs. Brown is familiar with most of the children who are currently, or have previously been, in the special class for the mildly handicapped and inquires about the progress of the students who were mainstreamed a year ago. At the teacher's suggestion, she confers with their parents.

Advance planning helps to avoid conflict and focuses the attention of all parties on what is best for the student. Parents are advocates for their children, but to be effective in their role they need information. Merely sharing reports is not sufficient. A partnership can be established if school representatives are sensitive to the concerns of parents, invest in providing them with opportunities to understand their child's program better, and acquaint them with the alternatives the schools have to offer. Through such an approach, conflicts and hearings (as well as unnecessary expenditures of time and fiscal resources) can be avoided.