

Human Exceptionality



Society, School, and Family ■ 4/E

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Fourth Edition

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*This book is dedicated
to people with differences everywhere,
who have risen to the challenge of living
in a society that is sometimes nurturing,
but all too often ambivalent.*

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Preface

There is a hope, I believe, in seeing the human adventure as a whole and in the shared trust that knowledge about mankind sought in reverence for life, can bring life.

Margaret Mead

As you begin your study of the fourth edition of *Human Exceptionality: Society, School, and Family*, we would like to provide some perspective on those features that continue from our third edition as well as on what is new and different. It is important to remember that this text is about *people*. Namely, it is about people with diverse needs, characteristics, and life-styles. It is about people who, for one reason or another, are called *exceptional*.

What does the word *exceptional* mean to you? For that matter, what do the words *disordered*, *deviant*, or *handicapped* mean to you? Who or what influenced your knowledge and attitudes about these terms and the people behind them? It is likely that you were influenced most by life experiences and not by formal training. You may have a family member, friend, or acquaintance who is exceptional in some way. Or perhaps you are a person with exceptional characteristics. Then again, you may be approaching the study of human exceptionality with little or no background on the topic. You will find that such study is the study of being human. Perhaps you will come to understand yourself better in the process.

ORGANIZATIONAL FEATURES

In addition to providing you with current and informative content, we are committed to making your first experience in the area of exceptionality interesting, enjoyable, and productive. To accomplish this, we have incorporated some features in the fourth edition of the text that should greatly enhance your desire to learn more and become acquainted with people who are exceptional.

To Begin With . . .

To Begin With . . . boxes, found at the beginnings of chapters, are designed to introduce and stimulate interest on topics. Each offers a variety of fascinating and current quotes, facts, and figures related to the subject covered in the chapter.

Windows

Windows present a series of personal statements that focus directly on individuals with differences. The purpose of the Windows is to share with you some personal insights into

the lives of these people. These insights may come from teachers, family members, friends, peers, and professionals, as well as from individuals who are exceptional. Most chapters in this fourth edition open with at least one Window; others are usually included throughout the chapter. Note that these Windows are in no way representative of the range of characteristics associated with a given area of exceptionality. At best, they provide you with a frame of reference for your reading; they let you know that we are talking about real people who deal with life in many of the same ways. We believe that you will find the Windows to be one of the most enriching aspects of your introduction to exceptionality.

In the News

In the News boxes are scattered throughout the book, highlighting current events relating to various exceptionalities. For example, Chapter One (page 16) features an article on breaking down the barriers of discrimination through passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The In the News feature is designed to keep you up to date on issues and people who are making news.

Reflect on This

Every chapter includes at least one section entitled Reflect on This. Each highlights a piece of interesting and relevant information that will add to your learning and enjoyment of the chapter content. These Reflect sections give you a temporary diversion from the chapter narrative, while providing some engaging facts about a variety of subjects, including misconceptions regarding people with Down syndrome, information on preventing a hearing or visual impairment, or what to tell a friend who is contemplating suicide.

Today's Technology

New to the fourth edition is a feature on the expanding use of technology for people who are exceptional. Today's Technology highlights some of the innovations in computers, biomedical engineering, and public communication systems and the impact they have on individuals with differences. These Technology boxes focus on such topics as learning language skills through devices that synthesize speech, electronic readers for people with visual impairments, and word-processing programs with specialized features that assist students with learning disabilities in developing writing skills.

Interacting in Natural Settings

Also new to the fourth edition is *Interacting in Natural Settings*. This feature is intended to provide the reader with brief tips on ways to communicate, teach, or socialize with people who are exceptional across a variety of settings (home, school, and community) and age spans (early childhood through the high school years). Certainly, there are many possible ways to interact effectively with people who are exceptional. We hope that these tips provide some stimulus for further thinking on how to include these individuals as family members, school peers, friends, and neighbors.

Debate Forum

The text discussion in every chapter is followed by a Debate Forum. The purpose of this element is to broaden your view of the issues concerning people with differences. The De-

bate Forum in each chapter focuses on an issue about which there is some difference of opinion, such as federal involvement in education, children with AIDS in the public schools, educating students who are disabled with nondisabled peers, and the appropriateness of intervention strategies. For each issue discussed, opposing positions are presented, *Point* and *Counterpoint*. Remember, the purpose of the Debate Forum is not to establish right or wrong answers but to help you better understand the diversity of issues concerning individuals who are exceptional.

IMPROVING YOUR STUDY SKILLS

Each chapter in this text is organized in a systematic fashion. We encourage you to consider these brief suggestions in order to increase your learning effectiveness.

Preview the Chapter

In the margins of each chapter, you will find a series of Focus questions to guide your reading. Survey the Focus questions before reading the chapter; each question highlights important information to be learned. After surveying the Focus questions, examine key chapter headings to further familiarize yourself with chapter organization. Also scan the text for key terms, which are set in boldfaced type. Consult the Glossary at the end of the book for definitions of these terms.

Ask Questions

Using the Focus questions as a guide, ask yourself what you want to learn from the chapter material. After previewing the chapter, write down any additional questions you may have and use them as a supplement to guide your reading. Then organize your thoughts, and schedule time to actively read the chapter.

Read

Again, using the Focus questions as your guide, read the chapter.

Recite

After you have completed reading the chapter, turn back to the Focus questions and respond orally and in writing to each. Develop a written outline of the key points to remember.

Review

Each chapter in this text concludes with a section entitled Review. Each Focus question in the chapter is repeated in this section along with key points to remember from the material presented. Compare your memory of the material and your written outline to the key points addressed in the Review. If you forgot or misunderstood any of the important points, return to the Focus question in the chapter and reread the material. Review key terms cited within the chapter, as well; consult the Glossary as needed to become familiar with the meanings of these terms. Follow this process for each chapter in the book. In addition, consider developing your own short-answer essay tests to further enhance your understanding of the material in each chapter.

A Study Guide is also available to help you master the information included in this fourth edition of *Human Exceptionality*. Each chapter of the Study Guide is organized around effective methods for studying. Students are provided with information on what to preview, questions to ask, keys to effective reading, and how to recite, review, and reflect on the most important concepts in each chapter of the book. The guide includes exercises for mastering key terms, multiple-choice practice tests, fill-in-the-blank study sections, and activities that encourage further exploration into various topics of interest.

The study of human exceptionality is relatively young and unexplored. Those of you seeking careers in fields concerned with people who are exceptional will be part of the exploration. If, after reading this book, you are excited and encouraged to study further in this area, then we have met our primary goal. We would be unrealistic and unfair if we said this book will provide you with everything you ever wanted to know about people who are exceptional. What it does provide, however, is an overview on the lives of these people within their own communities, schools, and families.

LANGUAGE AWARENESS

As mentioned earlier, the study of human exceptionality is relatively new; thus, the parameters that define it are continually evolving. This is true of the language used to describe human exceptionality, as well.

Great care has been taken in this fourth edition of *Human Exceptionality* to discuss people with exceptionalities in a sensitive and positive manner. We have chosen to emphasize that these are indeed *people* first; the fact that they have exceptional characteristics is secondary. For example, rather than refer to *learning-disabled individuals*, we refer to *individuals with learning disabilities*. Likewise, we discuss *students at risk* rather than *at-risk students*. In short, the written style followed in this book is such that the person is always mentioned first; what makes him or her exceptional is mentioned second.

Care has also been taken to use appropriate terminology in describing people with exceptionalities. What is considered appropriate has evolved considerably over the years and will likely continue to do so. For instance, the term *handicapped*, once commonly used, is now considered to be derogatory in most contexts; terms such as *disabled* and *impaired* are preferred. (We address these issues in Chapter One in the discussion on labeling.) Similarly, terms such as *disturbances* (as in *emotional/behavioral disturbances*) have been replaced with less derogatory terms such as *disorders*. Although terms are necessary to describe categories of exceptional individuals, these descriptions need not be stigmatizing.

We encourage readers to review how language is used in this book and adopt these practices in their own communications. Consider that thought and language are interactive. The very words you choose to express your *ideas* about a subject also convey your *attitudes* toward it.

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To those professors who have chosen this book for adoption and to those students who will use it as their first information source on people with differences, we hope our fourth edition of *Human Exceptionality* meets your expectations.

Finally, to our families, thanks for being there as we strived to do our best in preparing yet another edition of this book.

Michael L. Hardman
Clifford J. Drew
M. Winston Egan
Barbara Wolf

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