

Sixth Edition

Understanding Human Differences

Multicultural Education for a
Diverse America

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Cover Design: Pearson CSC, Jerilyn Bockorick
Cover Art: Agsandrew/Shutterstock
Media Producer: Autumn Benson
Full Service Vendor: Pearson CSC
Full Service Project Management: Pearson CSC, Gowri Duraiswamy
Editorial Project Manager: Pearson CSC, Jennylyn Rosiento
Printer-Binder: Menasha
Cover Printer: Phoenix
Text Font: Palatino LT Pro

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Koppelman, Kent L., author.
Title: Understanding human differences : multicultural education for a diverse America / Kent L. Koppelman, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse
Description: Sixth edition. | Boston : Pearson Education, 2018.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018041226 | ISBN 9780135196731 | ISBN 0135196736
Subjects: LCSH: Multicultural education—United States. | Discrimination—United States.
Classification: LCC LB1050 .R477 2019 | DDC 370.117—dc23 LC
record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018041226>



ISBN 10: 0-13-519673-6
ISBN 13: 978-0-13-519673-1

*Dedicated to
Burt Altman and Dick Rasmussen,
who demonstrated the meaning of the word good
to precede the nouns colleague, mentor, friend,
and human being.*

Preface

Why Do We Need to Understand Diversity?

Americans live in the most racially, ethnically, and socially diverse country on earth. Yet too often we live, work, and play as if our own social, gender, or religious group is the only one that matters. To enjoy the advantages of our national diversity, it is necessary that Americans seek as many facts and consider as many issues as possible to enhance their ability to interact effectively with individuals from diverse groups. This text is not a collection of essays providing multiple perspectives on diversity—there are many books that already do that; instead, this text uses research to examine problems, perceptions, misperceptions, and the potential benefits of the diversity that exists in the United States. Understanding diversity is obviously a prerequisite for becoming an individual who values the diversity in American society.

If we are to value and respect the diversity represented by different groups in the United States, we can begin by learning how to value and respect opinions that differ from our own. It is not necessary to agree with everything a person might say, but it is necessary that when we disagree, we are able to express disagreement based upon a consideration of all available information and within a context of mutual respect.

The issues this text addresses are not new: Human beings have struggled with them in one form or another for centuries, as illustrated by the quotations from individuals of different eras that appear in each chapter. The quotations are not placed randomly in the text, but near a section of text that relates to each one. For example, near the section in Chapter 2 addressing the confusion about positive prejudices and explaining why prejudices are always negative, the quotation by Charles Lamb suggests that prejudices involve “likings and dislikings.” Because Lamb was a respected writer of his era, his confusion about some prejudices being positive was not based on a lack of education or intellectual ability but instead illustrates how ancient this misperception is.

Since the first edition of *Understanding Human Differences* was published, the rights of various minority groups in the United States have become common topics for debate. The issue of *transgender soldiers* being able to serve openly in the U.S. military has become a controversy affecting the military, the president, and members of Congress. Students used to come to diversity classes oblivious of the

issues, but that is less likely now, even though many diversity topics are still misunderstood.

New to This Edition

Two specific goals for this edition were (1) to include content that had not been addressed in previous editions, such as how American Indians are portrayed in K–12 curricula, research on the positive impact of immigrants on urban economies, the consequences for people with a disability of low wages paid to health care workers, and the reaction to the proposed travel ban against Muslims, and (2) to expand the coverage of critical issues such as new developments affecting income inequality, the incarceration of people of color and the school-to-prison pipeline, the ongoing struggle for civil rights for LGBT people, the economic and social consequences of closing urban schools, and the principles and successful practices of restorative justice programs in K–12 schools. Diversity issues are not static as new factors impact ongoing issues and as new issues emerge. It is important for all of us to try to be as knowledgeable as we can to participate in the discussions and debates on these issues.

As with any new edition, care has been taken to update statistics and sources and to find more current examples of issues, and this edition has expanded the number of examples pertaining to issues in K–12 schools. With regard to specific additions of content, the sixth edition of *Understanding Human Differences* includes the following:

- Update of racial profiling, especially police officers killing unarmed black men (Ch. 2 and 8)
- Impact of the 2016 election on student expressions of prejudice in K-12 schools (Ch. 3)
- Additional content on increased fears of undocumented workers about deportation (Ch. 4)
- New content on need for K-12 schools to prepare immigrant youth for college (Ch. 4)
- Added content on Religious Freedom Restoration Act and arguments for teaching about religion in K-12 public schools (Ch. 6)
- Expanded coverage of economic issues increasingly affecting elderly and young Americans (Ch. 9)
- Expanded coverage of health care issues for low-income families and for people with a disability (Ch. 9 and 12)

- Expanded information on influence of cultural body images on males (Ch. 10)
- Examination of arguments from opponents of same-sex marriage (Ch. 11)
- Added content on implications for people with a disability of low-wages paid to home care workers (Ch. 12)
- Update on Common Core State Standards and the political opposition (Ch. 13)
- Updated information on corporate efforts to promote diversity (Ch. 14)
- New information on gender issues in the military such as the Marine Corps sexist web site scandal (Ch. 14)

e-Text Enhancements

This text is available as an enhanced Pearson e-Text with the following features:

- **Application Exercises**, brand new to this edition, are tied to video and appear in every chapter. Students will be given a video to watch that ties into chapter concepts and theories, and a few short answer questions to respond to, and then, upon submission of their answers, they will be provided with author-written feedback. Application Exercises allow readers to take their understanding of chapter topics one step further with deeper analysis.
- **Video Examples** are available throughout the sixth edition. About three Video Examples are included in most chapters. In these videos, students will listen to experts, watch footage of diverse classrooms, listen to teachers and students from diverse classrooms, and watch videos that challenge biased behaviors and attitudes. Videos are accompanied by reflective questions.
- **Self-Check Quizzes** align with learning outcomes and appear as a link at the end of every major section within a chapter in the e-text edition. Using multiple choice questions, the quizzes allow readers to test their knowledge of the concepts, research, strategies, and practices discussed in each section.

Students should benefit from exploring all of these issues because each is relevant to today's society as well as the future society that they may influence. The first step in problem solving is to understand why a problem exists and how it is perpetuated; with that understanding, a person or a community, a state or a nation can implement solutions to address root causes of persistent problems. Consistent with this text's first five editions, the additional content offers information to enable students to understand problems or issues in society in order to find solutions, or in some

cases to describe solutions that have been proposed or implemented.

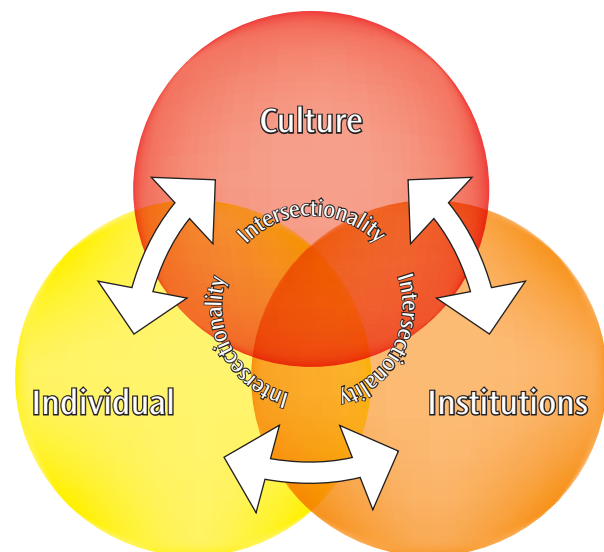
These features are only available in the Pearson e-Text, available exclusively from www.pearsonhighered.com/etextbooks or by ordering the Pearson e-Text plus print (ISBN 0135166926) or the Pearson eText Access Code Card (ISBN 0135170699).

Organization/The Conceptual Framework for this Text

Understanding human differences is an ongoing challenge. Initially, scholars focused on *individual attitudes and behaviors*; later, they described the influence of *cultural expectations* in shaping individual attitudes. Finally, scholars addressed *institutional policies and practices* in which either discrimination was intentional against minority groups or it was an unintentional outcome. Vega (1978) describes a conceptual framework incorporating these three elements to understand human differences and the oppression of minority groups by dominant groups. This conceptual framework provides the basis for the organization of this text as we examine individual attitudes and actions, the evolution of cultural biases, and the establishment of discriminatory institutional practices (see Figure F.1).

To understand human differences, Vega's conceptual framework allows us to analyze American cultural, individual, and institutional behaviors. In exploring culture, the objective is to describe *cultural norms and standards*. What images are associated with the ideal? Any culture

Figure F.1 A Conceptual Framework for the Study of Intergroup Relations



associates particular images with the ideal woman, the ideal man, and the ideal family. For many Americans, those images are primarily White middle-class people living in a nuclear family. Norms and standards are powerful determinants of individual expectations and behaviors, represented by the arrow pointing from culture to individual. Once we understand norms and standards, we can begin to understand what is meant by *cultural biases*. In a multicultural society, cultural biases can be detrimental to minority groups whose norms or standards do not conform to those of the dominant culture.

The influence of culture on individuals is powerful, as can be seen in the analysis of *individual beliefs, attitudes, values, opinions, actions, and inactions*; sometimes what a person chooses *not* to do reveals as much as his or her actions. Although individuals are influenced by their cultural norms and standards, the Vega conceptual framework portrays that arrow as double headed, meaning that when significant numbers of individuals accept cultural norms, express their agreement, and behave in accordance with them, the cultural norms and standards are reinforced. Any analysis of individual behavior must include the influence of prejudice on an individual's choices.

Finally, it is critical to analyze *institutional practices, policies, and standard operating procedures* that are influenced by cultural norms and standards as well as by individual attitudes and behavior. To the extent that they reflect cultural norms and standards as well as individual attitudes and behaviors, institutions also reinforce them. To relate institutions to human differences, the analysis must focus on discrimination, identifying both ways in which the institution intentionally discriminates against certain groups and ways in which the institution unintentionally advantages certain groups and disadvantages others. In the late 1980s, the term "intersectionality" was coined to address the social reality of overlapping identities based on factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation and social class and the unique forms of oppression occurring as a consequence of individuals having multiple social identities. The term was intended to expand our understanding of the complexity of oppression and the need for anti-oppressive awareness and activity to go beyond the rigid, established categories (Robertson, 2017). This term is being included in the Vega conceptual framework for the 6th edition of this textbook in recognition of its usefulness in understanding how multiple identities influence oppression. Although the Vega conceptual framework describes the intricate relationship among the three areas—cultural, individual, and institutional—chapter narratives of necessity deal with each discretely. Readers are asked to keep in mind the double-headed arrows signifying that all three areas are interlocked to create the following relationships:

1. Cultural norms and standards influence and are reinforced by individual attitudes and behaviors and institutional policies and procedures.
2. Individual attitudes and behaviors influence and are reinforced by cultural norms and standards and by institutional policies and procedures.
3. Institutional policies and procedures influence and are reinforced by cultural norms and standards and individual attitudes and beliefs.

The four sections of this text that relate to the conceptual framework are as follows.

- Section 1 focuses on the *individual* by exploring personal values, interpersonal communication, and the way an individual develops negative attitudes toward other people based on perceptions of group identity (leading to bias, stereotypes, prejudice, and negative behavior toward members of these groups).
- Section 2 focuses on *culture* by examining the pattern of historical responses in American society toward immigration and the increased racial and religious diversity that has always been a consequence of this immigration. The final chapter of this section describes how those who are pluralism advocates are engaged in efforts to reject this historical pattern of discrimination, but as the following section illustrates, discrimination remains a problem in our society.
- Section 3 describes interrelationships among culture, individuals, and institutions to produce discrimination based on race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, and disability, with institutional issues being a major focus of this section.
- Section 4 addresses changes that have been implemented to reduce levels of individual prejudice and institutional discrimination, focusing on major institutions in our society such as K–12 schools, higher education, business, the media, and the military; their pluralistic policies and practices are designed to benefit from the diversity that exists in our society. This conceptual framework helps us to appreciate not only the changes that are occurring but also the ongoing issues that illustrate how much further we have to go.

Before concluding this explanation of Vega's conceptual framework, consider this example to illustrate how interrelated culture is with individual and institutional behaviors. Although many forms of family exist in the United States, our cultural bias is for the nuclear family (the norm). Influenced by this cultural bias, Americans tend to form nuclear families. Even when people with a cultural tradition of extended families immigrate to the United States, they tend to form nuclear families within a few generations,

sometimes reversing convention with older adult parents receiving care in nursing homes rather than at home.

American institutions have encouraged the formation of nuclear families because they are more able to relocate in an age in which mobility of workers is highly desirable. In an analysis of discrimination, problems may emerge for minority subcultures that value extended families if they maintain that value rather than adjust to the cultural norm. As this example illustrates, Vega's conceptual framework helps clarify the complexity of intergroup relations by describing the related factors involved in the oppression of minority groups by a dominant group.

Inquiry Approach/ Discussion Exercises

Chapter narratives in this text are presented in an inquiry format. After a brief introduction, each chapter consists of related questions with responses based on research from a variety of disciplines and on author expertise. As references illustrate, information for this text has been collected from studies in a broad array of behavioral sciences, including education, psychology, sociology, anthropology, history, science, and literature. Although sources cited are from relatively recent publications, some older sources are also included either because they are still highly regarded in the field or simply because an author expressed a conclusion replicated by other research but not stated with as much clarity.

Discussion Exercises

To reinforce the inquiry approach, exercises for group discussion are provided at the end of each chapter to examine serious ethical questions. Based on specific issues, activities encourage readers to reflect on and discuss aspects of issues that involve ethical or moral dilemmas. The exercises are not designed to manipulate readers into finding a "politically correct" solution; rather, they enable students to hear the variety of responses from others and appreciate the complexity of individual, institutional, and cultural issues in America today.

The Intent of This Text

The information provided in this text is intended to challenge readers to think and talk about issues that each of us must consider as citizens in a multicultural society; this text is not necessarily intended to change reader values but to challenge attitudes based on incomplete or erroneous information (see Chapter 1 for a description of the difference

between *values* and *attitudes*). Diversity brings benefits as well as challenges, but the surest way to enjoy the benefits is to meet the challenges with a firm foundation of knowledge and insight that is based on research from all behavioral sciences. Once students have read this text, the primary goal will be realized if they have gained a better understanding of the issues addressed. Whether or not that is accompanied by changes in attitudes is up to each individual; and there is an Attitude Inventory in the Instructor's Manual that accompanies this text. Your instructor may ask for your cooperation in taking this inventory before, during, or on completion of the course.

The intent of this text is to clarify our understanding of human differences and the role they play in interpersonal and intergroup relations. The Vega conceptual framework allows us to recognize how the interlocking circles of cultural biases, individual attitudes and actions, and institutional policies and practices have produced inequities that continue to polarize and all too often prevent Americans from achieving ideals first expressed over two centuries ago when dreamers imagined a radical new concept: a nation where each person would be given the freedom to be whoever he or she wanted to be.

Support Materials for Instructors

The following resources are available for instructors to download on www.pearsonhighered.com/educators. Instructors enter the author or title of this text, select this particular edition of the text, and then click on the "resources" tab to log in and download textbook supplements.

Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank (0135170567)

The Instructor's Resource Manual and Test Bank includes a wealth of interesting ideas and activities designed to help instructors teach the course. Each chapter contains learning outcomes and a comprehensive test bank containing multiple choice questions, discussion questions, exercises, and suggested readings. There is also an Attitude Inventory and instructions for its potential use.

PowerPoint™ Slides (0135170575)

Designed for teachers using the text, the PowerPoint™ Presentation consists of a series of slides that can be shown as is or used to make handouts. The presentation highlights key concepts and major topics for each chapter.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank Tess Cameron for her assistance in revising Chapter 10 on sexism, and Alison Leonard for assisting with resources for the e-text. I am also grateful to Robin DiAngelo for her contributions to individual and cultural racism in Chapter 8. I also want to extend a special thanks to

Jan Koppelman for her assistance on numerous aspects of revising this text and improving both content and illustrations. I am grateful to my editor, Rebecca Fox-Gieg, for her advice and assistance. Thanks also to the reviewers for this edition: E. Jean Swindle, University of Alabama; Kelly Jennings-Towle, University of Central Florida; Mary Frances Mattson, Georgia State University.

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