

Creating Access to Learning for Students with Special Needs
MIT: “Widening the Circle: Seeking Inclusive Education” Spring 2013

The purpose of these first three workshops on differentiation is to help you develop an awareness of what is involved in anticipating the needs of learners with special needs. By the end of the quarter, you will demonstrate your growing ability to:

1. Develop and use processes for informing yourself about students’ particular learning needs and how to build appropriate accommodations into a lesson.
2. Identify practices for scaffolding a lesson that would be useful for all learners, and absolutely necessary for some.
3. Write sufficiently detailed lesson plans that build in appropriate scaffolding and accommodations for the students with special needs in your classroom.
4. Identify your legal and pedagogical responsibility for working with students who have special needs.

Assessments

- Context for learning that anticipates the specific learning needs students bring to your classroom & develop a list of appropriate accommodations that you can apply to your lessons for the unit. *(due week 2, revision due with final edTPA)*
- Pre- & post assessment on Sped Laws and types of strategies for working with students who have special needs. *(due week 3 & week 9)*
- Lesson plans for Curriculum Unit & edTPA that anticipates appropriate strategies for scaffolding student learning informed by the special needs of students.
- Reflection on your learning *(due Saturday week 9)*.

HOMEWORK & WORKSHOP PREPARATION

Weeks 1 & 2: Find out about your students. Engage preparation for 3 day teaching and edTPA Context for Learning *(due Saturday week 2)*

- **Find out from your teacher who has IEP’s in your classroom and what accommodations are contained in the IEP’s for students in your classroom.** The teacher not know know or be concerned about providing access to this document. Let them know that your goal is not necessarily to read the actual IEP (though that would be nice) but to know what kinds of accommodations to build in into your lessons for students.
- **Interview Special Education practitioner at your school** – (i) Find out how teachers can use the practitioner as a resource; (ii) Learn about appropriate accommodations for the students with IEP’s in your classroom to inform the structure of your lessons for the 3 day teaching; and (iii) if they are open to it, ask them for feedback to your lesson plans. ***Write up key insights from interview and bring to class week 3***

- **Find out what the edTPA expects you to demonstrate around supporting students with special needs:** identify directions, commentaries and rubrics that speak to this expectation.

Week 3: What does it mean to be a teacher of children & youth with special needs?

- **Complete Pre-assessment** (on moodle): Here you will you check in with your prior knowledge of Laws governing Special Education in schools and the kinds of practices that you need to develop an understanding of. The purpose of *this* assessment is to help you examine the state of your knowledge on how to support the needs of diverse learners. Treat this pre-assessment as a pre-reading strategy – it’s a tool for focusing your investigation so as to uncover important areas of knowledge and skill. ***Bring completed pre-assessment to class***
- **Bring (i) knowledge of types of IEPs students have in your classroom; (ii) interview write up; and (iii) knowledge of expectations from edTPA**

Week 5: Jigsaw investigation: Find out about a type of disability and learn about the subjective experiences of youth/adults in order to analyze a lesson and to develop appropriate accommodations.

Once you know which jigsaw group you are in, your homework for this week is to:

1. Watch video self-portraits of youth and adults who have this class of special need.
2. Read relevant chapter from Vaughn and identify the following information for the class of special need that you are investigating:
 - The characteristics of the particular type of special need.
 - What kinds of strategies could build into a lesson that would create access points for learning for a child who has this need.
 - List the qualities of a lesson that could create a barrier to learning for a child with this need.
3. Confirm and correct your answers to pertinent questions on pre-assessment.

Week 8: Introduction to Sped Law *plus any themes that emerge from your work*

1. **Read Vaughn, chapter 1** in order to clarify laws and responsibilities you hold as a teacher of students with special needs. Correct your pre-assessment using a different colored pen.
2. ***other TBA***

For Saturday Week 9: Revise Pre-Assessment & Write reflection

Revisit the pre-assessment in writing using different colored pen to capture new understandings or correct answers. Write a one page reflection that spells out what about your work this quarter (i) Connected, Extended, Challenged your prior knowledge. (ii) how you will integrate what you have learned into your work for spring quarter; and (iii) lingering questions you need to address before student teaching Submit both assessment & reflection