Professional Development Institute

Flex Course Syllabus

Teaching Students with Special Needs in the Mainstream Classroom (K-6)

PDI Course Number: 23T02

UCSD Course Number: EDUC41528

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, please click here.

Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

Course Description

Does your classroom population include students with special needs and are you left wondering how to help them? This online course teaches K-6 teachers how to address students with special needs in the general classroom. The course begins by providing a clear definition and scope of special needs. Then, the course provides information about teacher involvement in the special education process in terms of assessment, intervention, and collaboration. A variety of suggestions for working with students who have special needs such as learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional and behavioral disorders, communication disorders, autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, sensory impairments, and low-incidence disabilities are provided. Also included are strategies to assist English language learners, students who are considered at-risk, and gifted and talented students. Each special need is defined, and common causes and characteristics are identified, along with suggested instructional strategies. Intervention strategies and classroom adaptations are also provided to help teachers accommodate students with special needs in an inclusive classroom. By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident in their quest to better prepare their students with special needs in the mainstream classroom.

Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will learn the definition of a plethora of terms and concepts related to special needs.
2. Teachers will become aware of the services available for students with special needs.
3. Teachers will learn their responsibilities in the special education process.
4. Teachers will learn how to identify and assess students with special needs in the classroom.
5. Teachers will acquire strategies for prereferral intervention.
6. Teachers will learn how the formal referral process works.
7. Teachers will understand the various components of an Individualized Education Program.
8. Teachers will learn the importance of collaborating with school personnel and other professionals when working with students with special needs.
9. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for learning disabilities, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
10. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for intellectual disabilities, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
11. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for emotional and behavioral disorders, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
12. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
13. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for communication disorders, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
14. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for autism spectrum disorder, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
15. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for sensory impairments, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
16. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for certain low-incidence disabilities, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
17. Teachers will understand the definition and characteristics of English language learners, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.
18. Teachers will understand the definition, characteristics, and causes for students who are considered at risk, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom.

19. Teachers will understand the definition and characteristics of gifted and talented students, and they will learn various strategies to address these needs within the general education classroom including such things as acceleration, enrichment, and homogeneous grouping.
20. Teachers will understand how the Common Core State Standards relates to students with special needs.
21. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies for addressing the special needs of students within the general education classroom.

Instructional Media

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

Evaluation

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Lesson Plan (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

Topical Outline

Unit One

- Course Overview and Glossary
- The Definition and Scope of Special Needs
- Services for Students with Special Needs
- **Assignment #1**
  Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about working with special

needs students. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.

- **Test #1**

Unit Two

- The Special Education Process
- Identifying Special Needs
- Prereferral Intervention Strategies
- The Formal Referral Process
- Program Placement
- **Assignment #2**
  As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.
- **Test #2**

Unit Three

- The Importance of Collaboration
- Creating an Inclusive Classroom
- **Assignment #3**
  Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to helping special needs students succeed and will make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to easily follow. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom.
- **Test #3**

Unit Four

- Students with Learning Disabilities
- Students with Intellectual Disabilities
- Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
- Students with ADHD
- **Test #4**

Unit Five

- Students with Communication Disorders
- Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Students with Sensory Impairments

- Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities
- **Test #5**

Unit Six

- Working with ELLs
- Working with At-Risk Students
- Teaching Gifted and Talented Students
- Special Needs and the CCSS
  Assignment #4
  Select one disability or special need from this course that is of particular interest to you. Design a lesson that properly differentiates instruction to accommodate students with the chosen disability/special need in your classroom. Include the following information: 1) Name of the disability/special need; 2) Symptoms/characteristics of the disability or special need; 3) Curriculum standard(s) that is addressed in the lesson; 4) Educational objectives of the lesson; 5) Introduction to the lesson; 6) A plan to present the lesson that includes the differentiation strategies you will use; 7) Activities students need to complete; 8) Your plan to assess the lesson. Keep in mind that this assignment is a cumulative project and therefore, you are expected to demonstrate the knowledge you gained from the course and your ability to apply what you have learned in a practical setting.
- **Assignment #5**
  The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.

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