Supporting Students with Special Needs
EDUC 285

CERAS 204
3:00-5:15

Lisel Murdock-Perriera
murdockl@stanford.edu
office hours by appointment

Suki Jones Mozenter
mozenter@stanford.edu
office hours by appointment

Course Description:
This course will focus on developing the basic knowledge, skills, and strategies for teaching students with special needs in an inclusive classroom. We will explore the theoretical concepts underpinning inclusion, as well as the instructional practices that facilitate the integration and support of students with special needs in the general education classroom. This course focuses on the inclusion of students with high-incidence disabilities: specific learning disabilities, speech-language challenges, autism, and other health struggles. We will also learn about special education law and the roles of general education teachers within the law. As an overall focus for the course, applying a critical lens to special education and disability, we will examine how (in)equity impacts culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education.

Big Ideas for the Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concepts</th>
<th>Practical Applications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Inclusive Classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Design for Learning (UDL)</td>
<td>Differentiated Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Construction of Disability</td>
<td>Individual Learning Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Special Education Law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Objectives:
Elementary teacher candidates will be able to…

- Define inclusion and begin to envision what an inclusive classroom means to them
- Identify different learning processes that may impact a child’s experience in an inclusive classroom
- Design approaches/practices that may support these different learning processes
- Describe universal design for learning and differentiated instruction
- Summarize essential components of the special education law and describe a general education teachers’ role within the law
- Critically analyze the special education system and the social construction of disability

Readings
All course readings will be posted to the Canvas site. Please see below for specific details on readings for each session. We expect you to come to each class having completed the assigned readings and ready to discuss them with your peers.
Attendance and Participation
We expect you to attend every class. If something prevents you from doing so, please communicate with us in advance. Together, we will discuss a plan for how you can make up the material that you miss. *Missing two or more classes may result in a grade reduction.* We also expect active participation, taking into account that this looks different for different people. Whatever form of active participation you prefer, we expect you to attentively and intentionally engage with the class material and activities.

Assignments
In addition to completing all course readings and coming to class prepared for discussion, teacher candidates will submit the following:

Due 2/21/18 at 5 PM: **Special Education Processes Review**

Due 4/4/18 at 5pm: **Part 1, Designing an Inclusive Classroom for a Student with Special Needs**

Due 4/18/18 at 5pm: **Part 2, Designing an Inclusive Classroom for a Student with Special Needs**

Due 5/23/18 at 5 PM: **Parts 3 & 4, revisions to Parts 1 & 2, Designing an Inclusive Classroom for a Student with Special Needs**

All assignments will be submitted through the Canvas page.

Please see pg. 4-8 for details on the assignments.

Grading
This course will be graded on a letter grade system of A, B, C, or D; however, we expect that everyone will earn an A. We have high expectations for your work and engagement in the class. This means that we expect you to be present, to deeply engage with readings, to thoughtfully complete assignments, and to communicate with us if you need accommodations in order to be your full self in this class.

Assignments will not be given a letter or numerical grade. Rather, the focus when “grading” assignments will be to provide you with thorough written feedback that intends to engage you in a conversation about your work. If we feel that your assignments would benefit from further revision that will enhance your thinking and assist you in meeting the course objectives, we will ask you to edit, rewrite, or submit an addendum to what you have turned in and offer an in-person or phone meeting to discuss further.

Grades lower than an A will only be given to students who have completed the main course requirements but have not fully met our course expectations, which include:

1. Regular, on-time attendance;
2. Coming to class prepared, having closely read required readings and having completed any fieldwork or other preparation you are asked to undertake;
3. Rigorous, open-minded, and respectful class participation;
4. Turning in all work and any requested revisions on time.
Please note that, if permission is granted to turn in an assignment late, you will receive credit but may receive few, if any, additional comments on your work. For students who do not complete the main course requirements, we will discuss the option of receiving an “incomplete” in the course.

Students with Documented Disabilities
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oaes).

Honor Code
1. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:
   a. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
   b. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
2. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
3. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

Violations of the Honor Code
Examples of conduct that have been regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code include:
- Copying from another’s examination paper or allowing another to copy from one’s own paper
- Unpermitted collaboration
- Plagiarism
- Revising and resubmitting a quiz or exam for regrading, without the instructor’s knowledge and consent
- Giving or receiving unpermitted aid on a take-home examination
- Representing as one’s own work the work of another
- Giving or receiving aid on an academic assignment under circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that such aid was not permitted

Sanctions for Violating the Honor Code
In recent years, most student disciplinary cases have involved Honor Code violations; of these, the most frequent arise when a student submits another’s work as his or her own, or gives or
receives unpermitted aid. The standard sanction for a first offense includes a one-quarter suspension from the University and one or more educational components. In addition, most faculty members issue a "No Pass" or "No Credit" for the course in which the violation occurred. The standard sanction for multiple violations (e.g. cheating more than once in the same course) is a three-quarter suspension and 40 or more hours of community service.
**Assignment One: Special Education Processes Review**

Every school has a process for qualifying students for special education services. Very often, the process goes something like this:

1. **Teacher/Parent has concern about Child A**
2. Child A receives interventions
3. Child A shows adequate progress
   - **Process stops!**
   - **Process stops!**
4. Child A does not show adequate progress
5. School has SST meetings for Child A
6. More interventions tried for Child A
7. Child A shows improvement
   - **Process stops!**
   - **Process stops!**
8. Child A does not show improvement
9. SPED Evaluation for Child A
10. Qualify for SPED services
11. Initial IEP Meeting for Child A
12. Does not qualify for SPED services
Note:

- SPED = Special Education
- SST = Student Study Team (Schools may have different names for this)
- IEP = Individualized Education Program

Schools differ on how they qualify students for special education services, but in general, they tend to follow a similar path. Above is a skeletal outline of the path in its most basic form. For this assignment, you’re going to better understand this process in the context of your school.

**Your Task:** Learn how your placement site identifies students for special education services. To do so, rely on conversations with school staff, observations of meetings, and analysis of websites/documents. Your paper will include the following components:

1. A narrative description of the process of qualifying a student for special education at your placement site (1-2 pages single-spaced)
2. A reflection of your interviews with 2 staff members. Here are some questions to consider in your reflection (1-2 pages single-spaced):
   a. Who did you interview and what is their role in the process of qualifying a student for special education services?
   b. How did your conversation go? What, if anything, surprised you or stood out to you in your conversation?
   c. Where did these two staff members align in their views of the qualification process? Where did they diverge, if at all?
   d. How might their role at the school influence how they described the qualification process?
3. A reflection of each meeting (one SST and one IEP meeting) – see guiding questions below (1-1.5 pages per meeting; 2-3 pages total single-spaced)

**Paper Submission:** Please upload your 5-6 pages single-spaced paper to the Assignments page on Canvas by **5 PM on Wednesday, February 21, 2018.**

**Data Collection Guidelines for Assignment One**

**Conversations with School Staff:** Interview 2 school staff members about their understanding of the process of qualifying students for special education. Possible individuals to interview might be: an RSP (resource/special education) teacher, school social worker, principal/assistant principal, intervention specialist (e.g. literacy specialist, literacy/math coach), counselor, and/or school psychologist. Here are some questions you might consider asking:

- What is the process of qualifying a student for special education services at this school from the moment a teacher or parent has a concern about the child through when they qualify for services?
- What interventions do you offer students for whom there are academic, behavioral, or socio-emotional concerns?
- Tell me about your SST process.
- How does the decision to evaluate a child for special education get made?
What does the evaluation process look like?
How are parents involved in this process?
How are classroom teachers involved in this process?
What are your thoughts on how well this process works at your school?

The interview should last about 30 minutes, but it could go longer if your interviewee has time.

If you want to record the interview, remember to ask permission and explain its use (for a course assignment). You can also just ask to take notes.

Observations of an SST Meeting and an IEP Meeting: Observe an SST meeting (your school may have a different name for this, like an RTI meeting) and an IEP meeting. These do not have to be for a student in your class. Talk to your CT, school social worker, principal/assistant principal, and/or RSP teacher about sitting in on an SST and an IEP meeting.

The goal is for you to see what the meetings are like for children considered for special education pre-referral (SST) and post-referral (IEP). We encourage you to enter the meetings with a desire to learn, as well as a critical lens. Below are some guiding questions for your observations (and written reflections). Feel free to use these or other questions you’ve considered.

- Who was present at the meeting?
- What were the dynamics between the participants? Was there an interaction that struck you? If so, describe it and explain why.
- What was the role of the general education teacher in this meeting? What are your thoughts about this?
- What was the role of the parents in this meeting? What are your thoughts about this?
- What kind of language was used to describe the child, the child’s family, the child’s classroom/school experience, etc.?
  - NOTE: Be specific – avoid simply describing the language as “tense language” or “judgmental language.” Say what you heard, if you’re able to remember.
- What if any outcomes emerged from this meeting?
- What connections can you make to our course readings?

Website and Document Review: Peruse your school/district website and any relevant documents that will help you write up your 1-2 page single-spaced narrative description of the special education qualification process at your school site.
Assignment Two:
Designing an Inclusive Classroom for a Student with Special Needs – A Case Study

Part 1 (Due 4/4/18): A Careful Look at One Child (2-3 single-spaced pages)
*Please note: Revisions to Part 1 are due on 5/23/18

Select a student about whose learning you have some questions. Though ideally this child would also have an IEP, it is more important that you choose a student that you find yourself puzzling over and whose learning you would like to understand on a deeper level. Write a 2-3 page (single-spaced) detailed description of the child, including the child’s learning profile and experiences in school. Essentially, you want to tell the “story” of this child in school. Here are some guiding questions that you may choose to reflect on as you write:

- Describe the student’s current classroom/school.
- Who is this child as a learner? What are the student’s areas of strength, affinities, and needs for improvement? How do these map onto the learning processes we’ve discussed in class?
- What is the child’s school history (e.g. has the student attended the same school since kindergarten?)?
- Is there anything in the child’s medical or family history that is of note?
- What has the student’s academic achievement looked like over time? How does this connect to the learning processes we’ve discussed in class?
- Has the student had any SST or IEP meetings? If so, what were the main areas of strength and concerns discussed at those meetings? Again, what connections can be made to the learning processes we’ve discussed in class?
- What connections can you make to the course readings?

Gather information from the following sources:

- **Cumulative file**
  - School history, medical history, standardized testing achievement, report cards, prior SST meeting and/or IEP meeting notes
- **Work samples** (include copies of student work if possible)
  - What are the strengths, affinities, and areas for improvement that you observe in the child’s work?
  - How is the student’s work demonstrative of the different learning processes (both in terms of strengths and areas for improvement)?
- **Conversations with at least two adults working with the child**—your CT, former teachers, specialists, parents, administrators, etc.
  - What do these adults notice to be the student’s strengths, affinities, and areas for improvement?
  - To what extent do these sources agree with each other? To what extent do you agree with these sources?
- **Observations**
  - What have you observed to be the child’s strengths, affinities, and areas for improvement?
  - How do your observations connect with the different learning processes we’ve discussed in class?
Part 2 (Due 4/18/18): Making Your Classroom More Inclusive (1-2 single-spaced pages)
*Please note: Revisions to Part 2 are due on 5/23/18

Think about your current classroom. How might you change it to make it more inclusive, particularly for the student you selected in Part 1? **Write a 1-2 page (single-spaced) description of an inclusive classroom you would design for your case study student.** Consider the following aspects of your classroom: Physical space; class norms, structures, and routines; language used with and between students; curriculum and learning activities; integration of assistive technology; etc.

In your paper, draw connections between your vision for your inclusive classroom and our readings related to Universal Design for Learning/Differentiated Instruction, inclusion, and equity. Be creative! Remember, this is your vision of an inclusive classroom – the possibilities are endless.

Part 3: Planning a Lesson for an Inclusive Classroom (no page limit)

Take a lesson plan that you’ve already written and think about how you would change it to make it more inclusive. As you do so, keep in mind your case study student. **Rewrite this lesson for an inclusive classroom**, drawing on principles of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction that we discussed in class. Include a 1-2 paragraph explanation of how this lesson is inclusive. Also describe how your case study student will access content and activities in this lesson.

Part 4: Finale – A Reflection (2-3 pages single-spaced)

What did you learn about your case study student, notions of inclusion, and your own personal vision for teaching through this assignment? Select at least two readings from the course that particularly resonated with you. How do these readings illuminate and challenge your main “take aways” from this assignment and the course overall? **Write a 2-3 page (single-spaced) reflection of this assignment and the course, drawing from two readings of your choice.**

**Paper Submission:** Please upload your paper to the Assignments page on Canvas by **5 PM on Wednesday, May 23, 2018.**
**Sessions & Readings**

*All readings are posted on Canvas*

**Session One (1/10/18): Introduction to Course**
What is inclusion? What does it mean to support students with special needs?

**Reading:**

**Session Two (1/17/18): Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction**
What is Universal Design for Learning? What is differentiated instruction?

**Reading:**

**Session Three (1/24/18): Special Education Law & Equity in Special Education**
What are the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act? What are the responsibilities of a general education teacher within those laws? How does equity relate to special education law?

**Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**
Session Four (1/31/18): Overview of Specific Learning Disabilities & the Cultural Work of Learning Disabilities
What are specific learning disabilities? How are students with specific learning disabilities identified? Do learning disabilities really exist?

Reading:

Session Five (2/7/18): Language and Literacy & Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education
What are language and literacy-related disabilities and what strategies can be used to support them? How does cultural and linguistic diversity complicate language and literacy-related disabilities?

Reading:

Session Six (4/4/18): Attention & the Over-Medicalization of Children
What is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and what strategies can be used to support children with attention-related needs? To medicate or not to medicate? – That is the question

Reading:

Session Seven (4/11/18): Memory & Visual-Spatial Thinking and Sensorimotor Functioning
What are the different types of memory? What are visual-spatial thinking and sensorimotor functioning? What strategies can be used to support students with needs in these areas? How does gender intersect with these areas of cognition?

Reading:

Recommended Reading (study referenced in second reading above):

Session Eight (4/18/18): Social Cognition & Neurodiversity
What are social cognitive difficulties and what strategies can be used to support children with such needs? How does the neurodiversity model challenge traditional notions about autism?

Reading:

Session Nine (4/25/18): Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning

What is assistive technology (AT)? What is the relationship between AT and UDL? How can I incorporate technology in my inclusive classroom?

Reading:

Session Ten (5/1/18): Visions for Inclusive Classrooms

What does inclusion mean to me and my work as a general education teacher?

Reading: