EDUC 285: Dis/ability and Access in Elementary Schools

Winter & Spring Quarters 2019
Wednesdays, 1/15-2/12 & 4/1-4/29
Location CERAS 204
Meeting Times 3:00pm - 5:15pm

Instructors:
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Course Goals

● Apply a critical lens to the special education system and take an asset-based approach to learning variation.
● Summarize essential components of special education law and describe the general education teacher's role under the law.
● Demonstrate knowledge of inclusion, inclusive practices, and begin to envision an inclusive classroom.
● Recognize principles of universal design and differentiated instruction; and, describe the role they play in designing an inclusive classroom.
● Identify learning processes that may impact a child's experience in an inclusive classroom.
● Design individualized approaches and practices to support individual students with special learning needs.

HONOR CODE:

Students are expected to adhere to Stanford's honor code. According to the Office of Judicial Affairs (OJA) website, “For purposes of the Stanford University Honor Code, plagiarism is defined as the use, without giving reasonable and appropriate credit to or acknowledging the author or source, of another person's original work, whether such work is made up of code, formulas, ideas, language, research, strategies, writing or other form(s).” For further information, please consult the OJA website: http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/students/plagiarism.sources.htm
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; website http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae.

A note on the use of digital technology:

Cell phones and laptops are excellent research and note-taking tools, but they are sometimes distracting and can detract from our ability to be present with each other. If you are using your laptop to take notes in class, please turn off your wireless Internet. The use of cell phones for anything other than assistive learning support is discouraged, unless we are explicitly using them for a class activity. If you have an emergency situation, please do let us know.
Every school has a process for qualifying students for special education services. Very often, the process goes something like this:
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 **(1) conversations with at least 2 school staff**, **(2) observations of at least 2 meetings** (these can be either IEP meetings or SST meetings), and **(3) analysis of websites/documents**. You might find that some parts of this aren't clear to you from that information – that is, unfortunately, quite common. Just make note of it in your assignment.

You may choose to represent what you learn about this process however you like (slide show, comic, annotated artwork, audio recording of dictation, a traditional paper, etc.), but you must thoughtfully and thoroughly address the following:

1. How are students referred for special education services at your school?
2. How do staff seem to view the process of qualification for special education? Do they think it works well? Why or why not?
3. What happens at IEP and SST meetings at your school? What are your general impressions of these meetings?

**1. Interviews**

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 a few suggested questions for school staff:

- 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? 
What does the evaluation process look like? 
How does the decision get made whether to evaluate a child or not?

There is no specific page requirement for this assignment, but to provide a general sense: if you were to do a traditional paper, we would expect that it might be around 3-4 pages single spaced.

2. Meeting Observations
The goal is for you to see what the meetings are like for children considered for special education pre-referral (SST) and/or 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 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?
For this assignment, you will consider how to design a more accessible learning environment by carefully learning from one child that seems to be experiencing some kind of barrier(s) in their learning.

There are four parts to this assignment:

1. Learning about one child
2. Considering a more accessible and/or inclusive classroom environment
3. Planning a lesson for an accessible learning environment
4. Reflecting on your lesson

These four components are described in greater detail below.

NOTE: The only part of this assignment that you are required to submit in written form is your lesson plan. For all other components, you may submit it as an annotated illustration, audio recording, video, or some other form as long as you meet the criteria for the assignment as they are outlined in the page that follows. Some of you may find a more creative or alternative option to be liberating, while others will not. Either way is okay!

Part 1: Learning About One Child (1 page)

Select a student about whose learning you have some questions. Though it may be useful for the purpose of this assignment if this child also has 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. Prepare a detailed description of the child, including the child’s learning profile and experiences in school (written as 1 page single spaced). 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 challenges?
- 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?
● What connections can you make to the course readings?

**Part 2: Making Your Classroom More Accessible and Inclusive** (1 page)

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 page (single-spaced) description of an inclusive classroom you would design for your case study student, or you can create an annotated diagram or some other format as long as you meet the criteria. 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 Accessible and Inclusive Classroom** (please avoid writing anything more than 2-3 pages. This limit does not include appendices)

Option 1: 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. Using track changes, highlight changes you've made to eliminate barriers and increase accessibility and inclusion. Also describe specifically how your case study student will access content and activities in this lesson.

Option 2: Write a new lesson plan that you will actually use for a future day at school. As you do so, keep in mind your case study student. Use the principles of Universal Design for Learning and Differentiated Instruction that we discussed in class to guide you. Please make note of efforts you've made to eliminate barriers and increase accessibility and inclusion, and describe specifically how your case study student will access content and activities in this lesson.

**Part 4: A Reflection** (1 page single-spaced)
What did you learn about your case study student, notions of accessibility, 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 1-page (single-spaced) reflection of this assignment and the course, drawing from two readings of your choice.

Sessions & Readings
All readings will be posted on Canvas.

You may also find it useful to purchase some of the books to read them in full, but that is not a requirement of the course.

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| **Session Three (1/29)**  <br> **Special Education Law**  
- What are the contemporary models for 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?  
**Recommended**  
**Professor Bill Koski**  
Eric and Nancy Wright Professor of Clinical Education  
Director,  
Youth and Education Law Project |
### Session Four (2/5)
**Interacting with Ableism**

- What is ableism, and what are some different ways that it manifests in the schools where we work?
- How does ableism intertwine with other forms of oppression?
- What is disability justice?
- What kinds of specific barriers exist for people with dis/abilities and how might we work to eliminate them in schools?

**VIDEO:** Patty Berne & Stacey Milbern, “Ableism is the Bane …” Watch at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IelmZUxBIq0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IelmZUxBIq0)


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<td>Plan to observe meetings, schedule interviews, and begin to research special education systems in your new placement</td>
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<th>Session Six (4/1) Designing Inclusive Classroom Spaces</th>
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<td>Gay, G. (2002). Culturally responsive teaching in special education for ethnically diverse students:</td>
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| **Session Seven (4/8)**  
Language Status and Disability, and Fostering Student Relationships  
- What specific barriers exist for multilingual students with disabilities?  
DUE: Session 10, April 29th |
| **Session Eight (4/15)**  
- What are appropriate service delivery models?
- What is the general education teachers role for service delivery?


**Professor Chris Lemons**
Associate Professor of Education

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| **Session Nine (4/27)**  
DUE: Session 10, April 29th |
### Session Ten (4/29)  
**Guiding Principles for Inclusive Classrooms**

- What does inclusion mean to me and my work as a general education teacher?
- As educators, what are our (working) guiding principles for interacting with dis/ability and supporting access in our classrooms?
- How will I incorporate dis/ability justice into my teaching philosophy and teaching practice?

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