

SPED 420:
**Improving the Learning of Students with Special Needs
through Differentiated Instruction & Collaboration**
Spring 2011

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Class Meetings:	Mondays 4:20 – 7:00 Bayramian Hall (BH) 313
<i>Please do NOT call the Department to report anticipated absences or late arrivals to class.</i>	
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Course Description:

Prerequisites: Acceptance into the Multiple Subject, Single Subject, or Education Specialist Preliminary Credential programs or Educational Therapy certificate program

This course is designed for general and special education teachers to learn how to design differentiated instruction that is universally accessible to all learners, and how to provide accommodations and modifications to grade level instruction in order to meet students' individual needs. Foundational information on disability characteristics, and the potential impact on the inclusive classroom will be introduced, and historical foundations of special education and the inclusive education movement will be presented. The course also focuses on developing the basic principles of positive behavior support, and the communication skills needed to implement the range of collaborative service delivery options for students with disabilities, students who are at-risk, and those who are gifted and talented. Candidates will develop foundational knowledge and skills in research-based processes for effective instruction of students with special needs, positive behavior support, and collaboration with other educators, administrators, parents and students to improve student learning.

Conceptual Framework: The faculty of the Michael D. Eisner College of Education, regionally focused and nationally recognized, is committed to *Excellence through Innovation*. We believe excellence includes the acquisition of professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions and is demonstrated by the growth and renewal of ethical and caring professionals - faculty, staff, candidates - and those they serve. Innovation occurs through collaborative partnerships among communities of diverse learners who engage in creative and reflective thinking. To this end we continually strive to achieve the following competencies and values that form the foundation of the Conceptual Framework.

- We value academic **excellence** in the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills.
- We value the use of **evidence** for the purposes of monitoring candidate growth, determining the impact of our programs, and informing ongoing program and unit renewal. To this end we foster a culture of evidence.
- We value ethical practice and what it means to become **ethical and caring professionals**.
- We value **collaborative partnerships** within the College of Education as well as across disciplines with other CSUN faculty, P-12 faculty, and other members of regional and national educational and service communities.
- We value diversity in styles of practice and are united in a dedication to acknowledging, learning about, and addressing the varied strengths, interests, and needs of **communities of diverse learners**.
- We value **creative and reflective thinking** and practice.



READINGS

Text: Murawski, W.W. & Spencer, S.A. (2011). *Collaborate, Communicate, and Differentiate! How to improve student learning in today's diverse schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Additional Readings required as assigned and will be available for download from class website. These may change with prior notification.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the historical, legal and ethical perspectives that led to inclusive education for students with disabilities;
2. Identify the disability categories covered by IDEIA 2004, and the learning, behavioral and social characteristics of students with special needs (including students with disabilities, students at-risk, and students who are gifted).
3. Discuss the impact of students' individual learning and behavioral characteristics on the classroom;
4. Analyze classroom and student needs and use that information to organize and plan instruction for special populations, including the design of accommodations and modifications, and the use of assistive technologies;
5. Demonstrate an understanding of appropriate instructional goals, instructional materials, and instructional methods for students with high and low incidence disabilities;
6. Identify the critical components of effective inclusion, and identify variables that may facilitate or constrain the creation of a positive inclusive climate for students with special needs;
7. Describe effective curricular and instructional approaches that ensure access to the content areas for students with high and low-incidence disabilities, including literacy, mathematics, science and social studies;
8. Demonstrate an understanding of strategies for increasing students' positive behaviors and promoting the social integration of students with special needs in general education classrooms;
9. Describe and analyze a variety of service delivery options (e.g. co-teaching, consultation, integrated service delivery) used to facilitate the individualized, specialized instruction needed for effective inclusion of students with disabilities, students at-risk, and students who are gifted;

10. Discuss the principles of educational assessment, including testing bias and the importance of sensitivity to cultural and language factors as applies to identification of students who are gifted and talented, or students who have disabilities;
11. Identify the critical components of effective collaboration and collaborative service delivery models;
12. Work together to plan universally designed lessons that incorporate a variety of instructional and behavioral strategies and resources to meet the differentiated needs of individual students, to include diverse learners with disabilities, those who are gifted, English language learners, at-risk students and typically developing learners;
13. Analyze the competencies and challenges related to co-teaching and co-assessment, and plan effective instruction for diverse learners using the co-teaching approaches;
14. Demonstrate the communication skills necessary to implement collaboration with families, teachers and other professionals, including listening skills, an awareness of the impact of culture, and frame of reference;
15. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with parents and other service providers in a variety of school-based teams, including pre-referral teams, referral teams, IEP teams, co-teaching teams, RTI teams, and behavioral intervention teams.

General Requirements:

- Papers with an undue amount of errors in grammar, spelling, or sentence mechanics will not be graded. They will be given back to students to edit and resubmit, and will be graded as late.
- All assignments must be word processed and submitted on or before the due date. Assignments may be e-mailed to the instructor in case of illness or other absence, but it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are received by the due date. If assignments are emailed, a response will be sent when received. If you do not receive a response within 3 days, please send again.
- Students will be responsible for downloading their own class notes from the website. They will not be provided in class. Class notes will be posted on the website no later than the evening before class. ***Materials provided in class will only be available on the first day they are given out. It is up to you to make sure you have a buddy collect them for you in case of an absence***
- **10% of the points will be deducted each week (or part thereof) for late assignments.**

Participation: Education is a social endeavor and we learn from one another. If students are not present in class, we cannot benefit from their ideas, experiences, or observations. Due to the interactive nature of this course, attendance and participation are critical. Students are asked to notify the instructor in advance of missed classes whenever possible, and are responsible for obtaining any missed notes or handouts from a classmate. *Missing multiple classes will result in a lowered class grade.* Students will be expected to participate in weekly collaborative group interactions, and will be graded on that participation. In addition, students are asked to be aware of their communication style, and to use appropriate communication skills in all class activities.



Department Writing Standards:

Writing requirements within the graduate program: **This is a graduate course and students are expected to turn in papers and assignments of graduate quality.** All work should represent your reflections upon and integration of information covered in class in an organized way. Additionally, written assignments are to be clear in sentence construction and are to be proof read before they are handed in. Please discuss individual concerns with your professor. Writers in the fields of psychology, other behavioral and social sciences and special education express their ideas in a form and style developed by the American Psychological Association, commonly referred to as "APA". This writing form and style is familiar to a wide audience and allows the reader to concentrate on the content of the writing. **It is expected that students will follow the requirements of APA style rules in all formal written course assignments.** Such requirements are detailed in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition, 2009. Students will find the manual to be an invaluable resource as a professional educator and it is recommended they purchase the text.

Person-First Language: The CSUN Department of Special Education believes that a person is more important than a disability. Accordingly, we expect our students to use Person-First Language at all times, in both speaking and writing. For example, students would refer to ‘children with autism’ as opposed to ‘autistic children.’ Papers not using Person-First Language will be returned for editing, and must be resubmitted. For more information on Person-First Language, please see the class Moodle page.

Technology Requirements: Students are required to have access to the internet and to a working CSUN email account. *Instructor must be updated if email account changes.* The course website can be accessed at: <http://moodle.csun.edu/>. Your user name and password to access the website are the same as those you use for access to the SOLAR system. ***Most information will be provided via Moodle so please check frequently!***



On-Line Quizzes: Students are required to log on to the course website and respond to the assigned readings the week before class (4 times). **Quizzes are due by Sunday midnight before the designated class meetings.** A percentage score will be generated for all 4 quizzes, and will then be calculated for the points allocated on the syllabus. The purpose of the on-line quizzes is to demonstrate your understanding of the assigned readings.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Center on Disabilities (COD) in order to receive accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be honored in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The intent of the ADA is not to give a particular student an advantage over another, but simply to allow students with disabilities equal access to the course content, and to provide them an equal opportunity for success. Students may receive information about registering with COD at the following website: <http://www.csun.edu/cod/sdr/general/registering.htm>. The COD is located at Bayramian Hall, Rm. 110. Their phone number is 818-677-2684.

Grading: Grading is based on a total of 200 points. Participation in class is expected. A plus and minus system will be used. Grades will be assigned according to departmental standards as follows:

A	=	185-200 points
A-	=	179-184 points
B+	=	175-178 points
B	=	165-174 points
B-	=	159-164 points
C+	=	155-158 points
C	=	145-154 points
C-	=	139-144 points
D+	=	135-138 points
D	=	125-134 points
D-	=	119-124 points
F	=	below 118 points



A - Outstanding. A's are reserved for those students whose performance is *truly* outstanding. Performance reflects an outstanding level of competency attainment -- including critical analyses, information syntheses, and application of theory and research to practice. Projects and presentations are comprehensive, thoughtful, well organized, clearly written and effectively presented.

B - Very Good. Performance surpasses a basic level of competency attainment, understanding, and skill, and indicates an ability to integrate and apply information.

C - Satisfactory. Performance reflects basic level of competency attainment, understanding, and skill.

D - Unsatisfactory. Performance meets expectations for basic level of attainment for some competencies and understanding of some content.

F - Failing. Performance does not meet expectations for basic level of competency attainment and understanding.

Incomplete. Assigned only when at least 51% of required coursework has been completed *with a passing grade and with instructor approval*. See the current University catalog, page 56, for details.

NOTE CSUN POLICIES:

- Students are responsible for following all published CSUN policies and procedures.
- Adding/dropping classes is not normally permitted after the first 3 weeks of instruction.
- On individual assignments, students are expected to do their own work. The penalties for plagiarism and cheating are outlined in the University catalog, and can include failing the course.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments will be thoroughly discussed in class, and supplemental written guidelines will be provided.

1. Fieldwork Observation Report: (Obj. 2, 3, 4, 6, 13)

Students will be asked to observe two settings, general education and special education, focusing on a student with an identified disability in each setting. They will write a 3-4 page paper analyzing the effectiveness of the instruction for those students, identifying critical differences in behavioral and academic intervention across the two settings, and the reasons for the success of one setting over another (if noted). Content may be presented orally in class in small groups.

40 points (20%)

2. Collaborative Team Observation: (Obj. 5, 11, 12)

Each student will observe a collaborative team (e.g., SST, IEP, 504) in action. Observations will be analyzed and written up, following a provided format. Focus will be on observing communication & collaboration skills, to include cultural awareness. Students will make recommendations for improving the functioning of the team. (Alternative options will be provided for students not in schools).

20 points (10%)

3. Instructional Plan: (Obj. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13)

Students will use their data from the fieldwork observation to create a comprehensive instructional plan in one subject for their 2 observed students, in addition to a class of instructor-provided "students". They will be asked to collaborate **with at least two people** in order to collect ideas for their plan. Plan will include:

- * identification of Big Ideas from the curriculum appropriate for these students,
- * a variety of visual, auditory, kinesthetic activities & supports that are appropriate in this curricular area,
- * types of technology that could be used to make the content more accessible,
- * discussion of learning supports including grouping, reinforcements, affinities, & strengths-based focus,
- * types of assessments appropriate for this student in this subject, and
- * a co-planned Universally designed lesson plan that makes grade level content accessible to wide range of learners, to include the focus students.

50 points (25%)

4. Creative Sharing Project: (Obj. 6, 7, 8, 9, 13)

Students will have the option to read a research-based journal article on working with kids with disabilities, a book on individuals with disabilities, or watch a film on individuals with disabilities. They can also go see a presentation by a person with a disability and/or on working with individuals with disabilities. They will share a creative product with the class that underscores the message/meaning of the reading/video/presentation and how it affected them **or** how it could help teachers and/or students in inclusive classrooms.

20 points (10%)

5. Quizzes: (Obj. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13)

Students will respond to four on-line quizzes spread out throughout the semester to demonstrate knowledge of course content and readings.

20 points (10%)

6. Final Exam: (Obj. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

A culminating case study will be given at the end of the course in order to assess students' understanding of critical course content and their ability to apply course material to practical situations. Project will be completed collaboratively in class.

30 points (15%)

7. Attendance & Participation activities: (Obj. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)

Active class participation is required. Discussion is the major vehicle for academic discovery in this class; therefore, students must be present and engaged at all times. Written individual and small group activities will be completed in & out of class based on in-class information. These activities are recorded as class attendance and therefore cannot be made up.

20 points (10%)

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS =

200 (100%)