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Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom: Instructional Strategies for All Students

A Distance Learning Graduate Course
Based on the Work of Dr. William Glasser

Course Syllabus

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With the majority of today's special education students, we are not dealing with students with physical or mental incompetence, we are dealing with children who do not learn what we teach or do not like the way we teach it. So we have to improve what we teach and make it useable to students and we have to improve how we teach it.

Dr. William Glasser

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Dr. William Glasser
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Rationale

Schools across the country today serve more than 6 million youngsters with a wide array of disabling conditions. Access to a free, quality education is the key to the uniquely American promise of equal opportunity for all. This promise was formally extended to children with disabilities with the passage in 1975 of landmark federal legislation now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On June 4, 1997, President William J. Clinton signed a bill reauthorizing and amending the law that is frequently referred to as IDEA '97. IDEA was reauthorized again in 2004 with significant changes concerning Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), due process and discipline.

Among many other provisions, IDEA requires states to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum. If a student will not be participating with non-disabled children in the regular classroom and extracurricular and other non-academic activities, an explanation in the student's individualized education program is required. (Algonssine and Ysseldyke 2006). Consequently, educators have had to rethink their approach to the education of children with special needs.

"Special education" is now, more than ever, affecting general education classroom teachers as well as teachers certified to address specific disabilities. Over the past 10 years, the number of U.S. students enrolled in special education programs has risen 30 percent. Three out of every four students with disabilities spend part or all of their school day in a general education classroom. In turn, nearly every general education classroom across the country includes students with disabilities. (NEA 2006).

This inclusive approach of including teaching children with special needs in regular classrooms challenges teachers, schools, and districts to re-examine traditional beliefs and practices traditions and beliefs to determine which are consistent with the intent of the IDEA. In addition, new strategies must be developed to address the unique challenges of the inclusive education and ensure the success of both special and general education students. This course is designed to help educators through this process by presenting a compendium of teaching strategies including those research has shown effective in regular classrooms and those that have been proven effective in the instruction of students with intellectual, emotional, or physical challenges.

Among approaches to effective teaching explored in this course is Dr. William Glasser's choice theory and quality schools concepts. His non-coercive instructional techniques were developed in a special education setting and are currently being successfully used in inclusive classrooms in several of Dr. Glasser's quality schools. (Glasser 2006).

Other regular classroom instructional approaches that will be presented in the course videos are identified in the course text *Commonsense Methods for Children with Special Educational Needs: Strategies for the Regular Classroom* by Peter Westwood. In his review of the research on the subject of effective teaching, Westwood found that the characteristics of effective teachers included those listed below (Westwood 2003).

Effective teachers tend to:

* have well managed classrooms;
* provide students with the maximum opportunity to learn;
* maintain an academic focus;
* have high expectations of what students can achieve;
* adopt a style that is business-like and work-oriented;
* show enthusiasm;
* use strategies to keep students on task, motivated, and productive;

* impose structure on the content to be covered;
* present new material in a step-by-step manner;
* employ direct and explicit instructional procedures;
* use clear instructions and explanations;
* demonstrate appropriate task-approach strategies;
* monitor closely what students are doing;
* adjust instruction to individual needs; re-teach when necessary; provide frequent feedback to students;
* use a variety of resources;
* spent a significant amount of time in interactive, whole-class teaching.

While good instructional design and teaching can minimize the need for adaptation, sometimes the only way to provide for children with special needs is to adapt curriculum to accommodate them. (Loreman et. al 2005) Therefore, in addition to examining effective teaching practices that have been found to be productive in regular classrooms, this course will also present approaches specifically designed for special needs; intellectual, emotional or physical challenges. The special teaching strategies illustrated in this course were drawn form those identified in the text as proven effective for teaching children with learning and developmental difficulties (Westwood 2003):

* Abundant guided practice;
* Students are reinforced through descriptive praise and encouragement.
* High levels of student participation and engagement.
* Fast pacing of lessons.
* Positive student-to-student interactions and peer assistance.
* Frequent student-teacher interactions.
* Carefully controlling and sequencing the curriculum content to be studied.
* Providing abundant opportunities for practice and application.
* Ensuring high levels of participation on the part of all students.
* Using interactive group teaching.
* Modeling by the teacher of effective ways of completing school tasks.
* Teaching children how to best attempt new learning tasks.

This will also stress the importance of professional collaboration in education in general and in the special education setting in particular. Award-winning special educa-

tion teacher Pat Beckman, states that special education students are most likely to succeed academically when "responsibility for the learning outcomes of special education students is equally shared by the classroom teacher and the special education teacher" and when instruction incorporates variation in delivery, activities, expectations, and assessment to accommodate diverse learning strengths and needs. (Beckman 1999)

In summary, this course is designed to meet the needs of teachers in today's inclusive classrooms presenting a variety of teaching strategies that have been proven effective in educating both general and special education students. In addition, the course will present an overview of the learning characteristics of children with various disabilities and video demonstrations of effective teaching practices in inclusive classroom at varying grade levels.

Course Title

Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom:
Instructional Strategies for All Students

Course Description

"Teaching in the Inclusive Classroom: Instructional Strategies for All Students" is a three semester (five quarter) hour graduate course designed to give K-12 teachers the theory and skills to create and teach lessons that are effective with both special education and general education students. Participants will engage in various learning activities through which they will learn and implement teaching strategies designed to engage the general education students while at the same time accommodate the needs of students with mild-moderate learning or developmental disabilities.

In addition, participants will show evidence of using multiple paths of knowledge that include remedial methods, instructional techniques, and authentic assessment through their lesson plan development and implementation. Underlying all approaches is Dr. William Glasser's choice theory psychology and learner-centered philosophy. Glasser's theories hold that students with disabilities share the same basic needs as other children and at the same time are just as diverse in their interests, learning preferences, and individual characteristics.

Course Goals

The goals of this course are to have participants develop a understanding of the special educational needs of students with mild-moderate disabilities; to have participants develop a practical understand and demonstrate a proficiency in creating and implementing teaching approaches designed to accommodate the individual needs of all students, both disabled and non-disabled.

Course Outline

In the following outline, the term "Course of Study" refers to a study plan that includes required reading, video viewing, worksheets, application assignments and progress reports.

Session #1: Instructional Strategies for All Students: An Introduction

Objective: To have participants understand the scope and sequence of this course, to expose them to key concepts, to have them preview course videos and lessons, and have them complete an assessment of their current approach to teaching students with special needs.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and setting of a learning goal for the course.

Session #2: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Choice Theory and Meeting Individual Needs (Upper Elementary)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understanding of multi-grade and multi-age teaching approaches; to have participants view and analyze a sample lesson taught in a multi-grade inclusive classroom in one of Dr. Glasser's quality schools; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #3: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Real World Learning in the Inclusive Classroom (Middle School)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understanding of Dr. Glasser's concept of "useful work" in the classroom: to have participants view and analyze a sample lesson illustrating how real world learning can make concepts more accessible to both disabled and not disabled students; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings..

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #4: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Constructivism and the Two-Step Approach (High School)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understanding of the constructivism and how it relates to teaching in inclusive classrooms; to have

participants view and analyze a lesson taught using constructivist techniques; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #5: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Teachers and Students Working Together (Middle School)

Objectives: To have participants understand the role collaboration should play in an inclusive classroom; to have participants view and analyze a lesson demonstrating effective collaboration between a regular classroom teacher and a special education teacher and between general and special education students; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #6: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Differentiated Instruction (Middle School)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understand of the value of using differentiated instructional techniques; to have participants view and critically analyze lesson in which the teacher provides students a number of ways of completing an assigned task; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #7: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Teaching Study Skills and Self-Management (Middle School)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understanding of value of teaching self-management skills to general and special education students: view and critically analyze a lesson that includes teaching students study skills; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit

based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #8: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Class Meetings and Communication Skills (High School)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understand of the use of class meetings and student self-evaluation at the high school level; to have participants view and critically analyze a class meeting conducted in a high school classroom; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #9: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Peer Teaching and Group Learning Strategies (Lower Elementary)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understanding of using student's as tutors or facilitators in inclusive classrooms; to have participants view and critically analyze a lesson taught in a multi-grade elementary classroom; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of video, course of study supplementary reading and activities, and the creation and evaluation of a lesson or unit.

Session #10: Instructional Strategies for All Students: Using Choices to Teach Responsibility (Lower Elementary)

Objectives: To have participants develop an understand of the use of choices to teach students decision making skills; to have students view and critically analyze a lesson in which the teacher integrates teaching self-management into a math lesson; to have participants create, implement, and evaluate a lesson or unit based either on the techniques demonstrated in the video or strategies suggested in the course text and readings.

Assignments and Activities: Required reading in course text, viewing of

tice: Parent Perceptions of a Co-taught Inclusive Classroom. *Education, 118*(3), 471+.

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Vansciver, J. H. (2005). Motherhood, Apple Pie and Differentiated Instruction. *Phi Delta Kappan, 86*(7), 534.

Vitello, S. J. & Mithaug, D. E. (Eds.). (1998). *Inclusive Schooling: National and International Perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Voltz, D. L. (2001). Preparing General Education Teachers for Inclusive Settings: The Role of Special Education Teachers in the Professional Development School Context. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 24*(4), 288+.

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Wade, S. E. (Ed.). (2000). *Inclusive Education: A Casebook and Readings for Prospective and Practicing Teachers*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

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Wilson, R. A. (2003). *Special Educational Needs in the Early Years*. New York: Routledge Falmer .

Wolfendale, S. (Ed.). (2000). *Special Needs in the Early Years: Snapshots of Practice*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Internet Resources

The William Glasser Institute
http://www.wglasser.com
Choice Theory and Glasser Quality School information and resources.

The Choice Theory Website
http://www.sctboces.com/choicetheory
An excellent, concise introduction to Choice Theory.

The Council for Exceptional Children
http://www.cec.sped.org
A national organization dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities, students with disabilities, and/or the gifted.

U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/index.html?src=mr
The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) supports programs that assist in educating children with special needs, provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities, and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

A to Z Teacher Stuff
http://atozteacherstuff.com
Resources for teachers including thematic units and lesson plans.

Busy Teacher's K-12 Website
http://www.ceismc.gatech.edu/busyt
A meta-site featuring hundreds of links to education-related websites.

Center for Applied Special Technology
http://www.cast.org/
CAST is a nonprofit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through the research and development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies.

Closing the Gap
http://closingthegap.com
Assistive technology resources for children and adults with special needs.

Early Childhood Educator's Web Corner
http://users.sgi.net/~cokids/
An index to many, many resources for early childhood educators.

I Love Teaching
http://www.iloveteaching.com
Practical advice and tips for both new and experienced educators.

Journal of Special Education Technology
http://jset.unlv.edu
JSET is a refereed professional journal that presents up-to-date information and opinions about issues, research, policy, and practice related to the use of technology in the field of special education.

LD Online
http://www.ldonline.org
LD Online seeks to help children and adults reach their full potential by providing accurate and up-to-date information and advice about learning disabilities and ADHD.

Learner.org
http://www.learner.org
A collaboration between the Annenberg Foundation and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America
http://www.ldanatl.org/
Since 1963, LDA has provided support to people with learning disabilities, their parents, teachers and other professionals.

Literacy Access Online
http://www.literacyaccessonline.org
Literacy Access Online provides reading activities and resources for readers and their helpers

National Assistive Technology Research Institute
http://natri.uky.edu
The National Assistive Technology Research Institute (NATRI) conducts assistive technology (AT) research, translates theory and research into AT practice, and provides resources for improving the delivery of AT services.

National Education Association
http://www.nea.org
Good source of information for all educators.

New York Times Learning Network.
http://www.nytimes.com/learning
A wealth of information for teachers and high school students.

Preschool Education
http://www.preschooledcuation.com
Activities, lesson plans and discussion forums for preschool teachers.

Teachers First
http://www.teachersfirst.org
Information and resources for instruction and professional development.

Teachers Network
http://www.teachnet.com
Current news on teaching, lesson plans, and many other resources.
other resources.