*Disability Fairness in Public Schools*

Course Information

*Madison Stafford*

*This course is designed to educate Liberal Studies majors on the issue with disability fairness in public schools. Longwood specifically does a really good job at preparing their future teachers with the ability to work with special education students in classrooms. There are other universities, however, that do not prepare their future teachers specifically to handle SPED.*

Course Description

*This course is will explore the issues with disability fairness in public schools and how this has a lasting effect on children. The course will consist of 7 units which cover all aspects of areas where disability treatment in public schools needs improvement.*

Course Schedule

**Unit 1: *SPED Separation***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** Is special education separation the best thing for children with disabilities? |
| **Argument of the Unit:** *Students have a higher achievement in fully integrated environments.* |
| **Key Words:** I*ntegration, educational benefits, lack of family participation, knowledge, family and community partnership* |
| **Link to Reading:**[*Time to End SPED Segregation*](https://phys.org/news/2015-02-segregation-special-students-professors.html) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** *The article “Time to End SPED Segregation” discusses the idea that children with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms. The reasons the author discusses this is because of the overall benefits that combining classes would have on SPED students. The author also mentions how it will take the work of parents, teachers, and school administration to help make it successful. I chose this article, because of the authors views on why SPED and general education classes should combine. If the classes combine it provides so many positive social and educational benefits to students with disabilities.* |

**Unit 2: *Educating Teachers on SPED***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** *Should general education teachers be special education certified?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** General education teachers should have the same training and the same education on SPED as a SPED certified teacher. This is because SPED students spend a great deal of time in general classrooms and it is important for general teachers to know how to care for a SPED student. |
| **Key Words:**  *academic support, preparing, teacher education, class management, following the correct standards for SPED* |
| **Link to Reading:** [SPED Teaching v. General Classroom Teaching](https://www.masters-in-special-education.com/special-education-teaching-vs-general-classroom-teaching/) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “SPED Teaching v. General Classroom Teaching” focuses on the different tasks that each teacher provides. General education teacher is responsible for maintain disabled students in class for a few hours a day, but the majority of the time SPED students spend in a self-contained classroom. It discusses how SPED teachers have generally up to eight students a year that they are personally able to get to know, as where general education teachers have up to twenty-five children they are responsible for. I chose this article, because it describes how SPED teachers should work with other teachers to ensure that even students with “lower” disabilities are getting help as well. |

**Unit 3: “Lower” Disabilities**

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** *Should children “lower” disabilities such as Dyslexia or ADHD receive the same benefits as children with autism, down syndrome, or that handicap.* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Children who classify as having learning disabilities should receive the same benefits as those with severe disabilities. These children should require the same qualified teachers and same help that is given to other disable kids. |
| **Key Words:** *Dyslexia, ADHD, learning, focus, ADD,* |
| **Link to Reading:**  [Navigating Learning Disabilities and the Cost for Treatment](https://www.thesimpledollar.com/navigating-learning-disabilities-and-the-cost-for-treatment/) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “Negative Learning Disabilities and the Cost for Treatment” describes all of the different types of learning disabilities and how they affect students. “About 10% of children in the U.S. live with some form of learning and attention issues.” I chose this article, because it describes which the different types of learning disabilities are and how they affect students as learners. As future teachers, it is important to recognize all of the different things that could prevent students from obtaining the knowledge they need. It is also important to know how a child can be diagnosed with learning disability and what type of treatment works best for them. |

**Unit 4: *Costs of Disability Testing***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** Should the cost of disability testing be lowered for people who are not able to financially afford it? |
| **Argument of the Unit:** *The cost of disability testing for children in public schools is ridiculously expensive and public schools require their disabled students to have tests on file. “Access to a free, quality education is the key to the uniquely American promise of equal opportunity for all.”* |
| **Key Words:** Money, expensive, federal law, burden on families, achieving full funding |
| **Link to Reading:** [Background of SPED and the IDEA](http://www.nea.org/home/19029.htm) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “Background of SPED and the IDEA” discusses the ridiculous prices of disability testing for public school kids. Lowering the cost of disability testing will allow more students to receive the benefits that they need to have to be successful in schools. I chose this reading because of a personal experience I have heard of from my time at Longwood. My roommate who is dyslexic and ADHD had to pay $3,000 to get her disability test to qualify for disability benefits through Longwood. Families that are financially struggling, are not able to pay the money required to qualify for benefits. |

**Unit 5: *Inclusion v. Separation***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** *Why is including SPED students in general education classes more beneficial than separating them?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** *The benefits of inclusion are that SPED students will receive social interaction with other students and the benefits of separation is that they will get the one on one help they need.* |
| **Key Words:** interaction, accommodations, support, students learn from each other, cooperative learning |
| **Link to Reading:** [There’s No Place Called Inclusion](https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/pages/There-is-No-Place-Called-Inclusion) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “There’s No Place Called Inclusion”, discusses how SPED students need to be integrated in regular classrooms because of the positive impact it will have on those students. The author also gives advice on ways to ensure success for students with learning disabilities, such as giving the students time in class with other students and giving them quiet time to spend in an environment with teachers equip to handle their disability. I chose this article because it explains why inclusion is better than separation. The inclusion of SPED kids within a general education classroom allows the SPED kids to feel a sense of normality. It also provides them with the social integration they will need to have when they are out of the school system. |

**Unit 6: *Gender Differences***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** *Does gender have anything to do with a child being diagnosed with a disability?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** Boys are more likely to be labeled with a disability, because of their behavior. If a boy acts out in a negative way it can be seen as “oh he’s just being a boy”, but if a girl acts out in a negative way, it is seen that she most likely has disability. |
| **Key Words:** stereotypes, sexism, behavior, personality, gender classification |
| **Link to Reading:** [Gender Bias and SPED Referrals](https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23768097.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A47663fed5d22cc32f7f8a541197510cf) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “Gender Bias and SPED Referrals” discusses the differences in the behavior of boys and girls that could cause them to be labeled with a disability. “However, significantly more boys than girls were identified as reading disabled through the school's identification criteria.” I chose this article, because its comparison between boys and girls in elementary grades. Boys are often classified as having a disability solely on the fact that they are hyper and over active, while girls generally aren’t diagnosed. |

**Unit 7: *Race & Class Differences***

|  |
| --- |
| **BIG Question:** *Does race and class have anything to do with a student’s ability to receive disability benefits?* |
| **Argument of the Unit:** *Race and class can have an effect on whether or not a child is classified with having a disability and what type of benefits they can afford to receive.* |
| **Key Words:** *Minorities, equal, mental disabilities, privilege, poverty v wealth* |
| **Link to Reading:** [Ethnic Disproportionality in SPED Programs](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1hp-wCKzvWYC44pEB-2ruj0HEXApqA1EY) |
| **Annotation of Reading:** The article “Ethnic Disproportionality in SPED Programs”, discusses how African American children from lower income houses are more likely to be labeled with a disability than their white counterpart. “When these data are disaggregated by disability category, it becomes clear that the risk rates for African Americans and Native Americans are actually much higher in three of the “judgment” categories—those that depend on clinical judgment rather than on verifiable biological data.” I chose this article because it clearly talks about the injustice towards minority children when it comes to disability fairness in the public-school system. |