



## **Professional Development Institute**

### **Flex Course Syllabus**

# **Preparing Students with Special Needs to Meet the Standards (K-3)**

**PDI Course Number: 100T02**

**ACE Course Number: LE5777**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC40159**

If you would like information about receiving credit for completing this course, [please click here](#).

### **Course Timeline**

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

### **Course Description**

Are you finding it increasingly difficult to help your special education students find success with your state's standards? As most teachers know, learning can be difficult for those with special needs. So how exactly can a teacher make this “bridge,” thereby connecting their most vulnerable learners to the more challenging and complex concepts? This online course is designed for K-3 teachers who are attempting to do just this. Teachers will learn specific strategies for helping their special education students build strong foundational reading skills by using assessment to guide and differentiate their instruction. In addition, teachers will be given a variety of tools and strategies to help guide their struggling writers as they work to balance meaningful writing with explicit strategy instruction. Other topics include differentiating the mathematics block, providing tactile, kinesthetic, and auditory learning opportunities, student collaboration, cooperative group activities, and Universal Design for Learning. Rounding out the course is engaging special needs students in the art of conversation and using interventions and other teaching techniques to engage special needs students, including those who also happen to be English language learners. By the end of this course, teachers will feel much more confident in helping their students with special needs meet content standards.

## Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will understand why and how the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were developed and how they are currently organized for both English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.
2. Teachers will learn about how the various special education laws have shaped how the CCSS are consistently applied throughout ELA and math.
3. Teachers will learn how students qualify for special education services under current special education laws and the steps which are necessary to receive those services.
4. Teachers will learn how to read and understand a student's Individualized Education Plan, or IEP.
5. Teachers will understand the basic principles of Universal Design for Learning and how this framework can be used to differentiate instruction in order to better reach all learners.
6. Teachers will be introduced to the five foundational reading skills (concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency) and will learn specific strategies for incorporating these skills into their teaching methods in order to better differentiate instruction.
7. Teachers will learn about the different types of reading assessments and will learn various strategies for incorporating the assessment of the five foundational reading skills into their teaching in order to guide instruction for their struggling learners.
8. Teachers will learn how students with special needs may require specific assessment considerations, and how these may be incorporated into their teaching to further guide the instruction of their special needs students.
9. Teachers will learn how to differentiate their instruction using a variety of different strategies such as tiered assignments, compacting, flexible groupings, learning contracts, and choice boards.
10. Teachers will learn how to create smaller reading groups so that learning opportunities can be maximized.
11. Teachers will learn how to establish a basic writing routine in order to better help students focus on the task at hand.
12. Teachers will learn how to support their struggling writers with various tools and strategies, including those that specifically address the physical component of writing, as well as organizational and assistive technology tools and strategies.
13. Teachers will learn various strategies for teaching writing to their struggling students.
14. Teachers will learn strategies for engaging multiple senses during math instruction.
15. Teachers will learn how to differentiate their math block by content, process, and product.
16. Teachers will learn the difference between accommodations and modifications and will learn strategies for making assessment accommodations and modifications within their own classrooms.
17. Teachers will learn how speaking and listening are presented within the CCSS and will learn strategies for developing students' communication skills during small and whole-group lessons.
18. Teachers will learn specific activities and games that stimulate students' active listening skills, as well as addresses their speaking skills.

19. Teachers will learn about the benefits of group work for students with special needs.
20. Teachers will be taught specific activities that are meant to encourage effective collaboration among groups of students.
21. Teachers will have a basic understanding of the RTI process and will understand its essential components (screening, progress monitoring, the three tiers of intervention, and data-driven decision making).
22. Teachers will learn how to utilize the RTI process with their special needs students, including those who already have IEPs and those who may require one.
23. Teachers will learn about the various models of co-teaching and how they can be used as a basis to foster collaboration among colleagues.
24. Teachers will learn how to maximize the effectiveness of classroom support services, even if their school structure does not currently support “outside” help.
25. Teachers will learn specific strategies for supporting their English language learners who also happen to have special needs.

## **Instructional Media**

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement
- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

## **Evaluation**

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Differentiate Three Common Core Standards (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

## Topical Outline

### Unit One

- Unpacking the Common Core State Standards
- Navigating the Special Education Pathway
- Understanding Special Education Terminology and Reading an IEP
- Meeting the Needs of All Learners: Universal Design for Learning
- **Assignment #1**  
*Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about helping students with special needs engage with the Common Core curriculum at your grade level. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

### Unit Two

- Building Strong Foundational Reading Skills
- Using Assessment to Guide Reading Instruction
- Meeting Students Where They Are: Teaching Reading to All Learners
- **Assignment #2**  
*As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.*
- **Test #2**

### Unit Three

- Balancing Meaningful Writing and Explicit Strategy Instruction
- Supporting Struggling Writers: Tools and Strategies
- **Assignment #3**  
*Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to effectively engaging students who have special needs in the Common Core curriculum and will make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to easily follow. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom*
- **Test #3**

### Unit Four

- Multi-Sensory Mathematics Instruction
- Differentiating the Classroom Mathematics Block
- Assessment Strategies for Math
- **Test #4**

## Unit Five

- The Building Blocks of Conversation: Speaking and Listening
- Student Collaboration and Cooperative Group Work
- **Test #5**

## Unit Six

- Response to Intervention
- Teacher Collaboration and the Co-Taught Classroom
- Maximizing Effectiveness of Classroom Support Staff
- English Language Learners with Special Education Needs
- **Assignment #4**  
*Choose two reading skills and one math skill that are fundamental to students at your grade level. Next, pair those skills with a Common Core State Standard from your grade level. Then, devise three plans to differentiate those skills by content, process, and product. Follow the example given in the assignment.*
- **Assignment #5**  
*The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.*

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