Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education
CG-EDUC-546: Creating Inclusive School Environments
3 graduate credits
Sandra Gold, M.Ed.
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Contact Information:
Email: via schoology

Course Description:
The purpose of this course is to identify the social/emotional and academic needs of students with special needs in inclusive Jewish settings. The first part of the course will focus on identification of children with special needs and the assessment process. Different trends and issues in education surrounding service delivery models will then be explored. The final portion of the course will focus on what schools and teachers can do to create inclusive, tolerant environments for all children.

Learning Objectives:
1. Students will be able to discuss principles of educational assessment for special populations.
2. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics and effective application of different models of collaboration and delivery.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of strategies for increasing positive behaviors and promoting social integration of children with special needs in general education settings.

Required Texts:
Required readings will be available electronically.

Assessment:
Students will be assigned readings on a weekly basis and should expect to participate in either discussion board questions that will foster dialogue amongst the class participants or in individual assignments designed to allow for opportunities to apply new concepts and skills.

Assignments:
1. Students will participate in and comment on classmates' postings on discussion boards (40%)
2. Each student will interview either a parent of a child with special needs or a professional working in the field (10%)
3. Each student will analyze and rewrite a lesson plan to reflect UDL principles (15%)
4. Each student will critique a classroom management system (10%)
5. Each student will merge SEL competencies with PBIS goals (5%)
6. Each student will develop a teacher resource kit of materials that promote an inclusive environment (20%)
Course Accommodations for Disabilities:
Hebrew College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in programs. Accordingly, if a student has a documented disability, and as a result, needs a reasonable accommodation to attend, participate or complete course requirements, then he or she should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. For further information, see the Student Handbook at http://hebrewcollege.edu/sites/default/files/student_handbook.pdf.

If you require course accommodations because of a documented disability or an emergency medical condition, please email your instructor as soon as possible. We are happy to work with you on any issues you have to ensure that you can participate fully in the class and complete the course requirements. Please do not wait until the assignments are due for a retroactive accommodation, but discuss the situation with your instructor before you experience difficulty.

Course Structure:
Week 1  What is Special Education?
The process for identifying children with special needs and to begin providing support is a lengthy one. What does this mean in terms of day schools and / or after school religious programs who are not always fully a part of this process.

Key Questions:
1. Who are we talking about when we say children with special needs?
2. How do you define inclusion?
3. What about children found ineligible for services?

Readings:
- A Parents Guide to Special Education- Federation for Children with Special Needs
- Categories of Disabilities under IDEA - NICHCY, the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
- History of Special Education - PPT

Assignments:
Interviews with either a parent of a child with special needs or professional working in the field. Due week 4

Week 2  Pre-referral
Before students are referred for special education testing, the pre-referral process takes place. This process can look differently in different schools and towns. The goals, however, should be the same-to implement strategies to that help a child be successful and to document the progress.

Key Questions:
1. How can pre-referral work in your setting?

Readings:
- Before Special Ed- How Pre-referral works. Stump, Colleen
- A teacher’s reflection on the pre-referral process

Assignment
Discussion Board/ Case Studies

Week 3  Assessment
A classroom teacher needs to understand the differences and purposes of standardized tests and classroom based assessments in order to best use the information they provide about a student’s learning.

Key Questions:
1. What information can a teacher get from a standardized assessment?
2. What information can teacher get from a classroom based assessment?
3. How can a teacher design assessments that are useful for a diverse group of learners?
**Reading:**
- Valencia, Sheila W. "Understanding Assessment: Putting Together the Puzzle." *Current Research in Reading/Language Arts*
- Understanding Assessment Powerpoint

**Assignment:**
Discussion Board

**Week 4  Models of Service delivery**
The benefits of inclusion for both typical learners and children with special needs are very clearly documented. Yet, just like there is no one strategy that works for all learners, there cannot be a hard and fast rule about how to service children. Deciding when and how to provide push in services versus pulling children out of their classroom for servicing is a challenging topic.

**Key Questions:**
1. What are situations in your classroom when you feel push in is the best approach?
2. Are there situations where you feel pull out would be the best way to serve the student? Why?
3. What support would help you as the teacher make this successful for all students?

**Readings:**

**Assignment:**
Discussion Board

**Week 5 Roles**
Inclusion can only work successfully when everyone in a school system buys into the idea. Everyone needs to work together and have common goals.

**Key Questions:**
1. What roles do teachers, special educators, parents, students and other school personnel play in creating and maintaining a successful inclusive environment?
2. How do you define successful inclusion?
3. How can regular education teachers and special education teachers work as a team?

**Readings:**
- Fiori, Lindsay. "Special Education Regular Classrooms." *The Journal Times* 17 Sept. 2010:
- Case Study: Libby
- “6 Co teaching Models for the Inclusive Classroom” , *Teaching Tolerance*

**Assignment**
Discussion Board

**Week 6  Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**
UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn.
UDL recognizes that not all students learn the same way and attempts to increase learning by removing barriers that might interfere with a student's success.

**Key question:**
1. How can teacher meet the educational needs of all of their students?
2. To meet the needs of a range range of students, what should teachers consider when planning their instruction?
Week 7  What is Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
In addition to schools being aware of student differences and working towards making learning accessible to all learners, schools need to address social needs. Making sure that all students feel safe and can grow socially is an equally important component of creating an inclusive environment.

Key Questions:
1. What are the benefits of social emotional learning?
2. What skills do students need in order be socially competent?

Readings:
- http://www.edutopia.org/keys-social-emotional-learning-video

Assignments:
Discussion Board
Introduce final project- Developing a Teacher Resource Kit

Week 8  Character Education
Character education refers to teaching students about the traits they need to get along in society. In terms of a school setting, it is those core values that we need to teach our students to embrace in order to create a positive learning environment.

Key Questions:
1. What are those key core traits that are important for schools to teach?
2. How do you teach character?

Reading:
- Borba, Michele. "5 Steps to Teaching Any Character Trait." Education World

Assignments:
Discussion Board

Week 9  Classroom Management Systems
Teachers often use behavior management systems to create a climate within their own classroom. This week we’re going to think about those systems from the point of view of the child who learns differently, finds socialization challenging or has behavior issues.

Key Questions:
1. What are the components of a successful behavior management system?
2. Which systems help to create an inclusive environment without creating more barriers?

Readings:

Assignments:
Critique a classroom behavior management plan
Week 10  PBIS
PBIS stands for “Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.” PBIS is a structure for making sure that all students can be successful at school—academically, socially, emotionally and behaviorally. PBIS looks at all aspects of a school life, establishes clear behavioral expectations and actively teaches those expectations to all of its students.

**Key Questions:**
1. What are the characteristics of a school wide PBIS plan?
2. How does PBIS connect with a core values approach to education?
3. How does PBIS work together with a teacher’s classroom behavior system?

**Readings:**
- PBIS for Beginners ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org))
- PBIS and the Law ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org))
- PBIS Example 1 and 2
- Rethinking PBIS - a principal's reflection
- Explore the rest of [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) to learn more about the approach (optional)

**Assignments:**
Discussion Board

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**Weeks 11  Merging PBIS and SEL Competencies**
SEL and PBIS both believe that students learn best in safe and well-managed learning environments. **Key Questions:**
1. How do the principles of SEL and PBIS work together to improve behavior?
2. How do SEL and PBIS help create positive environments for all children?

**Assignments:**
Match SEL competencies with PBIS goals
Discussion Board
Share Teacher Resource Kit