SPECIAL EDUCATION AND DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION IN EFL CONTEXTS

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, AMERICAN ENGLISH INSTITUTE

Course Overview

This course is a survey of teaching methods that support learners with special needs within the context of the TEFL classroom. Participants read articles, visit websites and discuss teaching practices that provide strategies of support for diverse learners with a wide variety of skills and varying levels of performance. A typical assignment for a week may examine sub-topics such as the following:

- What are the causes (if any) for the disability?

- What are the symptoms of the disability and does it impact the learner's classroom success?

- What are the educational implications (which strategies are helpful) in such a case? Provide at least 2 substantive blog posts sharing personal experiences and/or ideas about the discussion topic with colleagues. Use appropriate citation. (Do *not* cut and paste information from the Internet or other sources. All wording should be yours.)

The focus is placed on inclusive teaching models, with exploration of the current best practices. As a community of professionals, participants engage in ongoing dialogue, sharing their experience, success and concerns in their teaching. A support system is established with exposure to resources found within individual teaching communities and external locations such as online forums and information centers. Emphasis is placed on the creation of a resource to take back for sharing among participants' local communities (e.g., classroom, school, or parents).

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Define Special Education and related terminology.

- Determine ways in which to support a student with a disability in their classroom.

- List the necessary steps to implement a student support plan.

- Create or locate effective assessment instruments to evaluate student needs.

- Identify and apply special education teaching strategies that are in line with local curriculum.

- Communicate more effectively in English by having participated in course activities.

- Network with fellow English language teaching professionals and benefit from the knowledge and support they receive from them throughout the course and beyond it.

Course Scope and Sequence

Week 1: Course orientation/ Introductions.

Week 2: Defining Special Education.

Week 3: Terms and categories of disabilities.

Week 4: Methods and best practices: Learning Styles.

Week 5: Methods and best practices: Differentiating Instruction.

Week 6: Methods and best practices: Project-based learning and Scaffolding.

Week 7: Classroom and individual behavior management strategies.

Week 8: Assessment strategies: A strength-based approach. Peer review for projects.

Week 9: Technology and Special Education

Week 10: School-to-home connections. Wrap-up: feedback; sharing projects; forward planning.

Course Requirements for Certificate of Completion

This class is Pass/No Pass. Participants must satisfactorily complete the course final project and all course work with a final score of 70-100% to receive a certificate of completion. Course participants will be required to:

1. Complete all reading assignments and participate actively in online discussions and tasks by sharing reflections, and contributing example activities (50% of total score).

2. Complete collaborative case studies (15% of total score).

3. Submit a final project with peer review. This will take the form of a PPT outline for a workshop, creation of an informational brochure on a specific type of disability, or a lesson plan with standard activities aligned with modified activities to support diverse learners (35% of total score).

Sample Materials and Resources

- Alan, B., Stoller, F. (2005). Maximizing the benefits of project work in foreign language classrooms. *English Teaching Forum, 43*(4), 10-21. Retrieved from http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/05-43-4-c.pdf

- Boss, S. (2011). Project-based learning: A short history. *Edutopia*. The George Lucas Educational Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning -history

- Burgstahler, S. (2012). *Students with disabilities sharing tips for success*. Retrieved from http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Technology/charge.html

- Ford, K. (2011). *Differentiated instruction for English language learners*. Retrieved from http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/41025/

- Hammond-Byrd, A. (2009). Learning to learn cooperatively. *English Teaching Forum*, *47*(4), 18-28. Retrieved from http://americanenglish.state.gov/files/ae/resource_files/09-47-4 -d.pdf

- Sze, S. (2009). Learning style and the special needs child. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 36*(4), 360-362.