

Lesson Plan

Objective: To examine whether and how students' **self-realization** would be affected by incorporating learning about special education into a high school English classroom.

Setting and Materials: Special Education classroom
Paper and Pencil

*Modifications **are** needed for students with significant disabilities.

Content Taught

1. This school's English curriculum required the students to complete a set of compositions for inclusion in a writing portfolio. Three of these compositions could be based on topics of disability, but these composition topics differed between juniors and seniors.

Juniors

1. **Essay of Argument** – discuss whether students with special education needs should be required to pass the state's academic accountability assessment.
2. **Brochure** – persuade students with special education needs to become self-advocates. This assignment should include definitions of learning disability, special education, IEP, accommodation, and self-advocacy, along with describing reasons for becoming a self-advocate.
3. **Self-Assessment** – discuss what you have learned about your special education needs and how you will use that information in the future.

Seniors

1. **Personal Essay** – discuss your experiences of living with a disability (e.g., how their specific disabilities affected them; when and how they first learned about their special education placements; positive and negative experiences about special education; how they viewed themselves and their disabilities now).
2. **Proposal** – outline steps for successful transition from one grade to the next. Targeted audience was special education students, teachers and parents.
3. **Self-Assessment** – discuss what you have learned about your special education needs and how you will use that information in the future.

Teaching Procedures

1. Instructional time lasted two to three weeks for each composition. This school's block schedule provided 90-minute class periods.
2. Along with procedures required of an English teacher in a regular English class, there would be individual and group instruction for writing process including:

- A. Instruction of writing assignments
- B. Research and reading to gather background information
- C. Pre-writing whole class discussions to develop composition content
- D. Individual writing conferences

Evaluation

1. **Structured interviews** – three rounds of interviews throughout the semester-long project. Questions focused on opportunities and experiences students had in school for learning about their special education needs, their interactions with adults and other students about special education, and their ideas about the pros and cons of disclosing their disabilities in current or future school or work settings.
2. **Brief weekly survey/written response probes** – survey consisted of four items selecting between disagree, mostly disagree, mostly agree or agree, followed by a one or two sentence statement concerning one of these questions. The items include:
 - A. This week at school I had an opportunity to talk about my educational strengths and weaknesses.
 - B. This week at school I learned something new about my educational strengths and weaknesses.
 - C. This week at school I learned about a strategy or how to ask for an accommodation in order to better manage my special educational needs; and
 - D. This week at school I used a special strategy or asked for an accommodation in order to better manage my special educational needs.
3. **Student work**
4. **Teacher journal**

Lesson Plan Based on: Eisenman, L., & Tascione, L. (2002). “How come nobody told me?” Fostering self-realization through a high school English curriculum. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 17*, 35-46.