Philosophy of Inclusion

Artifact A

It is important for you to be able to share your ideas of why and to what extent students with exceptional needs should be included in the classroom. Through the writing of your philosophy, you will be able to identify and share your own goals and values regarding inclusion.

Directions:

Complete a mini review of professional literature to include the articles used in class to create a personal position on the efficacy and thus value of inclusion. Remember the audience when considering language and length. You should consider and address each of the following questions:

* .What do you believe about special education and its role in the school system?
* What are your beliefs about how children learn? (Think about the theorists and authors presented)
* What are your ethical obligations towards students, parents, school, and community?
* How do your beliefs impact your instruction and classroom management?

Teaching and Learning Context

Artifact B

It is important for the teacher to have an in-depth knowledge of the academic, emotional, and social development of students, and how this development can impact student learning and instructional planning.

Directions:

Complete the following:

* Select a group of students that you will see daily and complete sections A-F on the attached chart.
* During the first two weeks of your placement, observe the academic and behavioral characteristics of the students in your selected group and keep anecdotal notes. Suggested areas of observation are included in the charts. Note: this is not an exhaustive list nor do all items have to be addressed.
* At the end of each week, discuss the notes with your supervisor and get input from him/her regarding your observations. At each weekly meeting, your supervisor will initial your notes. The notes should be included in your portfolio.
* Use your notes to complete sections G-I on the chart.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| A. Students in class or group | B. Grade level(s) | C. Disability area(s) |
| D. Circle the phrase that best describes the setting(s). | |  |
| Inclusion Classroom Special Education Classroom | | |
| E. Place a √ beside the role that describes the types of help available to you. | | |
| □ instructional assistant(s) | □ peer (student) tutor(s) | □general education teacher |
| □ volunteer(s) | □ other (Please specify) |  |
| F. Indicate the # of children in each category below. | |  |
| LEP # with IEPs/IFSPs # with 504 modifications Title I/At Risk Other | | |
| G. First Week Observation Summary. Summarize the academic and behavior characteristics that you observed during your first week. The following list may be used as a guide. | | |
| Academic: |  | Behavior |
| Attention to task |  | Motivation |
| Follows directions |  | Noncompliance |
| Handwriting |  | Not prepared |
| Copying/note taking |  | Classroom status |
| Asks for help |  | Leadership |
| Learned helplessness |  | Social awareness |
| H. Second Observation Summary. Summarize the academic and behavior characteristics that you observed during your second week. The following list may be used as a guide. | | |
| Academic: |  | Behavior |
| Attention to task |  | Motivation |
| Follows directions |  | Noncompliance |
| Handwriting |  | Not prepared |
| Copying/note taking |  | Classroom status |
| Asks for help |  | Leadership |
| Learned helplessness |  | Social awareness |
| I. Answer the following question about your class using your observations as a guide. | | |
| ▪ What are the strengths of the students? | |  |
| ▪ What concerns do you have at this time regarding the students? | | |
| ▪ How will you use this information for teaching? | | |
| ▪ How will you use this information to manage the classroom environment? | | |

Monitoring of Services & Conference Procedures

Artifact C

Monitoring the implementation of an IEP is a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly activity that requires documentation of progress made by the student toward meeting his or her IEP goals. Due to the individuality of an IEP, each teacher will use different forms and methods of documentation.

Directions: Describe the system your classroom teacher is using to monitor the implementation of the IEP. Provide completed forms with the names blocked out. Answer the following questions and precede each answer with question verbatim.

* How are general education teachers made aware of IEP goals and accommodations?
* How are students’ goals and accommodations tracked in general education?
* How are progress reports (e.g., daily, weekly, end of grading period) used for data collection?
* Who provides the data? What type of summative report incorporates the data?
* What role does the paraprofessional play in monitoring the IEP goals?
* What types of records are kept to aid in documentation (behavior and academic checklists, Progress reports, etc.)?
* Finally, indicate what you would improve or change, and why you would do that.

Communication Home

Artifact D

Making connections with families is an important task for special educators. Reaching out to them with written communication is one strategy. For this activity you will prepare a newsletter. Newsletters typically have several topics and have a simplified text. Lists and bulleted items are common. The goal is to have a reader friendly communication tool.

Directions: Create a one-page newsletter. Include at least the following:

1. Content Heads-Up:
2. Identify some of the content topics or skills the students will be learning.

2. Mention a specific activity or outcome from one of those.

1. Suggestion for an activity to do at home to reinforce ideas presented in class
2. Some suggestions at different reading levels of children’s literature related to an upcoming or current topic

Other ideas include asking for resources such as paper towel cardboard tubes or other supplies for an activity or for the classroom.

Examples of formats will be available in Moodle for your use.

Collaboration

Artifact E

Collaboration with other professionals and families is an important and complex responsibility for special educators. The goal of collaboration is to facilitate joint ownership and responsibility for the learning and management of students with special needs.

Directions: Working with your cooperating teacher, select an area in which you can collaborate with another teacher, a paraprofessional, or a family to address an academic or behavioral issue. After deterring the focus of the collaboration, write a narrative that addresses each area below.

1. Describe the collaborative activity and provide a rationale for selection.
2. Develop a collaborative plan that addresses the following:
   1. Objectives – what do you plan to accomplish
   2. Assessment plan – how will you measure the impact of the collaborative efforts
   3. Proposed activities
   4. Persons involved
   5. Resources needed
3. Describe the impact of the collaboration on the child’s outcomes and identify possible next steps.

Behavior Intervention

Artifact F

The functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and behavior intervention plan (BIP) are basically composed of three steps: collecting data, developing one or more hypotheses of what “functions” the behavior is serving, and selecting strategies to help students meet their needs in more appropriate ways. Careful listening and watching can often reveal what the students, themselves, are unable or unwilling to reveal about why they do not feel safe, nurtured, or affirmed.

Directions: Since completing an actual FBA or BIP would necessitate the district to conduct a re-evaluate of the IEP, candidates are to look at the processes and have discussions with their cooperating teacher about to what extent they can participate in this process. At minimum, you are to do the follow:

* Select a student for observation. (Make sure this student has room for improvement. In your narrative be careful not to use the student’s actual name.)
* State the target behavior in concrete terms. (This should be measurable, observable and specific. Example: Getting out of seat without permission during structured class time. Non-example: off-task)
* Observe the student and keep a record of when the behavior occurs (does it typically happen at certain times of the day, is there a trigger?)
* Discuss with your cooperating teacher your observations and what you would propose as a behavior improvement plan.
* If allowed, implement the behavior improvement plan.

For your portfolio, be sure to include your observations, the target behavior, and your proposed behavior improvement plan. If you were able to implement it, discuss how successful your plan worked and what modifications you might make for the future.

Language Instruction

Artifact G

One of the standards addressed by the Council for Exceptional Children is communication. This standard states that beginning special education teachers will have a knowledge base of language and have a skills base of strategies that can support and enhance communication skills with exceptional learning needs.

Directions: Develop and teach two lessons that give specific attention to writing and/or vocabulary development. Lessons can be a combination of the two areas, one of the areas, or be combined with science, math, social studies, etc. Copies of authentic student work must accompany this artifact.

Outline each lesson that you will teach using the chart below. Lessons should contain a variety of evidence-based research strategies that are developmentally appropriate. For each lesson, identify the learning outcome(s) addressed; describe the specific learner activity or strategy you plan to use, describe the accommodations or modifications that will be used, and describe how you plan to assess student progress on the outcomes. Following each lesson, reflect on the lesson and determine student progress. Identify necessary changes that will increase student progress toward the outcomes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lesson #1 | Learning Outcome(s) Addressed | Instructional Strategy/Activity | Accommodations | Assessments | Reflection |
| Lesson #2 | Learning Outcome(s) Addressed | Instructional Strategy/Activity | Accommodations | Assessments | Reflection |

Paraprofessional In-Service

Artifact H

Paraprofessionals are individuals who assist teachers and others in the provision of services to students with disabilities. They are considered non-certified staff and their responsibilities for making decisions about students are limited. Typically school districts use paraprofessionals to provide individual ongoing assistance to one or more students with special needs in general education classrooms, special education classrooms and other school and community environments. The partnership you form with a paraprofessional will be different that your relationship with other non-certified staff. As the special education teacher you may be responsible for directing and possibly helping to evaluate one or more paraprofessionals.

Directions: Create a 30-minute, hypothetical, in-service for a paraprofessional in your classroom. The in-service area may be academic (how to do a think aloud, questioning strategies for comprehension, etc.) or behavioral (how to give positive reinforcement). The in-service must include the following areas:

* Rationale
  + Clear explanation or description of skill, strategy, or concept
  + Why the paraprofessional needs to know this
* Demonstration
  + How the skill, strategy, or concept is used in realistic situations
  + A description of how you would teach the skill, strategy, or concept that should be used
* Practice
  + Time for the paraprofessional to practice the skill and receive feedback from you (think role play)

Transition Reflection

Artifact I

Our program goal is for candidates to become reflective practitioners. Our own experiences affect how we understand the experiences of others. With this in mind, the following reflection activity uses your own experience as a student as a point of reference to think about the experience of your current students.

Directions: Think about your experience moving from high to college, a job, and/or family. Think about the experience that many of your students with exceptional needs will have. Compare and contrast those experiences by addressing these points:

1. Expectations for success
2. Academic success as a high school student
3. What concerns did you have as a student?
4. Compare and contrast your concerns to those of your students.
5. What meaning or implications for your teaching do you draw from these comparisons?

\*Adapted from Indiana University Southwest’s portfolio for special education.