Dare to Dream

Teaching Students with Disabilities

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STARTALK
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My Story

- New Beginning

- First diagnosed in the 3rd grade

- Self-contained classroom

- Struggled through high school but was able to graduate
My Story

- Found support for my learning disability while a part of a program in college

- Transferred with a 3.5 GPA

- Graduated with honors with a degree in Mathematics

- Now a writer, advocate and entrepreneur
The Big Three

Explaining Disability Law’s Impact on Today’s Students

- IDEA
- Section 504
- ADA
Disability Laws: IDEA

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- First passed in 1975
- Originally known as “Education for All Handicapped Children Act” (PL 94-142)
- Created Special Education in the United States
Disability Laws: IDEA

- “Guaranteed access to a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment to every child with a disability”

- Prior to this law, only 1 in 5 students with disabilities were in public schools

- Documentary on YouTube: “35th Anniversary of IDEA”

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/idea35/index.html
Disability Laws: Section 504

- In 1973 the Rehabilitation Act was passed into federal law.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protects people with disabilities against discrimination.
- Uses language which is similar to that found in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (outlawed discrimination based on race, religion, sex and national origin).
Disability Laws: Section 504

In part, Section 504 states that:

“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...Shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
Disability Laws: ADA

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Passed in 1990
- Comprehensive Antidiscrimination Law
- Provides protection in a variety of settings such as Post-secondary education, employment, and public transportation
Tips for Teachers
Tip #1: Have High Expectations

- As much as 80% of students with disabilities do not have significant cognitive impairments

- They can do the work

- Students with Learning Disabilities (approximately 44% of students with disabilities) have “average to above average intelligence”

- Just need supports
Examples of People with Disabilities

- **Albert Einstein** - Einstein was four years old before he could speak. He failed high school math but went on to be a brilliant physicist who developed the Theory of Relativity.

- **Stephen Hawking** – Theoretical physicist, cosmologist, best selling author and Director of Research at the Center for Theoretical Cosmology at the University of Cambridge.
Examples of People with Disabilities

- **Muhammad Ali** – Did not meet the academic requirements to graduate from high school, was initially rejected from military service due to his impaired spelling and writing, but went on to become the Heavyweight Champion of the World three times

- **Philip Schultz** – Winner of the 2008 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry for “Failure” a collection of his poetry. Also the author of his memoir, “My Dyslexia.”
Examples of People with Disabilities

- **Temple Grandin** – Diagnosed with Autism as a child, she is a renowned consultant on livestock management and animal behavior, a best selling author, and an activist for people with Autism.

- **Charles Schwab** – Failed high school English several times, struggled in foreign language classes, and had trouble taking notes in class. He is the founder, chairman and CEO of Charles Schwab Corporation one of the world’s leading financial service companies.
Tip #2: Read the IEP

- What is an Individualized Education Plan (IEP)?

- Annual meeting and document

- IEP will state the student’s disability (or Eligibility Category)

- The IEP will also state the student’s accommodations, modifications, and supports
Tip #2: Read the IEP

- If you have questions about the IEP, speak with members of the IEP team:
  
  Teacher (General and/or Special Education)
  Guidance Counselor
  School Psychologist
  Other School Staff (Coach, Administrator...)
  Student’s Parents/Guardians
  The Student
Tip #3: Use Accommodations

- What are Accommodations?

- Accommodations are often described as “equalizers” that level the academic playing field so that a person with a disability can perform at the same level as their peers. They can also be what gives a person access to materials and/or environments that would be closed to them without these supports.
Use Accommodations: Common Accommodations

- Provide lecture notes/outline
- Audio recording lectures
- Calculator
- Visual representation, i.e. concept maps, diagrams
- Seat in front of the room or a place with limited distractions
Use Accommodations: Common Accommodations

- Extra time on tests
- Reader for test, or test in an audio format
- Reading partner for test/handouts
- Large print/Braille
- Computer access for word processing programs
Use Accommodations: Things to Consider

- Medication as an accommodation

- There’s an App for that - Mobile technology
  OT with an iPad: [http://otwithanipad.blogspot.com/](http://otwithanipad.blogspot.com/)

- Avoid Modifications of material unless it is the only way for a student to be successful
Learning Styles

Consider all the learners in your classroom:

Visual
Aural/Auditory
Read/Write
Kinesthetic

VARK: A Guide to Learning Styles

• www.vark-learn.com
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Allow students to demonstrate what they have learned in different formats:

- Creating posters
- Video or multimedia
- Giving a presentations

Resource for UDL: www.cast.org
Let’s Talk About Language

How have disability labels evolved over time?

- Crippled
- Handicapped
- Disabled
- Different
Let’s Talk About Language

Some words can be very offensive to people with disabilities:

- “Retarded”
  - “Spread the Word to End the Word” (www.r-word.org)
- Even a word like “Stupid”
- “Wheelchair Bound”
People First Language

Say:                  Instead of:

People with disabilities                      Handicapped/disabled
Cognitive disability                         Mental retardation
Mike has autism                               Mike is autistic
Maria has a mental health condition          Maria is mentally ill
Tyrone communicates with...                  Tyrone is non-verbal

How has Disability Touched You?

- People with disabilities are everywhere – “The largest minority”

- In our families, in our communities, in our schools and in this audience

- Create a safe space in your classroom by telling your students how disability has touched you.
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If you have any questions:

www.lederick.com