

Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities



Standards:

This course aligns to the INTASC Standards including Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Assessment and Planning for Instruction.

It also aligns to the McRel Teacher Evaluation Standards including Teacher Leadership, Diverse Learners, Teachers Know Content and Teachers Facilitate Learning.

The following Learning Forward Professional Learning Standards align: Equity Practices, Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction.

Teaching students with special needs can be both rewarding and challenging, even on the best of days. Students with disabilities have unique requirements, learning preferences, strengths, and social skills. This course explores a range of special needs, how they manifest in the classroom—including neurodevelopmental conditions like ASD and ADHD. Differences in communication for children with such conditions, as well as their common struggles and challenges are discussed.

Teachers are presented with a range of strategies, accommodations, and tools to support these students academically and foster positive relationships with their peers and others. In addition, technology aids and adaptations that can help address and overcome weaknesses and challenges are introduced. The course is rich with practical suggestions, downloadable resources, and demonstration videos that educators can readily incorporate into their teaching methods.



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Quizzes



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Instructional Strategies for Students with Disabilities

Course Outline

Section A: Teaching Students with Special Needs

Lesson 1: Introduction to Special Needs

- What are special needs?
- What are disabilities?
- Types of Special Needs
- Common Struggles

Lesson 2: Teaching Strategies

- Physical Accommodations
- Instructional Strategies
- Academic Accommodations
- Assessment Accommodations

Resources:

- Visual Dictionary (Downloadable template)
- Visual Transition Cues (Downloadable Poster)

Lesson 3: Communication and Collaboration

- Social Competence and Difficulties
- Social Challenges
- Intervention Strategies
- Cooperative and Learning

Resources:

- Feelings' Chart (Downloadable Template)

Lesson 4: Behavior Management

- Special Challenges
- Behavioral Intervention Strategies
- Managing Difficult Behaviors

Resources:

- Student Behavioral Contract (Downloadable Template)
- List of Tangible Rewards (Downloadable Poster)

Activity:

Quiz to assess understanding of course content

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Course Outline

Section B: Understanding ADHD

Lesson 1: Introduction

- Definition of and challenges in ADHD.
- Causes of ADHD. Strengths of students with ADHD.
- Prognosis and treatment of ADHD.

Lesson 2: Core Issues in ADHD

- The brain in ADHD and how the changes in the brain cause deficits.
- Challenges in ADHD and strategies that may be used to overcome these, especially in the areas of attention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.
- Strategies that are useful in working with students with ADHD including instruction sheets, classroom seating, movement breaks and rules.
- Dealing with anger and addictive behavior in students with ADHD.

Lesson 3: Associated Issues in ADHD

- Issues seen in ADHD including issues in organization, motivation and social skills.
How teachers may help students to organize their schoolwork and complete it.
How students with ADHD may be motivated.
- How students with ADHD may be supported so that they build positive friendships in the classroom.

Lesson 4: Accommodations

- Classroom accommodations that can help a student with ADHD to learn and perform well.
- Modified seating and lighting.
- How a classroom schedule and organization can support learning.
- Adapting homework, visual aids and assessments in order to help a child with ADHD cope with the curriculum.

Activity:

Quiz to assess understanding of course content

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Course Outline

Section C: Introduction to Autism

Lesson 1: Overview

- Definition
- Symptoms and other similar conditions
- Therapies
- Labeling neurodevelopmental disorders
- The brain in Autism Spectrum Disorder

Lesson 2: Social Skills in ASD

- Social skills and related challenges.
- Theory of the Mind
- Teaching non-verbal learners
- Verbal processing, echolalia, perseveration, and scripting
- Abstract language, eye contact, empathy, spatial terms, and pronouns

Lesson 3: Expressions of Autism

- Sensory hyposensitivity and hypersensitivity
- Splintered development, perseveration, and stress
- Part-to-whole or whole-to-part thinking
- The lack of social motivation and imagination in children with ASD
- Extraordinary abilities

Lesson 4: ASD in school

- Neurological differences in children with ASD
- Central Coherence Theory
- Classroom physical environment
- Teaching materials and strategies
- Behavior management strategies
- Working with parents and team

Activity:

Quiz to assess understanding of course content