

Special Needs Package (50 Hours)



The courses in this online PD package help teachers gain confidence in integrating and teaching students with special needs in the classroom. The package includes tools to help teachers make classroom adaptations, modify lesson plans, tests and assignments, and communicate effectively with students who have special needs.

The Special Needs Package includes 10 self-study courses (5 hours each) for a total of 50 hours of professional development.

- Accommodating All Learners
- Accommodations through UDL
- Assistive Communication for Every Classroom
- Cognitive Skills - Understanding Learning Challenges
- Differentiation for Gifted Learners in the Classroom
- IEPs: Documentation and Implementation for Teachers
- Introduction to Autism
- Teaching Students with Special Needs
- Understanding ADHD
- Writing and Dyslexia: Overcoming Challenges

Accommodating All Learners



Standards:

This course aligns to all of the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

Reach and teach all learners by examining 21st century student and educator strengths in this research-based course packed with strategies, resources, and tools. Participants will gain insight into both their own learning and teaching preferences as well as the learning styles of students.

Closely aligned with national standards and pedagogical goals, this course addresses accommodation, modification, and adaptation of curriculum, materials, and instruction to appropriately meet the needs of varied students in achieving graduation standards (i.e., differentiated instruction).



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Accommodating All Learners

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Every Learner Learning

- Teaching and learning
- Accommodating all learners
- About the brain
- Introduction to learning styles
- Teacher as a learner
- The Paragon Learning Style Inventory (PLSI)

LESSON 2: Who Are Our Students? Teaching Across Types

- Characteristics of today's youth
- Aspects of physical and cognitive access to the general curriculum
- Academic learning styles and students' skill development as it aligns with age
- The concept of perception and differences in perception
- How to build a win-win pedagogy based on the 5 principles
- Strategies to employ when the teacher's learning style conflicts with students' styles
- Thinking styles

LESSON 3: Technology

- Media as a flexible tool to reach all learners
- Recent research on technology and traditional models of delivery
- Traditional media versus digital media
- Digital media and how it can be used to customize materials and methods
- Technology timeline

LESSON 4: Theories and Strategies

- Components of multiple intelligences
- Activities to develop each type of intelligence
- Bloom's taxonomy, differentiated instruction, and informal learning
- Hemisphericity and activities that can stimulate both left and right sides of the brain
- The 4-quadrant model



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Accommodations through UDL



Standards:

This course aligns to all of the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

Teaching each and every student effectively is never easy. Teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching a diverse group the same lesson and ensuring that they all learn in the process.

This course is designed to present teachers with the Universal Design of Learning (UDL) framework, which builds on research that shows how a single teaching approach has very limited results on student learning, highlighting the need for a new curricular approach.

This course is centered around exploring practical strategies that can be used to add a much needed element of flexibility in teaching presentation, student expression, and meaningful engagement.



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Accommodations through UDL

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Basics of UDL (Universal Design of Learning)

- The meaning and need for UDL to meet both teacher and student needs
- Designing comprehensive curriculum and effective assessments
- The basic principles of UDL and their implementation
- Using UDL to meet the varied needs of students by differentiated instruction

LESSON 2: Flexible Methods of Presentation

- Possible barriers to optimal student learning and strategies to overcome them
- Audio-visual and textual strategies of providing multiple options for perception
- Using variety in language, mathematical expressions, and symbols
- Essential strategies in ensuring successful comprehension, maximum transfer, and generalization of learning

LESSON 3: Flexible Methods of Expression

- Effective strategies to successfully engage and challenge students
- Ensuring that the expected physical engagement with the learning environment does not pose barriers for differently-abled students
- Offering alternatives for students to express themselves
- Using the UDL framework to scaffold the skills needed to demonstrate students' executive functioning

LESSON 4: Flexible Options for Engagement

- Providing multiple opportunities so all students are engaged in the classroom
- Strategies to create a positive classroom environment
- Ensuring that the primary goal is enhanced student learning, but eliminating distractions and irrelevant activities
- Promoting students' self-regulation by teaching them personal coping skills, self-assessment, and reflection techniques



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Assistive Communication for Every Classroom



Standards:

This course aligns to the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content and Planning for Instruction.

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

Students with disabilities face many communication challenges. Combined with possible physical and cognitive disabilities, learning can be compromised. As teachers, it is important to help students with disabilities overcome difficulties to attain and maximize potential in the classroom.

In this course, teachers are introduced to available assistive communication techniques and tools. Teachers gain an understanding of high-tech and low-tech assistive devices and learn how to incorporate them into a classroom. The tools, strategies, and templates provided in this course help teachers create an inclusive classroom and positive learning environment for students with disabilities.



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Assistive Communication for Every Classroom

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Introduction to Assistive Communication

- Defining Assistive Communication and exploring its benefits and function
- Identifying the laws advocating for and supporting the use of Assistive Technology
- Understanding Assistive Communication, its purpose, and the three types of Assistive Communication devices used in the classroom
- Identifying the four categories of Assistive Communication Technologies

LESSON 2: Low-Tech Strategies for Communication

- Exploring the six phases of the Picture Exchange Communication System method and its application
- Understanding American Sign Language and its use in the classroom
- Practical application of the Picture Exchange Communication board and Topic rings/wallets in the classroom
- Identifying the four main types of Communication cards effective in the classroom

LESSON 3: High-Tech Strategies for Communication

- Exploring the different high-tech strategies and their uses for improving communication and learning in the classroom
- Computer modifications and adaptations enabling students with disabilities to achieve academic excellence
- Practical application of the devices with regard to Physical, Visual, Communication and Learning disabilities
- Identifying the smartphone applications that can enable communication

LESSON 4: Implementing Assistive and Alternative Communication in Classrooms

- Understanding the role of the teacher and the Assistive Communication team with regard to Assistive and Alternative communication
- Exploring the process of implementation and classroom observations of Assistive and Alternative Communication in the classrooms
- Defining the Multi-modal approach to communication and the three Levels of communication
- Exploring the strategies aiding and facilitating communication, group work, assessment, and homework



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Cognitive Skills - Understanding Learning Challenges



Standards:

This course aligns to all of the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

The U.S. Department of Education and others indicate that weak cognitive skills are the source of over 80% of learning problems.

Students approach each task with varying learning tools, called cognitive skills, and these skills determine the quality, speed, and ease with which individuals learn and perform.

This course provides methods for detecting students with weak cognitive skills and tools to strengthen those skills. Teachers will receive understanding, as well as ways to apply development techniques in the classroom. This fun and interactive course includes information about new brain research and how it can impact today's classrooms.



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Cognitive Skills - Understanding Learning Challenges

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Introduction

- Unlocking your students' complete learning potential
- The prevalence of learning challenges and the need for effective special education
- The crucial role of teachers and schools in maximizing educational impact
- The importance of cognitive skills for successful living

LESSON 2: Testing

- How tests are administered and interpreted
- The two main types of tests and their different goals
- The role of IQ scores and phonemic awareness
- Common contemporary approaches to diagnosed learning issues and the significance of cognitive skills in making a lasting impact on students' learning

LESSON 3: Cognitive Skills

- Understanding the nature of student learning and the role cognitive skills play in it
- Identifying and accurately assessing cognitive weaknesses
- The features and significance of specific cognitive skills
- The inter-connected nature of skills and specific abilities closely associated with cognitive growth

LESSON 4: The Brain

- Contemporary research on the functioning of the brain
- The role and nature of attention and memory in the learning process
- Understanding dyslexia and effective approaches to it
- The significance of parental involvement and the need for practice

LESSON 5: Effective Training

- The role of the brain in laying essential foundations for learning
- Specific methods to build and strengthen cognitive skills
- The need for effective cognitive training to be non-academic in nature



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Differentiation for Gifted Learners in the Classroom



Standards:

This course aligns to all of the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

This course examines some of the challenges facing gifted learners and offers easily implemented accommodations and success strategies. By understanding the unique learning needs of children who are considered “gifted,” participants will indirectly meet the individual needs of all learners.

Through this course, educators and parents can make greater sense of gifted and talented education by learning about identification, instruction, and assessment. Teachers will also explore related topics, issues, and resources geared towards our gifted population.



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Differentiation for Gifted Learners in the Classroom

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Characteristics

- Who gifted learners are
- Types of gifted learners, including academic, linguistic, and artistic learners
- Qualities of gifted learners

LESSON 2: Personal, Social and Cognitive Needs

- The personal, social and intellectual needs of gifted learners
- Differentiation and how it can be implemented, including aspects process and assessment
- Independent learning and curriculum compacting for gifted learners

LESSON 3: Special Populations

- Twice exceptional students and how they require additional support
- Indicators of twice exceptionality and strategies that can be used to teach this special population

LESSON 4: Practical Strategies

- Several practical strategies that can be used while working with gifted learners and special populations
- Pre-assessment in teaching gifted learners
- Strategies such as H.O.T.S, Morning Minute, Learning contracts and tiered instruction



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IEPs: Documentation and Implementation for Teachers



Standards:

This course aligns to the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

The goal of this course is to help teachers get comfortable with and understand the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Through rich examples and templates, teachers learn to understand and incorporate recommended IEP strategies in a classroom setting.

Through developing, aligning with, and carrying out the IEP, teachers can provide children with an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

Teachers will examine various supports and services a student with special needs may receive for instruction and testing, explore regulations and requirements, and develop a collaborative team to improve education for children with special needs.



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IEPs: Documentation and Implementation for Teachers

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Introduction

- Research
- Common special education terms
- Understanding IDEA and IEP
- Understanding Section 504
- The special education process

LESSON 2: The IEP Team

- Setting up the IEP team
- Roles and responsibilities of IEP team members and the IEP team process
- Typical IEP meeting
- Preparing for an IEP meeting

LESSON 3: Developing a Standards-based IEP

- Components of a standards-based IEP
- Standards-based annual goals and post-secondary goals
- Student assessment and progress
- Identifying special education services
- Year-end evaluations

LESSON 4: Translating IEP goals

- Models of school-based interventions
- Classroom accommodations and modifications
- Barriers to effective use of accommodations
- General types of accommodations
- Effective teaching strategies/instructional accommodations
- Testing, timing, and grading accommodations



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Introduction to Autism



Standards:

This course aligns to the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Application of Content, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

Most of us know someone with autism. This neurodevelopmental condition impacts a student's ability to communicate, form social skills, and manage sensory challenges. Autism often affects a student's academic potential and learning style in the classroom. A person with autism may experience a unique way of thinking, remembering events, reacting, and communicating.

In this course, educators will find tried and tested strategies, tips, real-life examples, and insights to create more inclusive classrooms and help students on the autism spectrum thrive.



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Introduction to Autism

Course Outline

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



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Teaching Students with Special Needs



Standards:

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

Create nurturing, safe and diverse learning environments that enable every child to thrive.

Special needs encompass a range of conditions and challenges that affect a child's academic performance. Students with special needs may need assistance in learning, movement, and/or communication. Learn how to support all students' varying capacities and capabilities regardless of their unique requirements or obstacles.

This course delves into many kinds of special needs, their manifestations in the classroom, and includes an abundance of strategies from communication and academic to behavioral approaches — along with demo videos, tools, and downloadable resources that help children on their learning journey.



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Teaching Students with Special Needs

Course Outline

Lesson 1: Introduction

- 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

Lesson 3: Communication and Collaboration

- Social competence and difficulties
- Social challenges
- Intervention strategies
- Cooperative and learning

Lesson 4: Behavior Management

- Special challenges
- Behavioral intervention strategies
- Managing difficult behaviors



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Understanding ADHD



Standards:

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

Have you ever come across a child who's always on the move? They might have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Children with this condition are restless, impulsive, and have a very short attention span.

These energetic students can often disrupt a classroom. This course provides a variety of tips, adaptations, and strategies for teaching students with ADHD and other students who are energetic, hyperactive, or have difficulty paying attention.

You will learn about classroom modifications and adaptations that can help maintain order in the classroom and discover methods for communicating more clearly with special educators and parents.



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Understanding ADHD

Course Outline

LESSON 1: Introduction

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

LESSON 2: Core Issues in ADHD

- The ADHD brain and how the changes in the brain cause deficits
- Challenges in ADHD and strategies that may be used to overcome them, 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 to motivate students with ADHD
- How to support students with ADHD so they can build positive friendships

LESSON 4: Accommodations

- Classroom accommodations that can help a student with ADHD 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



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Writing and Dyslexia: Overcoming Challenges



Standards:

This course aligns all of the INTASC Standards including Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environments, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Planning for Instruction and Instructional Strategies.

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

Reading and writing are crucial aspects of student learning and critical life skills. Teaching students to read and write can be layered and challenging, especially since individual learners require teachers to adapt a range of teaching methodologies and approaches.

This course explores how writing challenges in the classroom may show up, including learning conditions (such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyspraxia) that may make it difficult for children to read and write, and a variety of teaching and evaluation strategies that can help all children — regardless of their level — to become competent readers and writers. An incredibly useful resource for teachers everywhere, this course is an invaluable tool for mastery of the art, craft, and science of writing.



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Writing and Dyslexia: Overcoming Challenges

Course Outline

Lesson 1: Writing Challenges

- The importance of writing
- Dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia: symptoms and diagnosis
- Decoding and encoding challenges
- Handwriting and other writing challenges

Lesson 2: Transcription Challenges

- Spelling
- Morphology
- Phonics
- Keyboarding

Lesson 3: Cognitive Functions in Writing

- Writing challenges
- Memory, attention, and concentration
- Sequencing, planning, and organization
- Strategies to improve writing

Lesson 4: Sharpening Writing Skills

- Pre-writing
- Initial draft
- Revising
- Assessment



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