

An Inclusive Web: Cyber-training Regular & Special Educators

Trinka Messenheimer & Sean J. Smith, Bowling Green State University, USA

This presentation seeks to illustrate an on-line project that supports an undergraduate and graduate Exceptional Learner course (required for all pre-service regular and special education students). The web-enhanced course that we have developed offers a general introduction to the characteristics of exceptional learners and their education. The course, Exceptional Learners (i.e., introduction to special education), is dedicated to providing a general exposure to the characteristics of individuals with special needs, as well as instructional modifications and behavioral management techniques that can be employed to assist individuals in the regular education environment. It is the intent of this course that participants will become more comfortable in the identification and educational requirements of students with special needs. Because legislation and subsequent litigation, related to the education of children and youths with disabilities has become increasingly specific and mandatory, this course also reviews relevant special education law and how it applies to the education of students with special needs.

We selected this course because of the direct application to a wide audience of preservice special and regular education teachers. Traditionally, this course has been a requirement for all pre-service teacher educators in our teacher education programs, (e.g., elementary, secondary, and special education) and for many individuals preparing for careers in related education professions (e. g., school psychology, communication disorders). A major goal of this project was to create a resource that would be applicable to teacher education needs beyond the confines of Bowling Green State University and University of Toledo.

The on-line project that we have developed as an introduction to special education involves three web-based components. The first, titled Course Basics, includes a section dedicated to course basics found in a typical teacher preparation course (i.e., course syllabus, readings). The second, Assignments, incorporates web applications enhancing traditional instruction, offers access to relevant special education materials, and incorporates a number of on-line library resources and related Internet applications. The final section features Web-based Case Studies which seek to combine theory with practice in an interactive manner.