Small Group Discussion Question:

Rock et al., describes three salient challenges within special education: special educator workload, role ambiguity, and evaluation. What challenges do general educators face with respect to these issues? Which is/are most salient to general educators? Why?

Consider these modern dilemmas in special education as you discuss the salient challenges of both special and general educators:

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<th>Dilemma</th>
<th>Examples &amp; Explanations</th>
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| Special Education Teacher Workload | • Have the "knowledge, skills, and dispositions" to efficaciously teach core academic subjects that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for their students;  
• Have knowledge of federal, state, and local policy;  
• Have knowledge of implementation of these policies;  
• Employ evidenced-based practices (EBPs);  
• Know how to effectively assess in order to assist in determining student eligibility for special education services;  
• Write individualized education plans (IEPs) that include goals and objectives that are specific to individual students;  
• Conduct and support progress monitoring of students throughout the academic year;  
• Consult and collaborate with related service providers, general educators, administrators, families, local and state agencies;  
• Stay up to date on evidenced-based practices, differentiation and assistive technology;  
• Understand how various disabilities are manifested in the school environment;  
• Facilitate transition services for students that are exiting secondary school into work and/or collegiate environments. |
| Special Education Teacher Role Ambiguity | Special educators teach in a variety of settings that range from special schools (that cater to only students with specific disabilities) to general education classrooms (which are considered the least restrictive environment). They also collaborate with general educators in a variety of models, such as, co-teaching, team teaching, and facilitation. Special educators also supervise paraeducators and provide direct instruction to students across a range of disabilities and grade levels in both academic and non-academic subjects. |
| Special Education Teacher Evaluation | In some states, standardized testing is weighted as much as 50% of teachers’ yearly evaluations. These evaluations do not take into consideration that students with disabilities require specialized instruction as a result of lower academic performance in relation to their peers. Special educators often work with students that are homeless, have attendance problems, and experience challenges at home. Special educators are provoked to leave the profession because of the pressure to raise standardized test scores to the detriment of other important goals, which also prevents talented professionals from pursuing this field. |