



# EXPLORING APPROACHES TO PRESERVICE SPECIAL & GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION

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# TODAY'S AGENDA

- 12:10 –12:20 *Welcome & Historical Background/  
Current Challenges in Special Education*
- 12:20 –12:35 *Small Group Activity*
- 12:35 –12:50 *Whole Group Discussion*
- 12:50 –12:55 *Debrief*

# LET'S BEGIN WITH THESE QUESTIONS IN MIND

- 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?
- How can we infuse knowledge of special education into our general education programming?
  - What do our candidates need to know and do?
  - Where in our program can we create opportunities for our candidates to learn about how to best support students with disabilities



# A BRIEF HISTORY.



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# Categorical Era

## **(1800s) Sequin, Gallaudet, Itard**

Categorization of students with various disabilities were based on research of the deaf/blind/MR.

## **(1958) Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act**

Provided support to develop leadership preparation for special educators by colleges and universities.

**(1972)**

## **Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

No state can deny education to a child with a disability on the determination that he/she is uneducable or not toilet trained..

## **(1954) Brown v. Board of Education**

“Separate but equal” is ruled unconstitutional setting a precedent that allowed for parents to fight against segregation for children with disabilities.

## **(1970s) Bureau of Education for the Handicapped**

increased funding to prepare teachers to teach students with specific disabilities.

## **(1975) Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142)**

Due Process, protection against discriminatory testing during assessment, LRE, IEPs

# CATEGORIAL ERA

## Research & Teaching

During this time effective special education teaching was defined by a teacher's ability to accurately diagnose deficits, and prescribing, implementing and assessing appropriate interventions.

- **Disability as an organic disorder** (physiological or structural change in an organ) - based on the logic that is the process contributing to an impairment be identified, teachers can use specific interventions to address deficits.
- **Diagnostic-prescriptive teaching** - assessment of perceptual motor or psycholinguistic abilities; instruction was designed to address deficits or capitalize on student strengths.

# NONCATEGORICAL ERA

Research & Teaching  
(1970s-80s)

Effective teaching during this era was teacher-directed, efficiently paced, and included multiple opportunities for student involvement.

- **Behavioral and process-product research** gained momentum producing an extensive repertoire of effective strategies for special educators.
- Teacher education became more **competency-based**.



# NONCATEGORICAL ERA

Research & Teaching  
(1970s-1980s)

During this era effective teaching required that teachers have mastery of general instructional and classroom management strategies.

- Teacher shortages led to **noncategorical licensure**.
- Teachers were assigned students of **various disability classifications**.
- **Curriculum-based measurement**, adjustment in instruction was based on student performance data that was frequently collected.
- **Direct Instruction Curriculum**  
- curriculum was designed to assist all students in areas of difficulty regardless of disability; scripted.

# INTEGRATED ERA

Research & Teaching  
(1990s-Present)

What is considered  
effective teaching during  
the integrated era?

- **Students with disabilities are placed in general education classrooms;** research revealed that separate class placement did not improve students with MR but RR were more effective for LD students than both general and separate placements; much debate around these findings.
- Debate between those in favor of **full inclusion** (dead end for students of color placed in special education) and those in favor of **continuum of services** (gen ed unmotivated and unprepared; students needs first).
- Also found that general educators paid **little attention to learning differences and rarely adapted instruction.**

# MODERN DILEMMAS.



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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;

## SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER WORKLOAD

- **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.

**APPLYING OUR  
COMBINED  
EXPERTISE.**



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# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

**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?**

# WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION

- **How can we infuse knowledge of special education into our general education programming?**
  - What do our candidates need to know and do?
  - Where in our program can we create opportunities for our candidates to learn about how to best support students with disabilities?



# SUMMARY & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS.



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For Extended  
Discussion

# POTENTIAL FRAMEWORKS



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# RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

## ■ Tier 1

- High quality instruction in the general education environment.
- General educators are expected to have knowledge of evidence-based practices, implementation, and curriculum-based measurement.

## ■ Tier 2

- Special educators must have a deep understanding of general education curriculum and collaborate and engage in 'multidisciplinary planning' with general educators.

## ■ Tier 3

- Special educators need knowledge of instructional interventions, technology, assessment for high-risk learners. Ability to assist students with intensive instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics. Integrate domain specific knowledge with their knowledge of intensive interventions and assessments.

**21ST CENTURY  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
MODELS**

- **Driver 1: Digital Revolution**
- **Driver 2: The Diversity Gap**
- **Driver 3: The Credibility Factor**
- **Driver 4: The Demand for Collective Impact**
- **Driver 5: The Culture of We**