

## **Reflection Questions**

1. *What was an eye-opener or what stood-out in the readings and assignments? Why?*

I learned in chapter eight, about the varying disorders regarding speech and language acquisition. This was the first time that I had heard about the issue of apraxia. This is a motor disorder that affects the way that students are able to speak. The listener can get a sense of the sound that the student is trying to make, however the sound is distorted. It happens because the child has trauma such as a stroke, tumor or head injury. I believe that it stood out to me, because at first, I could not initially tell that there was a problem when I watched this [video regarding apraxia](#). She was so young, I thought that she seemed pretty normal. So I wonder how to tell the ones that have apraxia and the ones that don't (if the issue is not related to a trauma injury, then what is the speech deficiency called?). Is it simply a speech impairment? Or is it that they simply need time to grow and learn "how to" speak more accurately because they are simply young. My concern is over-diagnosis. That perhaps a whole generation of kids are being labeled with issues that I simply don't believe they do have. I think oftentimes kids need time to learn.

2. *What have you learned about yourself as a life-long-learner from the reading and assignments?*

I have figured out that in general, I look at life very differently from most people. I often push away the status quo as far as conceptual understanding in the public school system. I can see that our kids are being told that they are failing. It makes them struggle even more. This makes me sad. I would like for the entire system to

change. Some reconstruction needs to take place in the mindsets of both the administrators, teachers, professional speech pathologists and students alike.

3. *How will your faith impact your work in the classroom?*

I believe that there is power in our words. Simply, as the Bible states, "There is life and death in the tongue." I once heard a study done about two plants. One plant was given everything exactly the same as the other. In the science experiment, they were given the same amount of sunlight. They were given the same amount of water. They were given the same amount of soil nutrients. They were given the same temperatures. The only difference between the two plants is that one plant was told each day how beautiful and lovely it was! The scientists *spoke* a blessing over the plant each and every day for months. This plant did as expected, it thrived and grew bright, lively and brilliant. The second plant was given the opposite scenario. The scientist spoke curses over it. Daily it was told how ugly and unbeguilding it was. With all of these negative projections from the words of the scientists, the plant withered and died within weeks. It could not make it, because of the curses spoken over it. This is a faith sharing experiment that I would like to share with my class, so that they understand the power of words.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *Why is it important to understand your own biases, assumptions, and values regarding diversity and students with disabilities?*

Each person is unique and important in the eyes of God. Each child, student, parent, aid, and educator have value, significance and meaning. I believe that being able to

confront our beliefs directly (from the beginning) will help us to steward our classroom better. It's good to know what we believe and what we stand for. It's also good to hear out and listen to the other participants. Each person sees differently. Knowing one another's perspective and having a safe environment to be able to share is important. People need to be able to adjust their actions towards others that behave, believe or act differently than they do. It's important to go in with a mindset that you are there to serve in any capacity that you can; and that you are there, as an educator, to build trust of relationship and dignity with the student as well as parents and family.

2. *What was an eye-opener or what stood-out in the readings and assignments? Why?*

I really enjoyed hearing about the dignity that is inherently critical to carrying out special education practices. It was encouraging to read a textbook that emphasizes the purpose, honor and dignity that each person carries. This definitely stood out and caught my attention. They stated that being people centered, rather than project centered is the goal in special education. At an IEP meeting, the educator is there to make the parents feel welcome, encouraged and supported in their child's education. They need the ability to have a safe environment where they can share their perspective, concerns and successes about their child's education.

3. *How will your faith impact your work in the classroom?*

My faith drives my intentions, my motivations, my will and my mindset. I plan on going in each day with a mindset of being there to serve. I'm there to help students progress and gain information knowledge, as well as experiential life skills. I'm there to be a listening ear when they have concerns. I'm there to enjoy educating them as well as gain insight on areas of development in my professional career. Students are wonderfully and fearfully made. Each student was knit together in the womb by God himself. I plan on treating these very same students with the utmost dignity, honor, compassion and forthright honesty that I would treat anyone else. I'm there to

encourage them, build them up and help them progress further in their education, as well as their life goals and aspirations!

### **Reflection Questions - Week 2**

1. *What was an eye-opener or what stood-out in the readings and assignments? Why?*

I really like the phrase, "Plan with the end in mind." When speaking about Universal Design for Learning, I think it's important to create goals where students will be responsive in a positive classroom learning environment. They should be allowed to engage, interact, and problem solve in order to further their comprehension. It's important to discover different strategies with the end goal in mind. I so appreciate the book, speaking about long term and short term goals. Goals give direction and help the students to feel more confident in their abilities to learn the content. UDL is an excellent, research-based framework that provides explicit instruction. It's important to tell students the daily short term goals, as well as the long term goals that you have in mind. It's also important to give them those step-by-step instructional values in order to get them to cooperate with the material and be responsive.

2. *What have you learned about yourself as a life-long-learner from the reading and assignments?*

I have figured out (through the reading of this text) that I enjoy learning "how to" teach. I enjoy thinking about the short and long term goals that I can set. It gives me perspective and vision for my classroom. It brings stability if you (as a teacher/educator) are continually growing in your understanding and in your

discipline. I also appreciate the character development attributes in the classroom setting. It's good to keep students reminded of the simple things (like the golden rule) or how to be a good friend. Behavioral development is a huge part of guiding the student to a successful education. It's important to note how to interact with students and how to work with students that have varying dispositions, and disabilities. The book helped me to understand the psychological implications of mental, social and physical disorders.

3. *How will your faith impact your work in the classroom?*

I plan on being like Jesus was. If he saw an issue, he prayed for them. So my goal is to bring my faith into the classroom. If a student is having trouble with something, I will do my best to pray for them. In addition to this, I will find books that deal with character development with faith based elements to encourage my students. There are some good books out there (like the Berenstain Bears, Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University Junior or Ellie Holcomb's new books like *Who Sang The First Song?*) that will encourage students to do what's right when they are faced with a choice. Focus on the Family provides some good books in addition that would be beneficial to teaching kids lessons about being a good friend, honoring others with dignity, holding fast to their hope, and being a good steward of what they have been given. It's important to portray culturally relevant books in the classroom, that will give students a light attitude and hopeful demeanor.

## **Reflection Questions**

### *1. Why should writing an IEP be a collaborative effort?*

Writing an IEP for a student needs to be a collaborative effort so that all of the specific areas of need and improvement can be addressed. Each team member has a specialization of study, in which they can bring their unique view of expertise into the evaluation of the student. This allows a whole picture to be brought forth, so that the student gets the proper accommodations and solutions to their learning engagement. Examples of such team members are speech pathologist, occupational therapists, linguist, general education teachers as well as special education teachers. It's really important to implement a plan for the student that will excel them in their studies and personal furtherance. Goals need to be clearly defined, designed, implemented and achieved through the team.

### *2. What was an eye-opener or what stood-out in the readings this week? Why?*

The bullet points on page 307 of the textbook stuck out to me significantly. They are encouraging key points to keep in mind as a teacher. Some of the key bullet points that I enjoyed the most were:

- Be passionate about teaching
- Keep learning.
- Differentiate
- Think Outside The Box. Use my Imagination. Work hard.
- Be patient. It takes time to get results.
- Have high expectations for your students, for all of them.

- Put the research into your classroom. Use UDL.

It's important to note that we are in a group or team of professionals to assist the students with whatever their need is. It's also good to keep in mind these important points, to help the positive classroom environment "moving forward" in a beneficial direction.

3. *What scripture, parable, or bible character comes to mind from this week's readings and why?*

Acts 2 is what comes to mind from this week's readings. There was a group of believers gathered together and they were a team. When there was anyone in the group that had a need, then people would sell their homes or their items, in order to give to the one that had need. There was an extension of kindness upon everyone. They all wanted to help and have "helping hands." This is how I want my classroom environment to be. I want it to look like a community of believers that care about one another, that speak truthfully to one another and want to share good news with each other. It should be a bedrock in order to maintain a supportive environment.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *What is your greatest take-away from your differentiation project?*

My greatest take-away was the process of creating the differentiation PowerPoint. While searching for resources of visual images and video content, I was able to watch a number of videos regarding differentiation from Eudotopia. This equipped me with having a more clear perspective on differentiation from the viewpoint of educators and principals. This helped me to see a model for a good template to

follow. They had some good ideas of center rotations, and assessment strategies. It was both informational and enlightening.

2. *Is there anything about differentiation instruction that you do not understand?*

I don't think anyone can fully understand the implications of the best pathway to teach students of various dispositions. Each individual is so unique and so distinct in their interests and abilities that it's hard to target a correct and proper instruction strategy for each individual. I honestly don't even see how this is even possible! How are we to teach 20 + students with each student being capable of so much, yet having a distinct and unique style of learning. Quite honestly, it feels like an impossible task. Haha! But anyways, I'm up for the challenge!

3. *What biases or assumptions have surfaced so far that you are working to overcome? (optional) You may opt out of writing your answer but chose to think on privately.*

My assumptions are that I have a great insufficiency in being able to teach (in and of myself). I know that I would have to go in each day with a "game plan" and template on what to teach my students. I know already that if I am lost, they are going to get lost. So I guess, the hardest idea for me, is how am I going to accomplish all this? In theory, learning all of these strategies is nice, but actually implementing these strategies (on a daily basis, I might add) is a different matter entirely! There are so many children in the classroom, and I recognize that each student is precious. How do you manage a human soul? And not just one...but 20 or more of them? Whew...that's a conviction if there ever was one! I'm supposed to be leading these kids. What does that look like?



## **Reflection Questions**

1. *What was an eye-opener or what stood-out in the readings and research? Why?*

What stood out in the readings to me was about how gifted students become gifted by both biological and environmental factors. As I think about my own life, I was placed in the gifted program at school when I was in first grade. I remember sitting at the desk to take the test that got me into the program. I remember thinking over the questions about multiplication and addition. I remember thinking  $0 \times 6 = \underline{\quad}$  - zero done six times, is  $0 + 0 + 0 + 0 + 0 + 0$  - so it must be zero. I remember correcting my answers and This one event changed the trajectory of my entire schooling experience. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to be in the program, because it meant that I was surrounded by other kind, intelligent and creative students. I enjoyed being in my classes and the work seemed like fun! School was more of a pleasure for me, and I believe that this is due to the fact that the community that I was surrounded by- constantly made that difference. I was around other supportive and encouraging people most of the time. The teachers always gave us freedom to work, but they all made sure that we were persistent and diligent in our labor. So I learned how to work hard, and be creative from the program as well as feel accepted in all my classes. It was truly a joy!

All that to say, this chapter brought me back to some sweet memories and times. The environmental factors of being around my parents at home (who also taught me) is also a critical factor. My dad was my soccer coach in a competitive traveling league for all my years up till high school. So I had his support and

encouragement as well as structure to help me excel in my endeavors. Having a positive, safe environment like that - helped me to build my confidence and train me in the ways of life. So I agree with the book that both biological factors and environmental factors are significant causes of gifted students' success.

2. *How will you use this toolbox as a resource?*

This toolbox will help me to recover factual information regarding student disabilities as well help me to have resources to be able to provide supplemental materials for both students and student's families. I'm especially excited about the books that pertain to specific disabilities. For example, visual impairments are addressed in the book [Lucy's Picture](#) by Nicola Moon for elementary school aged kids. Books such as these will bring awareness to students about other children in their class, and hopefully help them to empathize and have compassion on student's of disabilities. There are some really helpful resources and materials that will benefit both the educator, the student's, the IEP team and the parents of students.

3. *With all that's going on in our world and the field of education, what do you think God is showing you as an inspiring teacher? What is he calling you to do?*

God is showing me that it's important to be honest and forthright with students about what I believe. I am not ashamed of the gospel of God, because it is the power of God at work within me. It's my joy to work with students and help them in their academics as well as life skills, career choice and character development. It's important for me to remember that the reason behind all of my endeavors in teaching is to glorify God by caring for (with the love of Christ) every student that

walks through the door to my classroom. The love of God can impact every heart in our classroom.

### **Reflection Questions**

1. *What is your biggest take away from this course?*

This course has encouraged me to think about students with disabilities with a gracious and dignified mindset. I was able to learn the vocabulary and the terminologies to be able to successfully teach special education as well as to pass the upcoming Praxis Examination. It was a good preparatory course to become a licensed professional in teaching special education. I also highly appreciate and value that I can reflect upon how I choose to bring my faith into the school classroom environment. This course has empowered me to think about what I teach, how I teach it, and in what attitude it's being taught in. My goal is to serve my students with tenderness, kindness and compassion as Christ himself would.

2. *What impact or impression would you like to leave with your students?*

I would like for each and every student to walk away with the impression that I care about them. I want them to feel valuable and appreciated, accepted and received. I'm simply here to help guide them in their learning and to give them direction and responsive feedback. I would also like them to form good quality relationships with their peers alongside having a safe environment in which to work on schoolwork. I would like for each of my student's to have met their IEP goals and graduate with honor.

3. *What specific strategies from this course will you take into your special education classes?*

Some specific strategies that I will take because of the application from this course, are seating preferences for students with various disabilities. Students with ADHD should have a quiet, separate location to work on project objectives and assessments. Students with absence seizures and visual impairments should be seated in close proximity to the teacher. In addition, I will help students with multiple disabilities by using large print text and graphic organizers to convey information. I'll also use lots of hands-on activities to help students understand educational principles. I also plan on using providing students immediate feedback, as well as allow them the use of assistive technologies.

