

Revised Personal Philosophy Statement – SPED 898 Masters Project

Artifact #1

Personal Philosophy Statement: Meaning of Collaboration in Special Education

SPED 854: Family and Interpersonal Collaboration in Special Education

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SPED 898: Masters Project

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Personal Philosophy Statement: The Meaning of Collaboration in Special Education

Special education is an evolving field, and my philosophy reflects its dynamic nature. It is woven together from my years as a general education early childhood teacher, my studies in early childhood education, my graduate school learning, and my core values and beliefs. I strive for a perspective that is as fluid and adaptive as the field itself, evolving to meet the needs of all students.

Philosophy of Special Education

Every child is unique, with diverse needs and abilities. My goal is to ensure that every student receives a flexible, accessible, and meaningful education that addresses both their immediate and future needs. With the right support and instruction, all students can succeed, regardless of their limitations.

I believe in fostering an inclusive environment where students with special needs are educated in the least restrictive environment suited to their growth. This approach promotes equal participation, belonging, and interaction, fostering a sense of acceptance, value, and safety for every student.

Cultural Responsiveness in Collaboration

Culturally responsive and effective collaboration forms the foundation of a positive school environment. Parents, teachers, therapists, administrators, and students all play critical roles in ensuring students with disabilities have equal access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

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Inclusivity is central to my philosophy of collaboration. I believe that every voice matters in the decision-making process, particularly those of students and families. Collaborative processes must empower all stakeholders, including students, through active decision-making, active listening, perspective-taking, and sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal communication that honors individual strengths, challenges, and preferences.

By creating intentional opportunities for all stakeholders to contribute their insights and expertise, we co-develop strategies that are equitable, culturally relevant, and meaningful ensuring that they feel valued and empowered. Parents are invaluable partners in identifying strategies that honor their children's strengths, challenges, and cultural values. By reflecting critically on my own practices and striving to enhance my cultural competence, I will build relationships of trust, respect, and equity by understanding the cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic contexts of students and their families.

Adaptability to Diverse Needs

Adaptability lies at the heart of my collaboration philosophy. Collaboration must be flexible to reflect the evolving needs of students, families, and the broader school community. Through ongoing reflection and responsiveness, I ensure that our collective efforts remain effective and relevant.

Whether employing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, implementing co-teaching models, fostering interdisciplinary teamwork, or developing personalized support plans, flexibility ensures that each student receives the resources and opportunities they need to thrive. This approach recognizes collaboration as a dynamic, evolving process that requires continual refinement and innovation.

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The Role of Technology, Assistive Tools, and Data

With a background in computer science, I understand the transformative potential of technology in education, particularly in creating an inclusive environment that benefits all learners. Leveraging assistive technology ensures that students with diverse challenges can access education equitably, enhancing learning opportunities, fostering independence, and breaking down barriers.

Beyond assistive tools, technology enables the collection and analysis of student performance data, guiding evidence-based decisions. I can identify effective accommodations, modifications, and instructional strategies that address achievement gaps by evaluating measurable outcomes. In collaboration with families and IEP teams, I develop personalized plans that harness technology's power to optimize student success and make education accessible to every learner.

Commitment to Growth and Communication

My philosophy of special education is rooted in the belief that meaningful, culturally responsive collaboration is essential to creating a positive school environment and I am committed to developing communication skills that are open, respectful, flexible, and culturally sensitive. Through a commitment to inclusivity, relational trust, adaptability, and the integration of technology and data, I aim to create educational experiences that empower every student and foster growth, independence, and belonging for every learner.

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." This sentiment inspires me to continuously grow as an educator and collaborator, working toward meaningful partnerships that benefit all learners.