Artifact

IEP Review
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I interviewed a technology teacher who teaches elective courses, as well as pair-teachers that assist general education teachers in that same school. Based on those interviews, I feel the following 5 points will help with effective co-teaching:

- Understand that disabilities come in all different forms, and some are so subtle that you wouldn't even know a student had a disability unless they told you. Many of the students with disabilities may just require assistance in simple forms, like reminders of homework or classwork, or hints and suggestions on how to start an assignment.

- Make flexible lesson plans and projects for your class. This allows you to accommodate a wide range of skill-sets, and not just for students with disabilities. And by building flexibility into the curriculum, it may make it easier on the co-teacher to assist students who need help, even if the co-teacher isn't an expert in the subject area of the class.

- Understand that students take elective classes for many different reasons, so don't assume a student took the class because they were interested in the subject matter. Maybe your class was the only elective that aligned with that student's schedule, which means you may have students in your class who are completely disinterested. This can have a big impact on student motivation, which can lead to lack of engagement, and things will probably get worse if a disability is mixed into the equation.

- Adolescents have short attention spans, so limit the amount of time you spend lecturing, and get the students into independent or group work as soon as you can. This will not only help student engagement with the lesson, but will also enable the co-teacher to start assisting the students more quickly.

- Be patient and understanding to students with disabilities. And whenever you need help, be sure to ask! The school's SPED department will probably have several trained people who can offer advice, and may also have additional resources and supports that they can provide struggling students, and not just those with IEPs.

According to the IEP, it seems that two major problems are that the student is reading below grade level and cannot understand algebraic concepts. It also appears she has difficulty with outlining and note-taking. However, it seems that the student has met previous IEP goals regarding improvements in using organizers, study guides, and teacher notes, and she can also apparently use recorded audio to prepare

her prior to reading long sections of text. So it seems the student is motivated, hardworking, and willing to improve.

To accommodate the student's reading deficiency, I would try to get electronic copies of any textbooks the student has. This would serve 2 purposes:

- The student could use a text-to-speech program to narrate the assigned passages of the textbook, which will hopefully help her word-decoding skills for those particular subjects.

- The student could also use a PDF or DOC markup tool to highlight the appropriate sections of the text, and could later use those highlighted sections to generate an outline.

Afterward, the co-teacher or I could review the student's electronic copy of the text, and see where the student highlighted to verify whether or not she identified relevant information. We could also verify the student's outline versus the highlighted text to see how well the student transcribed or interpreted the information.

Fortunately for the algebra situation, I recently read an article on using computer programming to close the achievement gap in math. The article by Cheng (2016) specifically states that programming "can give mathematical concepts context and relevance while still requiring the same amount of rigor" (para. 4), and specifically suggests having students write computer programs to solve algebra word problems. The example problem in the article doesn't solve for a specific value, but instead asks the student to come up with an algorithm that will calculate a value based on a given user input.

I think for the student in our particular case study, this would be a great way to try to help her with algebra. By using Java programming, she can give variables meaningful names (not just "x" or "y"). And once she sets up her program, the co-teacher and myself can explain to her how the algorithm she just came up with is similar to the algebraic equations in her text book (just more readable).

Furthermore, according to Cheng, the person assisting students with the computer programming doesn't need to be a Computer Science major. UC Davis apparently has some brief courses that enable a teacher of any discipline to integrate programming into his or her curriculum, so for our particular situation, we could also train the co-teacher on how to use programming. This way, the co-teacher could to assist our student with the math problem without requiring my assistance, which would free me up to continue teaching the rest of the class.

References:

Cheng, H. (2016, April 26). Teaching math with computer programming can help narrow achievement gap. Retrieved from https://edsource.org/2016/teaching-math-with-computer-programming-can-help-narrow-achievement-gap/563371