

**Utah State University
Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation**

**SPED 4910 – Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities (URCO)
Fall Semester 2009**

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Objectives:

Undergraduate Research and Creative Opportunities (URCO) credit is awarded for time spent working with students with disabilities in a school setting. It is intended to allow university students the opportunity to work directly with students with disabilities in order to learn more about the field of special education. Assignments are designed to assist students in analyzing their URCO experience and to give students an opportunity to learn more about teaching special education. Students may earn up to a total of 6 credits of URCO credit during the time that they are at Utah State University. Credit is awarded in variable amounts from 1 to 4 credits per semester.

Assignments:

For each URCO credit, students must complete one assignment. Students who have previously completed URCO assignments will begin with the first assignment they have not yet completed (e.g. a student who has previously completed two URCO credits will begin with assignment #3 this semester).

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE BY 5:00 PM ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4.

Assignment #1: Journal/Thought Entries (4 @ 20 POINTS EACH)

During the semester, you will write about **four** observations or experiences that you have had in a special education or disability services setting. If you are volunteering or working as a paraeducator, choose days during the semester that have made a special impression on you and write about it. If you are not currently volunteering or working in a special education or related setting, arrange to visit a classroom or program that serves students with disabilities, and write about your visit.

When writing about your observation or experience, consider how some of the following issues affect the way you perceive the students you observed or are working with. You don't have to address every issue – these are issues that I'd like you to think about as you write about your experiences and how it impacts you as a future teacher or related services professional.

- a) “The trend of integrating people with disabilities into the larger society began in the 1960’s and continues stronger than ever today (Hallahan and Kaufmann, 2000).” Do you support the idea of integration of people with disabilities into society? Why or why not? Should those with disabilities be given every opportunity that those without disabilities have, i.e. jobs, marriage, children? Does the severity of the disability change your opinion?
- b) How do children with exceptionalities affect their families’ quality of life, and what is your role as an educator?
- c) How does diversity affect special education?
- d) In your opinion, how should a situation be handled when a teacher or student says to you that it isn't fair that “Johnny is receiving so much help that I don't know if he knows the work”, “Beth never has to do all of the work that Susie has to”, or any other question similar to these? Is it fair or not?
- e) When a student with disabilities is included in regular classes, who should be informed that the student has a disability? Why? What might happen in the classroom if you answered this question in the opposite manner?
- f) To what extent should general educators and special educators collaborate? What could happen if this occurred? What could happen if it doesn't? What role, if any, do you currently play in this collaboration?
- g) How can communication between school and family be facilitated, especially in the event of on-going absences? How might this communication change if it was due to various reasons, i.e. sluffing, medical? What is your role in this process?
- h) In your opinion, what are strategies to help a student to do work that you know they can do? What factors might change your response?

Assignment #2: Professional Journal Article Summaries (3 @ 20 POINTS EACH)

To complete this assignment, you will review and write summaries on **three** journal articles. Articles must come from a national published professional journal. See below for acceptable journals:

- Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis
- Exceptional Children
- Journal of Special Education
- Teaching Exceptional Children
- Education and Treatment of Children
- Remedial and Special Education
- Prevention of School Failure

In order to access these journals through Utah State, follow these instructions:

- Go to <http://library.usu.edu/dels/index.php>
- Click on Find Resources
- Go to Electric Journal
- Type the name of the journal you are interested in
- Click on the year/way that you want to access it (whatever you click is fine)
- Click on the year
- Click on the article
- Click on the tab for full article.

Please address ALL of the following in each summary:

- Why you chose this article
- The purpose of the article
- Why the authors wrote about this subject (why is it important?)
- A summary of key points and/or findings
- How the information in this article can be of use to you and to special education teachers
- The article's complete reference

Each summary must be typewritten, at least 500 words, and can be either single- or double-spaced (12 point font). Please submit your summary via email.

If you have any questions regarding whether a different journal is appropriate for this assignment please contact me.

Assignment #3: Accommodations Assignment (2 @ 30 POINTS EACH)

This assignment is designed to help you learn more about two disabilities and appropriate accommodations for the specific disability. For this assignment, you must research two disabilities of your choice and then research different accommodations that would be appropriate for each disability. Write a one-page paper for each disability. Please include at least five barriers to learning that the disability might create, and at least 2 appropriate accommodations/modifications for **each** barrier. These can include ideas from teachers you have worked with, textbooks, journal articles, and the internet. (As you know, some internet sources will be more reliable than others; use your best judgment!) Include the references for your sources of information at the end of your paper.

Assignment #4: Research Report (100 POINTS)

This assignment is designed to help you learn how to write research reports and to learn more about a specific disability. For this assignment, you must research a disability of your choice and write a research paper discussing your findings. Please choose a disability that students in a Mild/Moderate special education setting may have, such as a Specific learning Disability, Emotional Disability, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairment, or Autism (Asperger Syndrome). You must use at least 5 scholarly references for your report. Use the American Psychological Association Publication Guide (5th Edition) in referencing your sources and writing your report. Be sure to be thorough in your explanations and discussions and to organize your paper in a logical manner.

Please address ALL of the following in your report:

- Define the disability you have chosen
- How to determine whether a student has this disability according to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
- Current research-based practices that are recommended for instruction.
- Possible assistive technology devices for a student with this disability
- Strategies for participation in the general education curriculum(i.e., the extent to which many students with this disability participate in general education, and school-based strategies for promoting meaningful participation.)

Remember that this is not an opinion or personal experience paper. Everything you include in this report must be referenced with research-based citations from professional journals. This assignment must be typewritten and be at least 5 full double-spaced pages (12 point font) not including references.