

## **Dr. Beattie - Introduction to Special Education - Transcript**

### What is special education?

Lets start today with what special education is. We are going to look at it today in two different sections. Where services are provided for kids with special needs? The people who are involved and work with these kids. By the end of the semester several of you who are not special ed majors will switch to become a special ed major. Those of you who are general ed majors, how many of you think you will never come in contact with a special needs child? You will! General ed classrooms is where the majority of kids with disabilities are served. General ed classroom is the first placement. These kids with disabilities reasonably well on their own so there is no need for direct support at that time, but that does not mean the special ed teacher is not involved. The services are also provided in the general ed setting with a collaborative teacher, someone who can work with a general ed teacher but can also deal well with the needs of the special needs student. So, the general ed teacher and the special ed teacher or who is assigned to collaborate work collaboratively to provide instruction not just for kids with special needs but also those with out special needs. The collaboration when it works is fascinating. We talked last Thursday about inclusion, and this is what it generally is. The general ed person and the special ed person work collaboratively for the needs of all the students in the classroom. Because of the size of the school or number of students, when the work that is done with a consulting teacher (typically a special ed person). The general ed teacher will use the special ed teacher as a resource to know how to handle certain things. This is becoming less and less common because of the law, which we will talk about later.

### 4. in a special classroom

Up to this point we have not talked about anything directly about the special ed setting. At this level we shift to the options of the services provided in a special ed classroom. There are two primary services that exist in the special ed setting for special needs kids. They are a resource room setting/pull out situation, which one teacher is assigned to a small group of kids where the emphasis is more on skill rather than content, not always, but that is how it typically works. As I mentioned I have a learning disability in reading, so if I were in school I would get pulled out of my general classroom situation and work with the special ed teacher in the resource room on my reading skills. Again not always so, lots of academic work, the stuff that happens in the pull out setting can deal with study skills. This tends to work with kids that have mild disabilities, mental or behavioral.

The second setting is a self-contained classroom. In the special ed classroom to be in those settings, that kid has to be identified as having a special need. The special ed teacher is essentially responsible for the majority of the content/information being presented to the kids. I taught in a self-contained setting, so I taught kids everything. I taught reading, writing, math, history, and science. What are the limitation/drawbacks? The limitations are the knowledge of the teacher. For instance I taught kids biology, I don't know how to spell biology let alone know anything about it. That is changing some because of No Child Left Behind, and the mandates on the teachers. The next service to look at is in a private school.

This continuum of services is listed in your book except for private schools, but I think it should be. There are many circumstances where kids with disabilities are served in a private school setting that is designed exclusively to meet the needs of a particular population. In Charlotte for instance, there are two schools that are meant to work with kids with learning disabilities. There is a school called the Door Academy and the Fletcher School. Essentially the requirements to get into the school is to meet the states criteria that exist to say a child has a learning disability.

The sixth setting is in a residential setting. Kids who are ill or exhibit illness that keep them from going to school, in some circumstances kids who have been expelled.

For whatever reason kids who have to be schooled at home or in a hospital are dealt with by an itinerant person. Someone who moves from home to home or hospital to hospital and provides the instructions for the kids in that setting, but this is not common. These are the seven settings in which kids receive services.

Review of the settings. What is going on between these? What kinds of things exist? The level of severity increases as we go down the list. The lack of involvement with other people without disabilities. In the general ed setting the kids are mixed in with kids without disabilities, and this is a huge factor. This is why the last two settings are less common.

#### Special education is provided by a number of professionals

You are probably wondering what in the world the guy with the jump rope on the slide has to do with special ed, but we will see if there is some connection. There is no order to this, there is no order that suggest that certain professionals work with more special needs kids than others.

Speech pathologists work with kids with obviously speech and language disorders, if you have a lisp or language problem or some difficulty of a combination. Typically you go for a short amount of time. Special ed is an area that has an incredibly short fall of teachers, in other words when you graduate with a degree in special ed you can get a job tomorrow. There is an even greater need for speech pathologist.

The second professional is school psychologist. Counseling, typically administer test. They will do the testing that will eventually qualify a student to meet the criteria. The psychology is more clinical outside of the school, but very much a part of what happens with kids with special needs.

Physical therapist is the next. They tend to deal more with big muscle movement, gross motor stuff. Working on the large gross motor kind of muscles.

The next is Occupational therapist, who is more fine motor in what they do. Pencil grasp, picking up things is what they typically deal with. PT is physical therapist and OT is occupational therapist. With the rise of autism one of the factors of kids with autism is sensory issues, and there comfort sitting in a place. OT's work with these sensory issues.

Next group of people are social workers. Social workers are saints according to me. In most jobs you have the chance to hear something positive, but not with social workers. Their job is to deal

with abuse, neglect, custody, etc. It is incredibly hard to deal with over an extended amount of time.

School nurse is the next profession. This is important in a variety of areas. Why are they so important now? This is the person who administers drugs. It is scary how many kids in schools now have to take medications. The responsibilities for a nurse is large.

PE teachers are the next profession. Kids with disabilities can't do PE, can they? Of course, there isn't really anything they can't do, they just do it differently. Since I am not a very good golfer, Blind people play golf. First of all how? Sound, the ball beeps. Someone puts the ball on the tee and aligns the person and the person listens to the ball beep.

The next three profession are music/art teachers, GED teacher, SPED teachers. Lets save music/art teachers, we will come back to that. We have already established how general ed teachers will be involved with special needs students. So that population works with kids with special needs, and obviously special ed teachers do it is there job. How do music/art teachers work with kids with special needs? It can bring out an artistic ability in a kid with special needs, it can be therapy. There is a famous quote, "Music calms the savage beast." Think about it, when you have had a bad day and you are leaving school, you turn your music on because it calms you down. Music and the art can do those things. There is also therapy where kids take out there frustration on the instruments they play because it is better to beat up a drum then another kid.

When we look at labeling in our educational system, what is involved? You give the kids a name basically; we are labeling them with something, for example a student with a learning or mental disability, etc. We are slapping a label on a kid for different reasons. There are a bunch of pros and cons but whether it is right or wrong it exists. If we at least have some sense as to why we have these labels we have a feel for the advantages or disadvantages of this it will help put it into place. One of the primary benefits of labeling is it helps professionals communicate. As you begin in your careers and you take your first job and a student is being discussed in a meeting and someone says "yeah I think he is LD." That label will make communication easier because you have a sense as to what that is.

I am a naive person and I got into education because I did not want to deal with anything political. Next to government I think education is the most political thing you can have. I also don't like to deal with money, so I thought education would not deal with money. Funding from the state and federal government is determined by the number of kids with whatever the disability category might be. So the state of NC for example receives X amount of dollars for every kid they serve with that specific disability. Then the state takes that money and distributes it to the counties based on the counties number of kids they serve with that disability. I do not know that this is necessarily a benefit but it is an outcome to having labels, advocacy groups. Special ed has a ton of advocacy group. There are specific groups, like the LD advocacy group. Another benefit is it makes needs more visible. It is rare that people will go through a majority of their schooling without hearing about what some kind of disability is. At least people have heard the terms more because of the existence of the label. I am using Learning Disability a lot simply because it is the one most heard of by people, but I do not want you to get the impression that all

special needs kids have learning disabilities. They may have difficulty learning but that is different.

The disadvantages of labeling is it usually brings focus to negative things. You do not get a great feeling from the existence of a label. In many circumstances because of these negative feelings people in general develop lower expectations for that population of kids because of that disability that exist. The third disadvantage is serves as an “out” for people. A parent will say “I am sorry my daughter has a disorder so she can not participate.” That is an out for the parent. Teachers will say, “I am a good teacher but this kid isn’t getting it, it has to be because they have a behavior disorder.” What bothers me the most is that kids are using it just as much as anyone else, “I’m sorry I forgot my homework because I have ADHD, I did it I just left it on my table at home.” I had a parent that said a disability should not be an excuse, but an explanation.

The fourth disadvantage is poor self-concept. I know this is probably difficult for the majority of you to understand, but when you go through life with this label attached to you and people look at you and have low expectations of you, it sort of gets to you after a while and you think less of yourself. The self-concept is really hit hard. I sit in faculty meetings and I think what am I doing in here with these people because they are very smart and well read and I cannot do this academic stuff, and I think I am well in over my head. That self-concept permeates everything that goes on.

Let me extend with that melodramatic thing about me. People will look at me and say they do not understand why my self-concept is how it is. I went to college on a football scholarship, and I was drafted by the Boston Red Sox out of high school, and the Chicago Black Hawks to play hockey. I was all state in several different things, I was president of my senior class, and the most popular kid in school. The thing that comes to my head though is the fact that I read like a ninth grader. The reason I am saying this is so when you work with a kid with a disability and they have this self-concept issue, it is real and has a huge impact on what happens with that kid.

As we go through this semester we are going to work with a bunch of different words that are used interchangeably that maybe shouldn’t be. So that we are on the same page....refer to the last few slides.