



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
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Getting to Know Your Classmates with Special Needs

Guide for Curriculum Unit 92.01.05
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The primary objective of my unit is to sensitize both students and teachers to special education students' needs and rights. Many students and teachers have had limited contact with special education students.

There is a trend in public education today to mainstream special education students into regular classrooms. This year, at the middle school where I teach, special education students are mainstreamed for the homeroom period at the beginning and the end of each school day as well as for unified arts classes, such as art, music, shop, etc. In previous years, these students have been isolated in special classes for the entire day. They have had no opportunity to interact with regular students, except in the cafeteria. Much of the time, the special education classes are set apart. Thus, the majority of students have little understanding of the various kinds of learning problems and handicaps that special education students have.

I believe that the average student needs to get past his/her misconception, misunderstanding, and fear of special education students. It is important for regular education teachers to help their students understand and accept their peers with special needs. I think that regular education teachers must be sensitized to the needs of the students with special needs. Teachers should also educate their regular education students about the various handicaps and disabilities of special education students, as well as sensitizing their students to their classmates with special needs.

This curriculum unit provides many strategies for educating teachers and students about the various special needs of these students. This unit also includes many strategies for sensitizing both students and teachers to students who are handicapped in some way.

(Recommended for Social Studies, Literature, and Language Arts, grades 3-8)

Key Words

Handicapped Children Family Life Law Learning Disabilities

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