Instructional Application Project: 35 points

This is the final assignment in the class, and it’s your chance to apply what you’ve learned to an educational context in which you work (or would like to work). You goal is to use class content, from the readings, overviews, videos, and discussions, to help you plan for the needs of students in your classroom, or in a classroom where you would like to teach.

Your assignment is to produce a product that applies course content to the solution of a problem that is of interest or concern to you in a *context* where you work. The *problem* you choose should be relevant to the education of students with disabilities—in other words, to the topics addressed in this course. You’ll then conduct further *research* about this problem and you’ll develop an *action plan* for at least partially solving the problem that is relevant to the context in which this problem occurs. Finally, you’ll produce a *product* that explains your context, problem, research, and proposed solution.

1. **Context:** Choose a context to which you’d like to apply information from this course. The context may be a particularly challenging student within your classroom, a subset of your classroom or your whole class, a hypothetical class in which you’d like to teach in the future, a school, or a school district.
2. The context you choose must involve the education of students with disabilities, or students who are at risk for disabilities.
3. **Problem**: Identify an important problem(s) related to the education of students with disabilities or those who are risk for disabilities in the context you have chosen. The problem you identify should be something that is substantial and important, and something that is of particular interest to you. The problem you identify should also be broad enough so that there’s not a simple solution. (If that’s the case, you can’t apply much of the course to solve it). But, the problem should be focused enough that you could actually “do” something about it, or propose a reasonable course of action. See below for further direction about problem identification.
4. **Research**: Using class content as a foundation, research your problem further. You should use at least **8** sources of information from the course website (readings, overviews, videos, and discussions) and access at least **8** additional sources of credible information during your research. You should reference each source in a reference list. You should then summarize the results of your research, citing the appropriate source for each of your conclusions.
5. **Plan of action**: Define a plan of action that offers a partial solution to the problem you have identified. Your plan of action should include at least **5** specific steps that you have decided could be used to solve your problem, based on your research. You should explain each step clearly and in detail. You should discuss why you have chosen this plan of action, based on the nature of the context in which you’ll be implementing it, the problem you have chosen, and your research.
6. **Write or produce a text** that explains the context in which you are working, the problem you have chosen, the research that you conducted, and the plan you have developed. Text is broadly defined to include a podcast, presentation, web-based product (e.g., video, website), video, or 8-10 page double-spaced paper.

*Some additional comments and reminders about the project:*

1. Please choose a context that is of interest to you and linked to your own professional goals. Take this opportunity to apply course content to something that can benefit your own professional development. However, because this is a special education methods course, the context you choose must include consideration of students with disabilities.
2. Choose a problem that is not too narrow. Narrowly defined problems are often important ones, but you won’t have much opportunity to meet the requirements of this project if you define your problem too narrowly. For example, a problem such as *keeping students in their seats during the morning reading block* or *teaching kids with learning disabilities to use the keyboard* may be important to you, but they are problems that have pretty clear and obvious solutions (e.g., reinforce a student for staying in her seat, use a specific keyboarding problem three times a week). Problems like these won’t enable you to do much research, and any action plan will probably be quite brief.
3. However, problems that are too big and broad will also make it difficult for you to meet the requirements of this project. For example, *preventing child abuse* or *increasing the achievement of students with disabilities on state tests* are critical problems, but research about these topics is voluminous and any action plan would involve myriad steps and actions.
4. The literature you review for your action plan should be **credible** information. At least some of your literature review should be drawn from peer-reviewed journals. Peer review is not infallible, but it is one way to help increase a reader’s confidence in the trustworthiness of a source. You can also draw from other forms of information, such as wikipedia, videos or blogs produced by knowledgeable individuals.
5. You’ll need to cite your sources. See our course website for information on citing sources. If you produce a text other than a paper, you’ll also need to include a reference list.
6. Be sure that the problem you choose, and the research you review, is related to course topics. The following list reviews the topics we’ve covered:

Jan 26: General principles of effective instruction for diverse learners

Feb 2: Differentiated instruction and universal design

Feb 9: Assistive technology

Feb 16: Responsiveness to intervention

Feb 23: ADHD in the classroom

Mar 2: Autism Spectrum Disorder in the classroom

Mar 9: Early childhood special education

Mar 16: Lower elementary literacy

Mar 23: Middle and high school literacy

Mar 30: Math instruction across the grades

Apr 13: Science and social studies instruction across the grades

Apr 20: Secondary and postsecondary special education

Apr 27: Special education myths: Becoming a critical consumer of special education research & practice

1. This project can incorporate information included in your professional development project, but it should *go significantly beyond* that project in its research and action plan.
2. Your final text (paper or other form of information) will be posted on the course website so that all your classmates can benefit from your work.
3. Carefully review the evaluation criteria and make sure you have followed them and addressed all the project requirements. It’s a good idea to use these as a checklist to evaluate your own project before you turn it in to me.
4. Ask me if you have any questions—and don’t wait to start planning.

**Evaluation Criteria**

You offer a clear and complete description of the context, including the location of your context, the type of students or teachers you’re addressing in this context (including numbers, age, ethnicity, disabilities or, for adults, job titles and experience). The reader should not have questions about where the problem is occurring based on your description of the context.

1 *point*

The problem is clearly defined and enough details are provided so that the reader can understand the problem and why it is important.

*3 points*

The problem is linked to the context and the types of individuals in that context. That is, the reader can see how this problem is important in the context in which it occurs.

*2 points*

The problem is important and neither too narrow or too broad.

*1 point*

You conduct a thorough review of research related to your problem and include at least 8 sources from the class website and at least 8 sources that go beyond the course website.

*2 points*

The sources you use are credible*.*

*2 points*

You link information in your literature review to sources, and you list all your sources in a reference list (using APA format).

*1 point*

You clearly summarize the research you have reviewed, and your summary is clear and concise and concludes with a discussion of conclusions you have drawn from this review. *2 points*

The literature you review is strongly related to your context and problem.

*3 points*

You develop an action plan that has at least 5 steps that are defined in enough detail so the reader knows the specific action you’ll take.

*3 points*

Your action plan is based on the literature you have reviewed.

*3 points*

Action plan makes sense for the context you have defined.

*1 point*

Action Plan could help solve the problem you have articulated.

*3 points*

You use information from class and credible sources beyond class (at least 8 citations for class and beyond-class information).

*3 points*

Your action plan is thoughtful and creative, and shows the incorporation of ideas beyond those covered in class.   
*3 points*

Your final product is well written or well produced, concise but complete, and free from substantive and mechanical errors.

*2 points*