

Teaching Exceptional Adolescents: Problem Handouts



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Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 1

Part 1: Congratulations! Now What?

You have just signed a contract to become a first-year teacher at American Technical High School. You know that ATHS has a good reputation in the community because of its success with serving an academically and socially diverse student body. The dropout rate is slightly lower than average, state test scores have been improving, and many graduates pursue traditional four-year postsecondary education or advanced technical training. You learned during your job interview that ATHS is committed to implementing an "inclusive" model of education; the school strives to provide access to the general curriculum for all students and present challenging learning opportunities to each student. Given the school's orientation, it is likely that you will experience the "HALO" effect in your classroom. That is, you will be expected to teach High achievers, Average achievers, Low achievers, and Other achievers ("others" being those who may experience learning difficulties for a variety of reasons).

Starting Questions:

As you ponder your new teaching assignment, respond to the following prompts...

1. My area of teaching certification will be:
2. Courses I am likely to teach include:
3. When I think about teaching students who are *academically* diverse,
4. I hope that
5. I worry about
6. I wonder about
7. My previous experience with academically diverse learners (in or out of school) includes:

Take a few minutes individually to write your responses. Then, share your responses with the group. Look for similar and unique issues. After sharing and discussing your responses, create a group report that responds to the questions below. Be prepared to share the report with the whole class.

1. What knowledge or experiences of academic diversity are represented in your group?
2. What challenges face secondary educators who teach in academically diverse settings?
3. What would your group like to know about teaching academically diverse students?



Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 1

Part 2: First Day

It's the first day of school for the teachers at your school. Everyone is busy setting up their classrooms, checking out the duty rosters, catching up on the latest school gossip, and planning for the students' return. You are getting ready for your first team meeting. All the teachers at the school have been assigned to "learning community teams," which meet periodically for focused professional development activities and cross-curricular planning. Additionally, each team is responsible for monitoring the performance (e.g., grades, attendance, disciplinary issues) of an assigned subset of students, identifying those students who may need additional services or supports, and problem-solving and making recommendations in regard to particular student issues.

As you settle into your seat around the table and review your class rosters, a colleague peers over your shoulder and exclaims, "Oh, great! _____ is back again. You're going to have an interesting semester! If any kid ever deserved the label of _____ it's that one."

Look on the back to see which student your group has been assigned. Take a few minutes individually to write your responses to the questions below. Then, share your responses with the group. After sharing and discussing your responses, create a list of questions that your group members have about your assigned exceptionality. Also consider where and how you could find answers to your questions? Be prepared to share your questions and resource ideas with the whole class.

Starting Questions:

1. What experiences have you had (in or out of school) with people who have _____ ?
2. What do you know about students who have _____ ?
3. What do you need to know about teaching secondary students with _____ in your classroom?

Possibilities for consideration (on back of page):

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1. Terry:
Learning Disability
(Auditory Memory) | 2. Jeff:
Asperger's | 3. Marie:
Twice Exceptional
(Gifted & LD) | 4. Anna:
Mental Retardation
(Intellectual
Disability) |
| 5. Quan:
Emotional Disorder
(Internalizing) | 6. Sanchez:
Visual
Impairment | 7. Lennie:
Attention Deficit Disorder
(ADD) | |



Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 1

Part 3: My Point of View

Educating any young person happens in the multiple contexts of school, classrooms, community, extracurricular activities, and student homes. Further, by law and in practice, many people have a say in the educational plans for students who receive special education services or other educational supports. Therefore, it is important to consider perspectives of other people who are involved in the education of youth with exceptional learning needs. You've already considered questions or issues that a general education teacher might have about a particular exceptionality. Now, within your group quickly assign each group member to one of the following roles:

- Student (from your assigned case)
 - Peer (without exceptional needs)
 - Parent or Other Responsible Adult Family Member
 - Principal
 - Special Education Teacher
1. Take a couple minutes to jot down questions that you (in your new role) might have about the exceptionality represented in your group's assigned case.
 2. Then, meet with people from other groups who have taken on the same role (*e.g.*, parent, student) as you have. Each person should identify the exceptional learning need of the case s/he was originally assigned and share his/her "role" questions with the group.
 3. As a group, make a list of questions that you think would be most important to someone in your role. Identify questions that may be common across exceptionalities as well as questions that are specific to the case you were assigned. Also share any ideas you have about where to find information that would help you answer these questions.
 4. Return to your original group. Review the questions your group generated in the Part 2 and 3 exercises. As a group, select the most interesting or important questions that relate to the broader Unit 1 question, "Who are adolescents with exceptional learning needs?" As a group, assign each group member one or more questions to investigate before the next class.



5. You will share the results of your research in two ways. First, you will complete the Post 1 assignment. See MyCourses for instructions. Second, you will share and discuss the information in the next class. Bring your notes with you!

Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 2

Introduction

Question 2:

Which instructional principles and practices should teachers employ in academically diverse classrooms?

As a new teacher at American Middle/Technical High School, you have in your class another student who may require special education services. Your task is to consider how you will meet his/her instructional needs in your classroom.

- Individually, examine specific information provided about your case.
- Make notes about questions you have about teaching this student, including questions you would have about teaching your discipline-area content/skills to this student.
- Select one of your discipline-area specific questions and write it on the designated posters/board for the whole class to see.

After the class discussion...

- Share your questions with your group and brainstorm other questions with your group. Identify the most important or interesting questions and divide questions so that each group member will have responsibilities for part of the research.
- Read the appropriate chapter in the textbook and locate supplemental readings to help you answer the questions raised by your group.
- As you read, begin to think about your group's Unit 2 presentation. This presentation will inform the class about the instructional principles and practices that you learned for this student. Your presentation will demonstrate (rather than tell) at least some of these principles/ practices.
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Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 2

Terry

Introduction: Meet Terry, a tenth grade student at American Technical High School. He has grown significantly over the summer and is now 5'10" with an athletic build. His conditioning doesn't come from working out, though; it comes from working at his uncle's auto body shop every chance he gets. He put in lot of time there over the summer, gaining skills in this trade which he would like to pursue after high school. He is using his income to buy parts for a '65 Corvette convertible that he is restoring with his uncle's help.

Classroom functioning: Terry is pretty quiet in class, struggling to keep up with the work and to learn subjects that seem irrelevant to him.

Ability: Terry was given the WISC in the fourth grade when he was first identified as a student in need of special education services. At that time, his IQ was 100 (Performance 110; Verbal 89) in the average range. There was significant scatter in his subtest scores with the lowest being in similarities, digit span, letter-number sequencing, indicating weakness in auditory memory.

Present Level of Performance (Academic and Functional): Terry was last given an educational assessment in the eighth grade. At that time, his reading score was 4.8; written language was 4.3; math was 8.2. At the last IEP meeting in March, teachers confirmed that these functional levels were still accurate. Terry is making limited progress in these basic skills.

Exceptionality: At Terry's IEP meeting in the eighth grade (which was his tri-annual re-evaluation) the team agreed that Terry continued to be a student with a specific learning disability with weakness in auditory memory. They also agreed that he continued to need special education services to progress in school.

Special Notes: The Guidance Counselor has shared with you that Terry has unresolved feelings about his parents' divorce and his new stepfather. Terry has never mentioned anything about his personal life in class.





Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 3

Introduction

Question 3:

How can classroom and school communities be shaped to support the success of adolescents with exceptional learning needs?

To Do Today:

Read your case scenario and individually make some notes about your responses to the following items. Then, share your ideas with your group. As a group, decide which questions are most important to answer in order to have a thorough understanding of possible options for this case. Assign each person a different question to investigate.

What are the issue(s)/ problem(s) you see in regard to **designing a positive classroom or school environment** and/or **managing behavior**?

Put your issues(s) or problems(s) into question form.

What other questions do you have about this case or scenario?

Questions to be investigated by each group member:

Next Steps:

- Review information about your case's exceptional learning needs in our textbook and from the first and second groups' postings on WebCT.
- Find at least two additional sources that will help you answer the question(s) you have been assigned by your group. Use the POCD problem-solving framework as you pursue Question 3 individually and with your group.

State the PROBLEM(S)

- Identify the issue(s)/ problem(s) you see in regard to designing a positive educational environment and managing behavior
- State problem(s) in the form of a question

Identify the OPTIONS

- Brainstorm options to address this problem/issue
- Investigate options.
- As you investigate, be open to ideas you may not have originally considered.
- Think about options for the teacher in the classroom AND options for the school community.



CONSIDER each option

- What does research/literature say about each option you've identified?
- What are advantages/ disadvantages of each option?
- Consider outcomes & unintended results of each option.

DECIDE on actions

- As a group, decide on the best course of action - what should a teacher do?
 - State recommendations in the form of actions.
- Design a poster board display and a handout that will present the above information in a concise way to your classmates. During our class "conference" you will take turns staffing your poster presentation; during that time you will give 5-10 minute briefings and answer questions, while other group members will circulate to learn from the other groups' posters. More information about the poster session requirements are given in the rubric for Presentation 3 under Assignments in MyCourses



Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 3

Marie

Your middle school team is discussing Marie, because she has recently been identified as qualified for special education, including the gifted program. Marie has confided to you that she really isn't interested in the gifted program, which is structured around twice/week "pull-out" enrichment activities. In Marie's case, she would be pulled from her English/Language Arts class. The team is unsure about whether it is best to encourage Marie to participate or not given her lack of enthusiasm for the idea and her preference for solitary work.

Ms. Keen, the English teacher, notes that she has tried many times to engage Marie in tutoring peers in the class who are struggling readers, in the hope that this will be a challenge to Marie. However, the peer usually ends up doodling on a worksheet, while Marie covertly reads a book she brought from home. Another team member chimes in to say that he has had similar problems in his class. Whenever he asks students to do a group activity, Marie sits on the periphery, reading or daydreaming. He wonders if Marie might be more engaged during the gifted program activities where she could interact with other gifted children.

Mr. Dunn, the new mathematics teacher, has a different concern. He suggests that Marie should be placed in the special ed resource math class so she can "catch up". He plans on doing many cooperative learning activities in his class. Based on the reports from other teachers about Marie's limited involvement in group activities and her poor math skills, he thinks the cooperative math activities will be too frustrating for her.

What are the issues? What are the options?



Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 4

Introduction

Question 4:

How do historical, legal, and values frameworks influence educational decisions regarding delivery of services and supports to exceptional adolescents?

Case Issues for Investigation

What do you need to know in order to participate in this meeting?

Terry: You will participate in an IEP meeting that will focus on Terry's transition needs and services.

Assistant Principal

Guidance Counselor

Student

Parent

Transition Coordinator

Social Studies Teacher

Special Educator

Jeff: You will participate in a manifestation meeting that determines whether Jeff's behavior was a manifestation of his disability; *i.e.* can he be expelled? You will also want to consider issues of zero tolerance and alternate placements.

Student

Assistant Principal

Parent

School Psychologist

Special Ed Teacher

Geography Teacher

Marie: You will participate in Marie's first IEP meeting in which you will identify her annual goals and appropriate special education services, as well as consider gifted programming

Assistant Principal

School Psychologist

Student

Mathematics Teacher



Parent English/Language Arts Teacher
Special Education Team Leader Gifted Program Teacher

Anna: You will participate in an IEP meeting that discusses Anna's goals for the coming year, especially considering whether full inclusion can best meet her special education needs

Assistant Principal English/Language Arts Teacher
Student Graphic Arts Teacher
Parent Special Education Teacher
Family Advocate

Quan: You will participate in the advisory committee for American Tech HS, discussing Quan's absences and whether he is entitled to a waiver of the policy as it relates to eligibility for school activities.

Student School Psychologist
Art Teacher Guidance Counselor
Parent Special Education Teacher

Sanchez: You will participate in an annual IEP meeting that focuses on Sanchez's goals for the coming year as well as the types of assistive technology and family support Sanchez will need to achieve those goals

Assistant Principal Parent
Student Geography Teacher
Assistive Technology Specialist Special Educator
Guidance Counselor



Lennie: You will participate in a manifestation meeting to determine whether Lennie's behavior was a manifestation of his disability; *i.e.*, can he be expelled? You will also want to consider issues of zero tolerance and alternate placements.

Assistant Principal

Special Educator

Student

Guidance Counselor

School Psychologist

Parent



Teaching Exceptional Adolescents

Unit 4

Anna (roleplay)

Narrator

Anna is 15 years old, and this is October of her 9th grade year. Her intellectual disability makes basic academic tasks difficult, but because of her outgoing nature she is adapting to her new life in high school. Today is Anna's annual IEP meeting. The team will discuss her progress and plan for her special education services.

Mr. Rich, Assistant Principal

You are in charge of the IEP team. After introductions and review of parent rights, you will lead the team through a discussion of the following items:

- Review of last year's IEP goals & progress made
- Anna's "measurable postsecondary goals" (employment, further education/training, independent living if needed)
- Anna's present levels of performance (teacher reports, parent report, progress towards diploma, etc.)
- Anna's annual IEP goals for the coming year
- Anna's course of study/ career pathway
- Review of the team's recommendations and assignment of responsibilities (e.g., who will do what?)

*** Anna**

You are soooooo happy that you were accepted into ATHS. You heard that you can get your high school diploma and a real job. That sounds like your dream come true. The other high school in your neighborhood would have been okay, but you heard they put the "retarded" kids into special classes there and some of them never get a diploma. Everyone else in your family got a diploma and you want one, too. You tell everyone, "I might be slow, but I'm not dumb! Don't treat me like a baby!" You might even go to college some day like your brothers.

You want to enroll in as many arts classes at school as possible. You love to paint and draw. Your art teachers in middle school and at the community center have told you that you do good work. Maybe someday you will be a famous artist! You hope that the career teacher, Ms. Terry, likes you and will let you into the arts career shop. You have heard that she is very nice. You want to make a good impression on her today. You have brought a notebook of some watercolors that you painted this summer.



You hope this meeting is over soon. You have a job after school and you don't want to be late. You are responsible for walking the neighbor's dog every day. You love playing with the dog—and getting paid every Friday is nice, too!

Mrs. Price, Anna's mother

You still can't quite believe that Anna is now in high school. Who would have thought that this day would ever arrive?! When she was born the doctor told you that she would probably never learn to read or write. He said she would always be slow and dependent on her family for the rest of her life. She had all kinds of medical problems during the first few years, which caused a lot of stress. However, your husband and your sons all pulled together and did everything they could to make Anna's life as "normal" as possible. The family has always treated her with great affection, but never cut her any slack. Over the years you've seen her blossom into a happy, capable young woman.

You're a little nervous today. You sometimes feel intimidated at IEP meetings—there are always so many "professionals" there and even after all these years, you still can't figure out all the jargon they use. So far, the ATHS teachers have been very welcoming and seem to be truly concerned about the success of students like Anna. You like the idea of Anna being included in general education classes all day, but this will be the first time she's had that opportunity; in middle school she was in self-contained classes for English and math. You know that the high school work will be a struggle for her, but you've also been doing some reading about how other schools have used peer tutoring, small group work, and curriculum modifications to support students with significant disabilities in general education classes. You asked Ms. Wright the family advocate from the Arc to join you today. You're hoping that she will help you ask good questions or make suggestions about how to help Anna be successful in high school classes.

*** Ms. Wright, Family Advocate, The Arc**

This is your first visit to ATHS, which is a relatively new school. You remember being very interested when you read in the newspaper about the plans to open this "inclusive school"—there aren't too many of those around at the high school level. As a family advocate who often accompanies parents to IEP teams, you know that usually when schools talk about inclusion, what they really mean is that kids can attend the same school as their peers, but they don't really take the same classes. It drives you nuts every time a teacher or a principal talks about "the inclusion kids"—as if they were some separate species. You know the law is very clear about providing access to the general curriculum and educating students in the least restrictive environment even if some schools can't seem to figure out how to do that. And you've had plenty of experience assisting families in due process hearings when they have wanted their children to be included but the school hadn't delivered appropriate supports to make that happen. In fact, some principals cringe when they see you walk into a meeting because they know you won't back down and have helped families win more than a few cases. When Mrs. Price called and asked you to provide her with "moral support" at this IEP meeting, you were happy to come along so you could find out how seriously ATHS takes its commitment to being inclusive. You will want to hear specific



examples of how the school plans to accommodate Anna, or if necessary, how they will modify the curriculum.

Ms. Terry, Graphic Arts Teacher

You've been informed that Anna wants to apply to the graphic arts shop after completing her exploratory year in the different shops. She's not yet been in your shop so you don't have much of a basis for knowing her. You have a great deal of industry experience and recently received your teaching certificate through an "alternate routes to certification" program. You have limited experience working with students like Anna. You had an uncle who was retarded. He died when you were much younger. You remember him fondly, but also remember that he always seemed like a child to you. You wonder if Anna has the social maturity to fit in with the other students in the graphic arts shop. And can she read and write? Your uncle could barely write his name.

The graphic arts career area is intended to prepare student to learn high tech skills in digital multimedia productions, digital web/ graphics publishing, digital imaging and print productions. Students develop a digital portfolio highlighting their skills and talents in the graphic arts program, and most students do an internship in their senior year with a local company. Because of an articulation agreement between ATHS and the community college, many students take graphic arts classes that can be used for college credit. You wonder if Anna can meet the industry certification standards; the school's career-technical funding from the state is linked to the number of students who meet certification requirements. What will happen if you take Anna into your career shop and she can't meet the standards?

*** Mr. Beach, a 9th grade English/Language Arts teacher**

Anna is in your class and seems to be doing "okay". She is always attentive in class and asks lots of questions, most of which are pertinent to the topic at hand. Because of her excellent social skills she gets along with the other students. When you have the students do small group work, Anna is never left out because the other students have already figured out that she can be counted on to do whatever task she is given.

From what you remember of Anna's "snapshot IEP" her reading and writing skills are at the elementary level and this matches what you've seen in class. So far, the class assignments have been what you consider to be "warm ups" that help you better gauge students' knowledge and skills, such as brief writing samples of different styles in response to prompts or reading, discussing, and taking comprehension tests on high interest short stories. Anna has worked diligently on these assignments, but the quality is low— her written vocabulary is basic—and she doesn't always finish. You've let her take some assignments home so she can finish, but you think maybe someone at home is helping her complete the assignments—her homework seems much more sophisticated than her classwork.

Your primary concern is how you are going to modify some of the assignments that will be required this semester. For example, when the class starts reading and writing analyses of classic poetry, you wonder if she'll be able to keep up. Will she understand the imagery and abstract ideas? How do you modify classic poetry? You are thinking that Anna should be excused from some units this semester. Maybe she could go to the resource room during those units to work



with a special education teacher. She really needs to develop her vocabulary and improve her reading skills. In your opinion, improving her basic reading skills should be more of a priority than trying to teach her to analyze poetry. And teaching students to read is not really your job.

*** Mr. Mack, Special Education teacher**

You've been reviewing Anna's IEP from the middle school and her latest psychological report. The school psychologist couldn't attend the meeting and has asked you to explain that there is no need to re-evaluate Anna at this time. According to the re-evaluation done last year, she received a full scale IQ score of 64 on the WISC and a composite score of 80 on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, with primary support needs in the areas of Daily Living Skills. On her most recent academic achievement test, also conducted at the end of last year, Anna scored at the 4.2 grade level in reading, 3.8 in writing, and 4.3 in mathematics.

Last years IEP goals as recorded by the middle school included:

- improve reading performance to 5.1 grade level;
- improve mathematics performance to 5.1 grade level;
- increase attention to academic tasks (decrease out-of-turn talking).

You think her IEP annual goals this year should include:

- Use comprehension strategies to read for key concepts/main idea with 80% accuracy
- Use vocabulary strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words with 90% accuracy
- Use problem-solving strategies to complete basic mathematical operations with 80% accuracy
- Name and explain the purpose of accommodations used in each class with 90% accuracy
- Based on career assessments and completion of 9th grade career exploratory shops, select a career technical training area that matches her strengths, needs, and preferences

Anna's teachers this year have said they enjoy having Anna in class, but you've already received lots of requests for consultation about how to modify assignments for her. The teachers seem particularly worried about her ability to read the high school texts. You've put in a request to get her textbooks scanned so they can be "read" aloud for her by the Kurzweil 3000, but she can only use that at school. Maybe the parents would be willing to buy some screen reading software that she could use at home? You'd like to see Anna have more tutoring in reading and mathematics. She could participate in the afterschool tutoring.

