

This October 21st and 22nd the Utah Mentor Teacher Academy welcomes one of its favorite instructors, Dr. Judy Wood, from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Wood will be introducing the Academy mentors to her Systematic Approach to Adapting the Learning Environment (SAALE). The SAALE Model answers the call for differentiating instruction for all students within general education and provides even greater access to students with disabilities. This practical research-based

model prepares educators to align curriculum to students. The following abridged article conveys her most recent ideas regarding the core curriculum standards and lesson planning for the special needs student. The full article, including lesson plans can be found at: www.updc.org/library/speducator/multimedia/index.html Past mentors who would like to attend should contact Mary Baldwin at the UPDC (801) 272-3431.



Judy Wood, Professor • Virginia Commonwealth University

Lesson Planning, Standards and the Special Needs Student

When preparing to engage all learners within our schools, a major aspect is lesson planning. The lesson plan is the road map from the standards and is designed to meet the standard. In the lesson planning process, the general education and special education teachers become actively involved in the planning and implementation of instruction and assessment. What better place than the lesson plan to prepare to engage all learners.

Before lesson planning begins, the nation and states have been busy developing guidelines for curricula selection for school districts. From the curricula educators begin to develop their units and resulting lessons. Let's back up and take a look at national and state preparation for curricula development.

Traditionally, educators within school districts were free to select what was to be taught and what materials were to be used. Across the nation attention was drawn to the diversity in the skills students were taught. It was felt that our students were capable of learning more. Nationally, the skills students were learning were addressed. States began to develop standards for school districts to follow when developing curricula. These standards were further broken into small steps or benchmarks and indicators were inserted into the benchmarks to establish a measuring point for educators.

Lesson plans are established, students are taught and assessment is implemented. Assessment is used ongoing when teaching and re-teaching a skill. Assessment further evaluates the lesson, measures teachers' instruction, students' progress, schools' and districts' progress, and eventually the states' progress in education.

Collaboration in Lesson Planning

Most often, the special education teacher becomes actively involved in the lesson planning process only when the general

education teacher is in the last stage of planning: developing a daily lesson plan. However, it is more beneficial to the student with special needs if the special education teacher becomes involved in the first phase of planning: the yearly lesson plan. A year's worth of learning outcomes, as set forth in daily plans, might be attainable for students without disabilities, but difficult for a student with special needs. It's a losing battle to try to keep a student in a general education class where the skills being taught are instructionally too advanced. A balance must be maintained between skills taught and those that are reasonably attainable.

Many students with special needs and those at risk can achieve success during general lesson plan activities when intervention points are identified and appropriate accommodations or modifications are provided. This process depends on careful, well-planned collaboration between general and special education teachers. As teachers work together, they should follow several guidelines:

1. Realize that interventions to the general class lesson plan may be necessary.
2. Be specific in listing what will occur during each component of the lesson plan. Include an objective, strategies, resources, and evaluation.
3. Allow time for both teachers to review the lesson plan and develop appropriate interventions.
4. Be flexible when an adaptation or intervention does not work.
5. Be prepared to develop an alternate intervention.
6. Realize that when an intervention is made to the lesson plan, the plan is still valid and not "watered down." ■