

Anya Dickey

### Philosophy of Special Education

Special education is a field of education I never previously expected to fall in love with, but it has stolen my heart. Through the observation I did in exceptional student and one in high school, I found myself constantly levitating towards the students with special needs. It was a struggle for me to not focus my attention on those students. I believe every student, even the individuals with disabilities, can learn. There is no such thing as a stupid kid; there are just kids who learn differently. An unfortunate issue I have witnessed and we addressed in class was the discrimination towards students with disabilities. This can come from anyone even teachers and I believe that is something that needs to be eradicated.

IDEA and 504s have helped numerous students in the American education system. I believe thanks to IDEA many students have been provided help that they need to earn an equitable education. Before these acts, students were ostracized by the public school system and rejected or sent to an isolated school. While the education system is undoubtedly imperfect today, every student is given the chance towards an education. With further laws, a majority of students with disabilities are included in the regular education classroom which I believe is great.

Students with disabilities face various obstacles that many of us might not even consider. There are so many types of disabilities that I struggle to say I have one big consideration for. Each student is unique and certain things can work for one individual, but not another. My biggest consideration for students with disabilities will be to treat them fairly and try to make

them feel as loved as anyone else. Some instructional strategies I have in mind are seating modifications, closed captioning on videos, and doing things like offering outlines of future lessons to students as needed.

I believe the most important consideration when deciding where a student should receive their education is what would benefit them most. At the end of the day, my priority is for the students to be able to receive an education that both emotionally and instructionally benefits them. I do support an inclusive approach, but for some students that does not work. I think the extremely severe children can receive the most support that they require. I believe that students with mild to moderate disabilities should be included in the classroom as much as possible as that can aide their mental health. Children are not unobservant or stupid, they notice when they do not get to be with their peers and that can really hurt their self esteem.

I believe that the most important role performed by the special education teacher is the loving mentor. Students need acceptance and love just as much as they need guidance and discipline. I think that it is important the teacher develops strong interpersonal relationships with all of their students. I have noticed that students respond better to teachers that they personally like and admire. It is also important they can effectively get the necessary curriculum across to the student in a way that works for them.

In my opinion, the regular education teacher also has an important role of being not just a loving mentor, but a facilitator. When students with disabilities are placed in regular education classroom, there is extra concern over their relationship with peers. I believe that the regular education teachers play a big role in facilitating these relationships and discreetly providing aid

to the students. To me, it especially vital not to draw attention to the extra help the students receive as that can embarrass them or cause shame from their peers.