

Educational Opportunities for Physically Handicapped Students in Eastern Europe

This lesson plan was written for community college instructors of a number of different disciplines. The lesson plan can be further tailored to give an international perspective to courses in sociology, education, disability rights, international studies, legal studies, social work, human rights, comparative politics, economics, global studies, media studies and/or engineering courses. The lesson is designed to last for 3 hours and can be broken up into multiple lessons at the instructor's discretion.

Introductory Readings: To be assigned for homework before class; amount and variety to be determined by instructor. Depending on the time allotted for the whole curriculum, one case study can be examined or both can be included to provide a comparative perspective.

Theoretical Reading: Should be assigned to students pursuing studies in education, or advanced students interested in theory. It can also serve as a resource for the instructor so that he/she might have a better understanding of the field and would be better able to explain the field to students without actually assigning the reading. Key terms such as *inclusive education*, *mainstreaming*, *disabilities*, etc., are defined and distinguished from each other within a historical, international context.

Kisanji, Joseph. *Historical and Theoretical Basis of Inclusive Education: Keynote address for the Workshop on 'Inclusive Education in Namibia: The Challenge for Teacher Education'*, 24-25 March 1999, Rossing Foundation, Khomasdal, Windhoek, Namibia."
www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/hist_theorectic.doc

Case Study Readings:

Ukraine

News Article: Korzun, Ksenia. "Integrated Education in Ukraine" *The Bearr Trust*. Odessa, June 15, 2012. http://www.bearr.org/en/news_items/view/670/integrated_education_in_ukraine.

Academic Article: Raver, Sharon A. (2007) "The Emergence of Inclusion for Students with Disabilities in Ukraine" *International Journal of Special Education*. 22: 1, 32-38.

Czech Republic

News Article: Habibovic, Milica. "Meeting special needs the caring way" *The Prague Post*. August 26, 2004. <http://www.praguepost.com/archivescontent/39849-meeting-special-needs-the-caring-way.html>

Academic Article: Mrug, Sylvie and Wallander, Jan L. (2002) "Self- Concept of Young People with Physical Disabilities: Does Integration Play a Role?" *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*. 49: 3, 267-280.

For a comparative perspective on the current educational opportunities for disabled children and adults in the European Union and the EU's goals for further integration, see the official EU press release "Special needs children and disabled adults still getting a raw deal from education, says report" available online at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-761_en.htm.

In-class warm-up activity for students: Divide students into small groups and assign each group, at random, the task of summarizing, in about one minute, one of the articles assigned for homework. Once students have summarized the article for their peers, the instructor can emphasize the following points before moving on to the next activity:

- The value of comparative study. Examining case studies conducted outside of the U.S. in different subject areas helps students gain further insight into their own system and allow them to confirm or reassess values, processes, rules and regulations.
- The financial cost of integration.
- Social change necessary for the inclusion of all types of students in one academic setting.

Group Assignment: Small Group Brainstorming Session. Ask students to spend 5-7 minutes as a group answering one of the following questions. Each group can then orally present their answers to the class.

1. What advantages are there to educating disabled students in schools specifically tailored to their needs, where their classmates are only other disabled students? What disadvantages might exist in such a system? In what cases might this separate system be desirable or undesirable (give 2 concrete examples).
2. What kind of infrastructure might a student in a wheelchair need to travel to and from school that a student who can walk might not need?
3. If able-bodied and handicapped elementary students are in a classroom together, what kind of extra training might a teacher in such a classroom need, if any?

In-Class Film (can also be assigned for homework or extra credit): *Ukraine's Forgotten Children* (2012) by British filmmaker Kate Blewett.

Available for purchase at: <http://truevisiontv.com/shop/product/details/117/ukraine39s-forgotten-children>

The instructor can choose to let students watch the film unguided, stop at mentioned points below to discuss specific aspects, and/or use the worksheet provided to maintain student attention throughout the film. Reading of Kate Blewett's explanation of why she made the film may also enhance critical viewing of the film. Her explanation is available at <http://mayashope.org/2012/09/08/kate-blewett-discusses-ukraines-forgotten-children/>.

Film worksheet: see attached.

End of viewing discussion questions:

- What are students' main impressions of the film? Did they find anything surprising?
- Who might the audiences for this film be?
- What biases does the filmmaker exhibit? What do you think her purpose was in making this film?
- At the end of the film, we learn that Sascha has been adopted by a family from abroad. Is this a solution to the problem presented by the filmmaker?
- If you were observing the grown men in the film with the purpose of determining whether or not they may be able to live independently, what kinds of behaviors would you look for? What kind of questions would you ask them individually?

Take-home assignment: Respond to one of the following three prompts in 2-3 pages, typed, using evidence from course readings, class discussions, and/or media used during the lesson.

1. What are the possible advantages and disadvantages of educating physically disabled students separately from their able-bodied peers? Are there instances when separate education is desirable? If yes, imagine and describe one possible situation where you believe it might be beneficial and describe specifically to whom it might be beneficial.
2. Identify the main argument (or arguments) in Mrug and Wallander's article and cite evidence from the article to support your interpretation. Do you see any of Mrug and Wallander's theories or arguments in any of the boys in Blewett's film? Support your answer.
3. Compare the Ukrainian orphanage system to the American foster care system. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each system? Which do you consider better, in what kind of circumstances, and why? Could the American foster care system implement any of the advantageous aspects of the Ukrainian orphanage system? If so, which ones? Could the Ukrainian orphanage system integrate any of the advantageous aspects of the American foster care system? If yes, which would these aspects be and how do you believe they might be beneficial?