

Instructionally Related Activities Report Form

SPONSOR: Talya Drescher

PROGRAM/DEPARTMENT: School of Education

ACTIVITY TITLE: Perspectives on Disability

DATE (S) OF ACTIVITY: Multiple Dates Throughout Fall semester, 2019

Please submit via email to the IRA Coordinator along with any supporting documentation within 30 days after the activity.

A. ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- (1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY;
 - (2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?
 - (3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?
 - (4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?
 - (5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?
 - (6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?
 - (7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)
 - 8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY (DO NOT INCLUDE ACCOUNTING STRINGS)
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B. ATTENDEE LIST- SUPPORTING DOCUMENT:

In addition to the report form, *in a separate document*, please provide a list of participants that engaged in the instructionally related activity. This for IRA Committee reference only and will not be published on the IRA website. Include your name and the title of your IRA activity on the document.

C.IMAGES FROM ACTIVITY:

Please provide a few images in this document (or attached separately) that demonstrate student participation.

(1) PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

Over the course of the semester, multiple speakers spoke to 4 sections of SPED/PSYCH 345. This report will include an overview of the multiple classes the speakers addressed.

The section (004) had two *guest speakers*:

- Mindy Froelich, math teacher (high school) and a parent of a young child with autism—she is a CI graduate in math and teacher credential program.
- Samuel Capozzi—he is a non-speaking person with autism.
- (One speaker had to cancel, due to the Santa Paula fire and school closures)

The speakers spoke about their experiences in schools and society (about disability, inclusion, discrimination, advise to future teachers)

Other sections had multiple guest speakers over the course of the term. Speakers covered the topics of:

- Mental Illness
- Medical/Physical Disabilities
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Severe/Multiple Disabilities
- Communication Disorders
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Learning Disabilities
- Gifted and Talented
- Twice Exceptionality

Speakers spoke for approximately 1.5 hours per session.

(2) HOW DID THE ACTIVITY RELATE TO A COURSE(S) AND/OR LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

These learning outcomes from the course syllabus were addressed:

- **Describe variations in children from developmental, educational, and psychological perspectives.**
 - a. MINDY: How she knew her baby had signs of autism (she described those indicators) but could not get an early diagnosis from the doctors.
 - b. SAMUEL: His story of being a non-speaking person with autism. Being talked about in front of him as if he did not understand. Moment he found his way of communicating. Strategies in seeking high school diploma and higher education.
- **Differentiate characteristics of children in the major categories of disabilities and gifted and talented**
 - a. MINDY: Characteristics of autism from a “high functioning” side of the spectrum.

- b. SAMUEL: Experiences from being on political science honor roll, and Mortar Board.
 - **Describe the general education, special education and support personnel roles and responsibilities in the educational process (from identification, referral, assessment, IEP planning and meeting, instruction and evaluation)**
- c. MINDY: Her work as a math teacher on IEP meetings, ways to connect with parents and high school students themselves in meetings. Her own experiences as a parent—how to build relationships with schools, but also how to call on the school when processes are not properly followed
- d. SAMUEL: Ways he works with the disability accommodations office and with professors

Other instructors noted that:

- This is a pre-requisite course for credential students and also meets the UDIGE requirement. It is a survey course on disabilities studies. The presentations supported material covered in the course on emotional & behavioral disorders (mental illness), autism and physical disabilities.
- The speakers helped the students see how the course content is applicable beyond the required course assignments.
- The various interviews allowed the students to hear firsthand knowledge from professionals working in the field of special education.

(3) WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OF THE ACTIVITY?

- It is vital that future educators hear directly from people who are their “clients”—individuals with disabilities and parents. This will deepen their compassion toward their future students so that the children are not mere numbers on a case load.
- It is also important, as an institution with a social justice focus, that we show respect toward people with disabilities and parents with a token honorarium and not expect them to (always) donate their time
- Student Ratings of Teaching (my evaluations) stated that the guest speakers added invaluable perspectives for the course material. Focus group comments during last class further stated that guest speakers were one of the strengths of this class.
- Anecdotal observation: Students wiped tears in both presentations, as the story from a parent (and our very own graduate) touched
- The speakers brought to life the various disorders/disabilities that we study in class. Our course provides text readings, videos and lecture---but having an individual who has personal experience and understanding about the disability is incredibly powerful. The reaction of the students is palpable. They are engaged, attentive, and actively participate with many questions posed to the speakers.
- Students gained insight into a variety of professions in the field of Special Education. Many students stated that they were inspired by certain interviewees to such a degree that they wanted to pursue a career in the same area.

- Allowing the students direct access to active professionals who share their knowledge and expertise, as well as the ability to have student's questions answered directly and in-person was really powerful. Students felt that this was one of the course strengths, with many commenting specifically about this course activity on the course reviews.

(4) WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE/WERE THE ACTIVITY'S WEAKNESSES?

- The classroom space continues to be a challenge at CI. The room is long and narrow, and it is hard to hear the speakers. Luckily the desks were the rolling type so that students could move up closer (static furniture does not allow for this type of flexibility).
- Consistency of speakers. Knowing that the speakers will contribute to the course, with advanced notice (one semester of advance notice would be wonderful) would help immensely with activity scheduling.

(5) HOW WOULD YOU IMPROVE THIS ACTIVITY FOR NEXT TIME?

- Book audio equipment through JB in advance
- To improve this activity, I would have the speakers provide a short (written) introduction, to assist with a comprehensive live introduction just before their presentation.
- I would like to have a student evaluation/reflection survey to help me determine their perception of this learning activity.

(6) WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE PROCESS?

- Instead of merely teaching special education from a clinical perspective, we need to embed authentic stories from individuals whose stories we attempt to tell.
- This reinforced the need for context for learners.
- Hearing from professionals actually "walking the walk" is always more meaningful than reading about the profession or listening to a lecture on the subject.

(7) WHAT ARE STUDENT RESPONSES TO THE ACTIVITY? ATTACH STUDENT EVALUATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS (IN ACCORDANCE WITH FERPA RESTRICTIONS YOU MUST REMOVE ALL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE STUDENT INFORMATION)

FROM SRTs (cut/pasted open ended comments):

The professor helped by bringing guest speakers into the classroom so the students can relate to the course material was the best. Few professors have that availability to do so.

The guest speakers were an invaluable source in bringing the perceptions of individuals with disabilities to my attention. An amazing experience.

FEEDBACK from End-Of-Class focus group (only guest speaker relevant comments included):

- “The guest speakers were amazing”
 - “Authentic stories from the parent and the person with autism”
 - “Really opened my eyes...I had no idea about the hardships”
 - “Made me understand my brother so much more, and what my Mom must have gone through...”
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- I have had these guest speakers for many years. The NAMI speaker provides her own evaluation. I read them. They are very positive toward the speaker and often provide insight into my students. Over the years, several have privately contacted the speaker for advice or referrals to agencies and programs.
 - On every SRT I have received over the years—the guest speakers are always mentioned as a highlight of the course.
 - Students found this activity enjoyable and immensely informative. This learning activity was mentioned as one of the strengths on the course reviews.

(8) GIVE A SUMMARY OF EXPENSES FOR THE ACTIVITY.

\$200 per speaker (preparation of slides and talk, travel, parking, presentation in class)

**B. ON SEPARATE DOCUMENT, PLEASE ATTACH ATTENDEE LIST
(PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFO REMOVED)**

Attendance is required in all sections mentioned. Rather than provide the multiple rosters, please see below:

Note: Speakers spoke in class for in person sections and made recordings for online sections.

SPED/PSYCH 345

Section	Number of Students Enrolled (per records)
01	29
02	34
03	29
04	29
05	24
06	23
07	26
08	17
10	16
	Total: 227 Students

C. PLEASE INCLUDE UP TO 6 IMAGES IN THIS DOCUMENT TO DEMONSTRATE STUDENT PARTICIPATION (or attached as a separate document)

Due to the personal nature of the topics covered, photos were not taken of the speakers. Please see note below if further evidence is required:

One instructor noted:

- I did not take pictures from the back of the class when students listened to the speakers. It just was not appropriate in the moment...the topic was emotional at times (the speaker had to gather herself to continue). I can provide a student or two to speak directly to you about the experience. The speaker is coming back, and I will also extend the invitation to anyone on the committee to join us.