

Collaboration Issues and Dilemmas

Student Ownership	Both general and special education teachers are accountable for the student's success
Individual vs Class Focus	Using Universal Design of Learning (UDL) so all students benefit, rather than catering to a few.
Content vs Accommodation	Going over more material or catering to student needs by choosing what is more relevant or feasible for them
Real World vs Student's World	Skills that will be applicable outside of the classroom

Student Ownership

Debating over which teacher has ownership over a student is pointless and disrespectful to the said student. There is no singular teacher who is responsible for a student's success – we *all* need to work together. We can mitigate individuals feeling overburdened or overwhelmed with a students' accommodations if we use our collaborative planning time effectively, and intentionally distribute specific tasks to capable teachers.

Individual vs Class Focus

Universal Design for Learning is essential in the classroom because of the fact that all students are coming in with different experiences, learning styles, and perspectives. Being able to address all students at once is critical in keeping everyone focused, engaged, and learning. Oftentimes there is a tendency or hesitation to give certain students, especially those with IEPs and/or disabilities, more attention than their classmates. Not only is that an opportunity to build resentment between peers, but also unfair to all students who have a right to free education in the classroom.

Content vs Accommodation

This is a dilemma I see rather frequently, especially in arts classrooms where the subject matter is not seen as essential to a student's success. There is a temptation to only teach what may seem "relevant" or "more feasible" for a student to focus on areas of needs, especially if another teacher recommends or suggests it, but doing so will only deprive the student of knowing their true potential. There is no way to know if a student can grasp a concept without introducing the concept to them. However, the public school calendar moves quickly and ruthlessly, and I can see this dilemma as something I myself may fall into.

Real World vs Student's World

I've argued with a coworker somewhat on this topic a month or so ago. We were discussing a student both of us saw during the same day, at different periods, who both struggles to speak in English and also has an autism diagnosis. We both agreed that the grading at our current school is too lenient at students, and we both agreed that it did not serve our students; however, my colleague took the stance that he wanted to push the student harder in his lessons because "real life is hard," and he thought to teach resilience through content area. While I find merit in that, I also understand there is so little time we have with students, and if we really intend to prepare students for the world beyond high school, my opposing thought was to teach the student how to find authentic resources in the real world to help him. That doesn't necessarily mean other people who will write essays for him, but I think of something you, Professor Zionts, had said in our first class: that we are not trying to handle students with disabilities, but teach them how to live *with* their disabilities. There are a lot of government-funded and non-profit organizations that seek to serve and assist individuals with disabilities, but you have to wade through a lot of bureaucracy and applications first. My philosophy is that each individual should strive to have as easy of a life as possible to fill their basic needs, that way they can seek out hardship, learning,

and self-actualization on their own. That pushes students to leave extrinsic motivation for intrinsic. In the end, I think it is critical to teach each student, as much as possible, not what “the real world is like,” but what the real world will be like *for them*, and how to then navigate it.