

Synthesis of Class Material

1.1 The two cases mentioned in class which were impactful on Special Education and the rights of students with disabilities are: *Brown v Board of Education*, which did not directly address students with disabilities, but by ruling segregation by race as unconstitutional purported the idea that segregation by disabilities would therefore, also, be unconstitutional; and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, which would later be revised as the Education of the Handicapped Act in 1970. The more recent ones were the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which brought two main ideas to the field of Special Education: Individualized Learning Plans (IEPs) with intentions to meet special needs, and the idea of least restrictive environment and its continuum for students with disabilities.

1.2 Classroom teachers are responsible for the specific goals listed in a student's IEP, though they are not to be blamed for lack of progress if they show ample effort. They are also required to work with the Special Education teacher to gather data, collect student work, and compile evidence, especially in the case that a student may need to be referred to Special Education. In that case, the teacher also has a duty to communicate with parents about whether the behaviors the teacher is noticing are visible at home, and how frequently, and under which circumstances. It is also a teacher's responsibility to know testing accommodations allowed for their students, to fully show off their work and understanding.

1.3 NCLB testing accommodations for students with disabilities included presentation modes, response modes, timing, scheduling, settings, and languages. These different modes allowed for more successes to be showcased, especially for students with disabilities. IDEA's most recent add-ons included early intervention services for infants and toddlers and plans for transitioning

to preschool in Part C. It also introduced Individualized Family Service Plans, to help outline what families would need to support their children. Part B continued by providing services for children ages 3-6 years old, and planned for transition from preschool to kindergarten. Lastly, IDEA included individualized transition plans (ITP) which begin around grades 6-7 to support career and college plans.

Application of Class Material

In my teaching experience, the first thing that I hope to apply from this class is to remember – there are a million types of disabilities and no singular way to address them all. It is my job to advocate for students who may be pigeonholed into an incorrect solution, and to advocate for students who are underestimated by their teachers and peers. I must actively check my own biases to teach all of my students holistically. As a teacher, I also will collect evidence and proof of a child's work in the case that they need testing, and communicate with their caretakers about my concerns. As much as possible, I will include the student. Lastly, the most actionable item I can immediately do, is to know which test accommodations are allowed for my students and to create accommodations for tests of my own. I want to see my students succeed in as many ways as they can.

Some challenges I can see that may arise, and have already done so, are students taking advantage of privileges. For instance, I am often quite lenient with the hall pass. In my 7th period, I have one student quite like Joe from our module who struggles with reading and is antsy to leave the class. I frequently bargain with him to stay in class a couple more minutes, or work just a little longer, before allowing him to use the pass which I know he will use to roam around. Even if it may have taken away from his class time, we have built some trust over this. His grades are good in this class, and he often asks for me to inspect his work with pride. That

said, I'm not so concerned about being taken advantage of that I will trade that for the security and safety my students feel and deserve. I believe the best way to acknowledge these is to be clear with why the privilege is allowed, and what the consequences are when we abuse them. In the end, when we make classrooms more comfortable for students who are uncomfortable, we are building an environment for everyone to be more comfortable.