

CRITICAL THINKING ASSIGNMENT MODULE SIX

Inclusive Lesson Plan

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Unfortunately, stories like Alex W.'s, whose family lost their suit against Colorado's Poudre School District in 2022, are not uncommon. Alex was diagnosed with several disabilities (Autism, Down Syndrome, vision and hearing loss, and impulse disorder), and his parents claimed the school district did not support him sufficiently as legally required and as outlined in his Individualized Learning Plan, or IEP (Michael Karlik, 2022). The School District won, and upheld that all psychological, behavioral, and educational needs were met as required. Alex was fortunate enough to have a family so involved, while far too many students do not have families that are actively advocating for them. The documentation needed for students to receive an IEP and require the school to provide accommodations for their disabilities (whether cognitive, learning, or physical), are full of fees, bureaucratic hurdles, and dead-ends. This highlights the need for educators themselves to work towards a more inclusive learning environment, identifying every opportunity to provide an accommodating classroom environment and utilizing available resources, tools, and assistive technology (AT) to ensure students are at the very least physically able to receive an appropriate education.

The three highest volume disability categories for students in Colorado include Specific Learning Disabilities, Serious Emotional Disabilities, and Other Health Impairments (*Special Education Data / CDE*, n.d.). Focusing on these disabilities, however, excludes 19% of learners with disabilities with more physical presentations (2.85% of all learners) (*Special Education Data / CDE*, n.d.). Universal Design for Learning is an educational platform that serves to level the playing field for students with all sorts of disabilities, urging educators to provide multiple means of engagement, representation, and opportunities for action & expression in the classroom (*UDL: The UDL Guidelines*, n.d.). The goal is to make lessons as inclusive as possible by taking into account every student's individual needs. This falls alongside individualized/personalized

learning, and is a seemingly impossible task. Nevertheless, an educators' responsibility lies at providing the best opportunities and the best support possible for students.

Continuing with the case study of a 10th grade English Language classroom's unit on "Why Use Fake News", there are multiple inclusive aspects built into the curriculum and unit design. The intended class takes place just down the road from Alex's school in the Thompson School District, whose department of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) is dedicated to providing professional development opportunities for educators, providing resources for students and families, and highlighting inclusive student engagement (*Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) - Thompson School District*, n.d.). Both school districts have a relationship with a supportive nonprofit organization, The Arc of Larimer County, which provides educational and financial support, as well as advocacy, for disabled individuals and often helps families navigate the paperwork required for students to receive sufficient support that comes with an IEP (Snow, 2023). The school uses Google Classroom as their Learning Management System, which has been proven to be a valuable tool for students with multiple needs, as the software utilizes several AT within its programs (speech-to-text and spell-checkers are a couple), as well as providing an always available platform for students and families to access material together, print materials with large print, utilize closed captioning on videos, and collaborate on multiple documents (Sharpe & Young, 2023).

The class in focus is an end-of-week class scheduled towards the beginning of the unit focusing on Critical Analysis. It is scheduled as a "Work Day", meaning that students reflect on the week's discussions and lessons and implement them with a focus towards adding to their final project. Students have the opportunity to utilize several inclusive strategies as well as AT: "Clarifying the content of [AT], designed to help (assist) in the learning process... the tools of

this group are not a specialized platform or catalyst for the learning process itself but such tools create conditions for its implementation... creating opportunities for learning that did not previously exist.” (Drushlyak et al., 2023). It is important to recognize that the use of AT alone does not support enhanced learning for students with disabilities, it simply strives to provide the environment so all students have the ability to access the same lessons. Additionally, the use of AT “may not guarantee the development of individual qualities that are in high demand by society today, such as creativity and soft social skills”, but with intentional use it has been shown to help “develop soft social skills such as teamwork, communication, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and negotiation skills. These skills can be enhanced through the use of social networks, online platforms, and cloud services” (Drushlyak et al., 2023).

The lesson is designed to build upon students’ social skills through Socratic dialogue, utilizing information found through varying online searches that focus on one concept or another. While doing the searches for this lesson on critical thinking, students explore the concepts such as “How do you create ideas” and “What is analysis?”. Statistically, the students with IEPs in this classroom will have a variety of “invisible disorders” such as ADHD, dyslexia, mood disorders, or Traumatic Brain Injuries, but several students will also come from low-income households and be nonnative English speakers, all which place them in a need for a focus on inclusivity. Online searches can be adapted with the aid of speech-to-text, larger font sizes, specialized tools, and personalized search inputs, but it is just as important to make sure students who would have difficulty completing tasks on their own or at home have the support available. The built-in work days provide the opportunity for students to work collaboratively, build relationships that provide accountability, translational support, and reinforce 21st Century skills: “While students are working collaboratively, they develop twenty-first century skills such as

when they brainstorm and plan for their project. They build on one another's ideas as they listen and share. They also evaluate the successes of their group activities." (Miranda et al., 2021)

There are many other types of lessons that can be structured using other AT, such as gamification, augmented reality, virtual reality, and multiple collaborative software types. Ultimately, "Inclusive education includes not only physical access to the general education classroom, but also meaningful access to classroom literacy content, curriculum, and learning experiences" which can be experienced differently with each classroom's focus (Tracy-Bronson et al., 2024). Personalized learning is taken to the next level with UDL, seen in this lesson plan through "Instructional practices [that] involve integrating curriculum and offering choice for assessment, peer learning, differentiated instruction and assessment, integration of technology, and social and academic inclusivity of students with exceptionalities." (Sharpe & Young, 2023). It can be adapted for students who benefit from strategies such as using compare and contrast charts, visual supports, graphic organizers, systematic prompting, reciprocal questioning and question generation (seen in the Socratic dialogues), and read-alouds, all of which have been found to benefit students with autism, dyslexia, ADHD, and other disorders (Tracy-Bronson et al., 2024). Ultimately, the type of AT and specific inclusivity strategies must change depending on the students' needs, but the goal is that the general lesson structure supports all students in the classroom and facilitates transformative learning experiences.

Lastly, the "work day" lesson plan supports students' co-creation of learning, providing agency, increasing engagement, and 21st Century skill development: "Public schooling is ideally an avenue where students are apprentice for democratic participation, and it prepares them to be actively involved in the shaping and transforming of the society. This exists in schools where student opinions matter; where teachers are not the only "experts" in the classroom; and where

everyone feels that they have something worthwhile to say (Kane & Chimwayange, 2013 as cited in Miranda et al., 2021). The integration of the concepts of “analysis” and “idea creation” into discussion and applied searches falls in line with constructivist theories of learning: “Constructivist learning theory allows for teachers to use pedagogical practices that allow multiple entry points during the learning process, a range of learning tasks that can be adjusted based on learners’ strengths and needs, and flexibility in the classroom while learners work within the same topic area. Thus, this creates space for multiple ways of learning that adjusts for students with a range of abilities. “(Tracy-Bronson et al., 2024). While the end goal of a well-crafted, thoroughly researched, multi-dimensional final project is expected of everyone in the class, what that looks like and how they get there depends entirely on the cooperation of the students and their teacher.

Lesson Plan

Title	“Why Use Fake News” - Critical Analysis Work Day
Grade/Subject Area	9th/10th Grade English
Diverse Learners	Statistically, five students in this classroom have a documented disability. There are likely several that have undocumented disabilities. The three highest volume disability categories for students in Colorado include Specific Learning Disabilities, Serious Emotional Disabilities, and Other Health Impairments (<i>Special Education Data / CDE</i> , n.d.), therefore, the chances of students having ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, anxiety disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, or processing disorder is high. The community itself is lower middle-class and upper lower class, with several families struggling financially. The community is also moderately populated with nonnative speakers.
Curriculum Standard or Course Learning Objective	<u>Ninth / Tenth Grade Band, Standard 4.</u> <i>Research Inquiry and Design - Synthesize multiple, authoritative literary and/or informational sources, creating cohesive research projects that show an understanding of the subject.</i> (CCSS: W.9-10.7, (<i>Colorado Academic Standards Online</i> , n.d.))

Technology and Diverse Learners

Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Classroom • Google Keep • Speech-to-text as needed • Audio file creation as needed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Classroom can be used for collaborative drafting and product creation, and has built-in Adaptive Technology (Sharpe & Young, 2023). Teamwork, communication, adaptability, emotional intelligence, and negotiation skills are all developed by using cloud services, shared documents, and social networks (Drushlyak et al., 2023). • Google Keep has a function on its app for speech-to-text capabilities, which allows students with dyslexia, ADHD, memory retention issues, physical typing challenges, and hearing challenges to translate Socratic Seminars into text that they can use for notes.
Inclusive Instructional Strategies	The class and unit are designed with the Universal Design for Learning guidelines in mind, working towards creating multiple avenues for engagement, representation, and action & expression (<i>UDL: The UDL Guidelines</i> , n.d.).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unit structure is highly focused on individualized learning, providing many opportunities for students to <i>explore their interests</i>, actively <i>utilize Adaptive Technologies</i>, and amend the instructions to arrive at the same intended goal with their own process. • The <i>personal choice</i> in research topics is designed to increase engagement, motivation, curiosity, and task completion in a collaborative, inclusive environment. • <i>Resources</i> provided such as sample texts represent a wide array of cultures, and discussions and work days are focused around individual curiosity and sharing of personal viewpoints, cultures, and understandings. • Many of the products and assessments throughout the class are intended to be completed through <i>individualized pacing</i>, and any additional time needed for timed assessments will be provided. • <i>Google Classroom</i> includes integrative alerts for assignments and assessments, ensuring parents and students both are provided with the necessary information to complete the task, alarms for upcoming tasks, and interactive calendars. • The intended atmosphere of the class is one of <i>openness and advocacy</i>, and students are provided with multiple opportunities to provide feedback for the classroom and the teacher regarding the effectiveness of assignments, and what they would like to see in further assignments.
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Lesson Structure (20–40 minutes)

Key Activities (select one or create your own)	Time Allocation (minutes)	Description
Review	5-7 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recap of the previous classes’ Socratic discussion on Analysis and Idea creation
Task Explanation	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of the exercise, which includes researching 3 academic papers (from a previous class) as a group of 3 students. The focus of the papers will be their research topic of choice for their final papers.
Research	7-10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will work in groups of 2-3 and discuss which search tools and search terms to use, discuss parameters, and individually identify at least three articles they could use to analyze how the “idea” of the conclusion in the papers was “created”. • Each article will be cited in their Google Keep notebook.
Analysis	10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will use the abstracts from the papers to identify which will be most helpful, identify the main themes of the abstracts, and summarize the relationship of idea generation, analysis of data, and reaching a conclusion.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will take notes in their Google Keep notebook, including how they will use this in their final project.
Reflection	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will share the connections they made and identify whether anybody else’s ideas are more useful for their project.
Assigned Homework	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework will be to thoroughly read through the three papers, annotate them for their annotated bibliography, and create a summary of the connections they made regarding new ideas that they can use in their project, how analysis is used in real research, and whether the papers gave them any new ideas for research. • The homework can be turned in as a typed document, as an audio file, or as brief notes with a request for 1:1 presentation summary with the teacher.

Unit Plan for “Why Use Fake News”

18 Weeks

54 Classes (M/W/F schedule)

32 Students

Colorado Fall Semester 2024-2025

Classes:

1-2 (8/7 & 8/9) - Authority and Resource Intro

- Intro with syllabus, intro of fundamental concepts and intro discussion "what is authority"
- Explanation of semester project, intro of Google Keep journals and setup, examples of good and bad resources
- Work Day - Resource lookup exercise

3-5 (8/12, 8/14, 8/16) - Research & Annotated Bibliography

- Annotated Bibliography Intro with examples
- Discussion around “Validity” and “Why Use Sources”
- Work Day - Group Exercise centered around Chat GPT, Wikipedia, and valid resources

6-8 (8/19, 8/21, 8/23) - Making a Claim/Thesis statements

- Intro to strong thesis statements
- Group discussion over What Comes First - thesis or research?
- Work Day - Creating BIG QUESTIONS from research

9-10 (8/26, 8/28 - no Friday) Supporting Your Claim

- Discussion around supporting your claim using evidence from valid sources
- Work Day - annotated bibliography research

11-12 (9/4, 9/6 - Labor Day) Academic Writing

- Intro to academic writing/grammar review/how to use editing tools and resources

- *Work Day - re-writing exercise on turning non-academic pieces into academic pieces*

13-15 (9/9, 9/11 9/13) - *Research - Academic Research How-Tos*

- *Intro do different Research Styles/Studies, statistical analysis, vocab around academic studies*
- *Discussion on what to look for, difficulties with research, what makes something “significant”*
- *Work Day - Find four papers with different research styles related to your topic*

16-18 (9/16, 9/18, 9/20) *Critical Analysis*

- *Intro to analysis of academic papers/studies*
- *Discussion around “What is Analysis”, “How do you create ideas”*
- *Work Day- identify main themes and make connections among several academic papers*

19-21 - 9/23, 9/25, 9/27) *Annotated Bibliography Drafts & Peer Editing*

- *Intro to different technology use (zoom, etc.) and Peer Editing*
- *Discussion - open-mindedness to peer editing/feedback, use of different tools*
- *Work Day - Peer Editing activities and exploration of digital tools*

22-24 (9/30, 10/2, 10/4) - *1st Quarter Ends - Annotated Bibliographies Due*

- *Discussion on Growth Mindset Course from Khan Academy*
- *Work Day - Bibliographies due before next class*
- *Reflection Day*

25-27 (10/7, 10/9, 10/11) *What if You’re Wrong?*

- *Intro to strength in thorough research/finding opposing viewpoints*
- *Discussion on claims using resource- choose opposite side*
- *Work day - Researching a multimedia source to present to class (work during fall break)*

Students off for a week

28-30 (10/21, 10/23, 10/25) *Presenting your idea*

- *Intro to Professional Presentations and Q&A, examples provided*
- *Discussion around what a presentation entails/brainstorming different styles*
- *Work Day - turning annotated bibliography into a presentation*

31-33 (10/28, 10/30, 11/1) *What to Keep*

- *Intro to prioritizing and presenting research*
- *Discussion - what makes something important*
- *Work Day - integrating feedback into presentation*

34-36 (11/4, 11/6, 11/8) - *Presentations & Feedback - “Because They Say So”*

- *Presentation will be recorded either as a video or as a narrated slideshow, no more than 6 minutes in length. Each student will review three presentations. This class will be an intro into HOW to do it, and a review of one presentation. A rubric and feedback template will be provided.*
- *Two more presentation reviews*
- *Work Day - Feedback reflection for students, clarification, and brainstorming of integration*

37-38 (11/13, 11/15 (Veterans Day) - *Research Time Management*

- *Discussion time management styles and priorities*
- *Draft a theoretical study and create a timeline for it, including style of research and analysis*

39-41 (11/18, 11/20, 11/22) - *Critical Analysis Part 2*

- *Intro to identification of gaslighting, false research claims, “considerations” in academic research papers*
- *Discussion - Why disclose “considerations” or add “recommendations”*
- *Work Day - Review “considerations” in research papers used for annotated bibliography*

Thanksgiving Break

42-44 (12/2, 12/4, 12/6) Work Week for final drafts

- *Work Day - finishing up research and making connections*
- *Work Day - draft for peer edits due EOD*
- *Discussion - Modern Topic “big idea” discussion and identification of what to look out for to ensure a valid claim, valid resources, and gaslighting*

45-47 (12/9,12/11, 12/13) Peer Editing & Final Drafts Due

- *Work Day - Peer edits round 1*
- *Work Day Peer Edits round 2*
- *Work Day - integrating peer edits*

48-50 (12/16, 12/18, 12/20) - 2nd Quarter Ends - Reflection Week

- *Final Drafts due before Class - Discussion on research process, timeline, key-takeaways of the actual physical process of writing a research paper*
- *Final discussion on Authority and validity, identify a “ridiculous topic” to defend*
- *Volunteer-based discussion - use your skills to defend your “ridiculous topic”*

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