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Guiding Principles for  
Educational Programming

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**ABSTRACT**

This article presents the outcome of a reflective study where pre-service teachers created visual representations of principles that guide their teaching in the inclusive classroom. Based on evaluations and reflections of the activity, results suggest that creating the visual representations served as an effective tool in helping pre-service teachers recognize and support children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. Examples of the completed projects are included.

Guiding Principles for Educational Programming

In designing an educational program for students with disabilities, it is important to consider goals, objectives, activities, skills acquisition, and assessments in terms of six guiding principles (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2002). In this study, university pre-service teachers created visual representations of the six guiding principles as delineated by Turnbull & Turnbull (expectations, strengths, contributions, choice-making, relations, and citizenship) to serve as a classroom reminder that these principles should play a part in a student's educational program. High expectations for students with and without disabilities focuses on how all students can achieve success. The student's strengths, likes, and dislikes should be at the center of the student's individual education plan. Recognizing contributions let the student know

that others believe in him and that he has the capability to make good choices. Self-determination allows the student to have confidence in himself and his ability to make choices that will be productive and beneficial. Relationships and citizenship involves functionality and participation within the larger community. Following is a sample of projects created by the pre-service teachers with a brief description.

#### Sample 1



The sun represents the positive behavior I wish to radiate within my class at all times. The handprints belong to my two nieces, I call my own children, and myself which represents the teacher and students all working together to achieve the 6 values within our classroom and life. This was a very fun and creative project, which I just live for that allowed concrete structure to the important values which I intend to use for the rest of my career.

Sample 2



I created this Styrofoam moon with six stars to represent my guiding values. Just like the stars in the sky guide navigation, these stars will guide me to be the best teacher I can be. I also think of them as shooting stars and the guiding values will always be something I will shoot for.



Sample 3

My project is a picture frame. I wanted something I could use in my classroom everyday so that I would constantly be reminded of my values. I know I will get a class picture every year so I will be putting the picture of my students in the middle of my values.

Sample 4



For my artistic representation of the six guiding values I chose to create my project made of wood. My project is a wooden schoolhouse with hall passes attached to the bottom for my future students to use. Each hall pass has one of the six guiding values written on it.

I like to build things when I can. My personal goal during this project was to make something I could see myself using in my own classroom. I wanted my project to be something that I could hang in my classroom that I would be proud of. Hopefully my students will ask me about the hall passes so I can explain to them the six guiding values. I really enjoyed this project. Most of the time projects you make in class you never use again. I look forward to using this over and over again in my classroom.

Sample 5



I enjoyed putting my own touch on the six-guided values by using my interest in card making. I used different textures and shades of cardstock, designs and patterns of ribbon, and different colored prints of scrapbooking paper. I will always keep in mind the guiding principles for students when I create a positive environment to cultivate my students' success.

Sample 6



I have always been interested in my Native American Heritage. My great grandmother was from the Cherokee tribe. I made my choice based on this interest but it was not my only reason. The dream catcher to me symbolizes being the guardian of the children's dreams. I will place this in my future classroom to remind me of this daily. I fully believe in these six guiding values. The six decorative streamers of this dream catcher symbolize my six guiding values so that they will be in view as a visual reminder to 1) have great expectations for all, 2) accentuate positive contributions, 3) build on strengths, 4) act on choices, 5) expand relationships, and 6) ensure full citizenship (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2002).

Results of the study suggest that by incorporating these guiding principles into the course, university pre-service teachers are more likely to accept children with disabilities in the inclusive classroom. The outcome impacts the school experiences of students with disabilities positively as pre-

service teachers implement the six guiding principles in planning and teaching. Furthermore, with the artistic interpretations created by the university pre-service teachers, a vision that all students can learn together in the classroom is positively projected.

#### References

Turnbull, A. and Turnbull, R. (2002). *Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.