

# SPECIAL NEEDS AND GIFTED STUDENTS (SNGX)

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## **SNGX 500 A Guide to Differentiating Instruction for Gifted and Talented Students 3 credits**

If you've taught more than one student at a time, you know that students learn at different rates. And when you have an entire class full of different types of learners, how can you keep each of them engaged without planning 20 personalized lessons? Differentiating instruction is essential for reaching students of diverse learning styles and proficiency levels. In classrooms with gifted students, it is especially important to create learning experiences and assignments that provide choice and challenge with opportunities for deeper and more complex learning. In this course, you will learn how to identify gifted learners and understand their unique needs in the classroom. You will also create a differentiated learning plan, from brainstorming all the way through to delivery. First, you will consider everything from academic standards, goal setting, and pre-assessment to the instructional plan, assignment creation, and summative assessment. Your plan will account for your students' unique learning preferences, interests, and readiness levels, and include flexible grouping practices, tiered assignments, and student choice of content, process, and product. Finally, you will learn how to manage a differentiated classroom and foster student responsibility and independence. By the end of the course, you will have all the tools you need to modify instruction, assignments, and assessments with a deeper understanding of the "big picture" of unit design and a focus on gifted learners. This course is offered through Advancement Course.

## **SNGX 501 Communicating With Parents of Students With Special Needs 1 credit**

Communication with families whose children have a 504 Plan or IEP involves more than just general updates on their children's social and academic progress. Many families who have been navigating the special education bureaucracy have already had less-than-positive experiences with communication between home and school. Establishing a relationship of trust with these families early in the process ensures that communication remains open throughout the year as you demonstrate that you share the same goal as the family: the success of their child. In this course, you will examine your current communication practices and how you can improve them to create a positive working relationship with your students' families. You'll develop methods for establishing and maintaining healthy communication so parents know you are on the same team and working toward the same goals. In addition, you'll learn practical, stress-free strategies for tracking and logging all correspondences with parents to keep a transparent record of students' progress on their individual learning goals. Using the tools and techniques from this course, you will be able to cultivate a positive, caring relationship with your students' families and effectively share their progress so you can work together toward their child's success. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

## **SNGX 503 Deconstructing the IEP 3 credits**

Individualized education programs (IEPs) are meant to help schools and teachers know how to meet the needs of students who require special accommodations. However, for many teachers, IEPs can be intimidating to read and interpret, much less implement successfully in the classroom. In this course, you will learn how to read and use IEPs to reach students who have special needs in your classroom and communicate effectively with families and service providers. You'll be equipped with resources to help you examine each section of the IEP and organize the information into manageable chunks. In addition, you'll develop strategies for differentiating instruction and keeping track of students' IEP goals and progress. Using the knowledge and techniques from this course, you will be able to confidently implement IEPs in your classroom and know for sure that you are both complying with legal expectations and (more importantly) helping your students receive the education they need. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

## **SNGX 504 Every Student Succeeds Acts (ESSA) 1 credit**

Education is always evolving and innovating. Although some changes are exciting, it can also be daunting for educators to keep up with all the trends, including new laws and regulations. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the newest law that is transforming the face of education with its new procedures and accountabilities. In this course, you will explore the goals of ESSA as well as the important changes that affect all educators and students. You will evaluate the benefits and disadvantages of ESSA and develop strategies for implementing its guidelines without upending your entire curriculum. In addition, you'll create a plan to explain the new law to parents and families and support them through any changes. Using the strategies from this course, you will be able to understand and incorporate any changes from ESSA that affect you, your students, and their families. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

## **SNGX 505 High-Incidence Disabilities 3 credits**

Students with high-incidence disabilities often spend most or all of their school days in general population classrooms, but they still have needs that may require special accommodations or teaching styles. But who are these students, and how can you reach them in the midst of your already-packed classroom time? In this course, you will review the disabilities that are present with the highest frequency within the population of students who receive special education services. These include autism spectrum disorders, communication disorders, intellectual disabilities, specific learning disabilities, and emotional or behavior disorders. In addition to examining the common characteristics of students with these disabilities, you will develop differentiated instructional strategies and explore resources that will support the learning of all students in your classroom. Using the tools and techniques from this course, you will be able to understand the challenges of students with disabilities in your classroom and help them achieve their highest academic potentials. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 507 Reaching and Teaching Gifted Students in the Regular Classroom 3 credits**

Research shows that gifted students can sometimes be the least likely to succeed in your class. How can that be? Gifted students may be defined as ones who have “exceptional abilities in any area of learning that significantly exceeds grade-level expectations.” In other words, when gifted students are in a class with grade-age peers, the regular curriculum consists of content they either have already mastered or can master far more quickly than their classmates. That means that if you don’t make the proper curricular modifications, these students will become disengaged and not achieve all that they are capable of. In this course, you will learn how to identify gifted students and their individual needs (including those who have added challenges, such as ADHD or learning English as a second language). You’ll also cultivate techniques for keeping them interested in school, including helping them combat perfectionism and grouping gifted students together to challenge one another. Finally, you’ll participate in practical exercises to modify your activities and differentiate your instruction to motivate and energize your gifted students. Using the strategies from this course, you will be able to support gifted students to help them meet their true academic potential. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 508 Special Education: The Process and Law 3 credits**

Every year, more than 6 million children in the United States receive special education services. Whether you’ve worked with one of these students or not, it can be intimidating to know how to navigate special needs in the classroom. How do you know how to best assist these students, and what are the rules and laws surrounding this process? In this course, you will learn about the history of special education, including how special education and discrimination laws have evolved over the last 60 years. You will examine the key facets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is the current legislation governing special education, and how they apply at the federal, state, and local level. Once you have this foundational knowledge, you’ll learn how to identify emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities in students and how to create and implement individualized education programs (IEPs) to help them. With the knowledge you gain in this course, you will be equipped to navigate the special needs process and partner with parents and your school with ease and confidence. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 509 Strategies for Supporting Children with ADD/ADHD 3 credits**

The Center for Disease Control reports that up to 11% of children ages 4 to 17 have attention-deficit disorder or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD). That means 1 out of 10 of your students could be diagnosed with an attention disorder! More than 90% of these students will have serious academic or social struggles at some point in their academic careers. How can you help these students succeed while balancing the needs of your other students? In this course, you will learn to identify the characteristics of ADD and ADHD and their impact on children. You’ll develop specific intervention and support strategies to help these students cope with stress, manage their emotions, and navigate academic and social challenges. Although teaching children with ADD/ADHD poses unique challenges, you’ll learn to cultivate a healthy mindset for working with these students without getting overwhelmed. By the end of this course, you will be equipped with a robust set of best practices for helping ADD/ADHD students manage their behavior, improve their social skills, and succeed academically. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 510 Strategies for Supporting Teenagers with ADD/ADHD 3 credits**

According to research, teenagers who have attention-deficit disorder or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD) benefit immensely when their teachers believe in them. Academic and interpersonal success often eludes ADD/ADHD students, especially once they reach high school. In fact, 90% of those who have attention deficits will face serious social or academic challenges at some point in their school careers. That’s why it’s crucial for you to understand why these students struggle and how to help them. Regardless of how familiar you are with ADD/ADHD, this course will give you the information you need to identify students who have these disorders and to prevent and manage potential behavioral problems associated with them. You’ll develop specific prevention and intervention strategies for a host of symptoms that interfere with success, including how to modify your teaching style, classroom environment, scheduling, and assignments to help ADD/ADHD students. Finally, you’ll learn the impact of ADD/ADHD medications and how to monitor and support students who take them. With the knowledge and skills you gain in this course, you will be equipped to be the positive influence that students with ADD/ADHD desperately need as they transition into adulthood. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 511 Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities in the Inclusive Classroom 3 credits**

With increasing use of the inclusive classroom model, it is more important than ever that educators at every level and in every subject are prepared to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. This course offers educators resources designed to maximize learning for students with learning disabilities. Topics include current research and laws, processes for assessing and identifying learning disabilities, information on how to access services, and strategies for teaching students with learning disabilities. This course also offers concrete techniques for motivating all children to want to learn and creation of a positive classroom culture to support academic success. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 512 Take Control of RTI 3 credits**

According to the RTI Action Network, “Response to intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs.” In today’s inclusive classrooms, general education teachers are responsible for identifying, implementing, and documenting students’ academic and behavioral progress. For many teachers, keeping up with RTI can become overwhelming when coupled with existing planning, grading, and extracurricular responsibilities. In this course, you will gain the tools you need to take control of RTI. After examining the different tiers of interventions, you will develop strategies for identifying students who are struggling, implementing appropriate interventions and differentiated instruction, and monitoring students’ progress to assess next steps. In addition, you’ll gather resources that you can integrate into your day and use right away to keep the RTI process organized and up to date at all times. With the knowledge and strategies from this course, you will be equipped to manage RTI without stress and help your struggling students reach the next level of academic achievement. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 513 Teaching AP Classes 3 credits**

Teaching AP classes can be rewarding and challenging all at once. Often, they give you the opportunity to teach some of the brightest and most ambitious students in your school. However, the nature of AP classes also requires you to become an expert not only on your subject's AP test, but also on critical thinking skills and other characteristics your students need to succeed in college. In this course, you will explore the history of the AP program and gain a deep understanding of the College Board, its mission, and how it endeavors to help students become college ready. Using a hands-on approach through research, discussion, and reflection, you'll cultivate strategies for helping your students engage more deeply, make personal and authentic connections with content, and develop essential research and analytical skills. In addition, you'll learn techniques for scaffolding instruction to get all students up to the appropriate level to be prepared for the AP test. Using the tools and techniques from this course, you'll be able to create an effective AP program that helps students develop critical thinking and college readiness skills that will last them for a lifetime. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 514 Teaching Students with High Functioning Autism 3 credits**

According to the Center for Disease Control, the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) has more than doubled since the year 2000, bringing the rate to 1 in every 68 children who have received this diagnosis. What does this mean for your classroom, and how can you help this unique population of students? Because of the increased prevalence of the disorder, there's a lot of misinformation about it online and in the media. In this course, you will separate myth from fact by learning all the signs, symptoms, and implications of having students with high-functioning ASD in your classroom. You will learn techniques for addressing the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs of these students and also create plans for partnering with their parents to help them grow. Finally, you will develop strategies for successfully integrating a student with high-functioning ASD into your classroom and working with other students to create a respectful, inclusive environment. As a teacher, you have a unique opportunity to draw out the strengths of your students with ASD and help prepare them for independence in the future. This course will help you understand and be able to interact with these students with compassion and confidence. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 515 Teaching Students with Low Functioning Autism 3 credits**

The number of students with autism is increasing, making it more likely that teachers in both general education classrooms and special education programs will encounter students with low-functioning autism. These students have different needs than students who are considered higher functioning, so it is essential to be prepared before these students enter your classroom. In this course, you will learn the strengths, needs, and challenges of students with low-functioning autism, particularly the reasons behind how they learn and behave the way they do. You will use this knowledge to build communication skills, behavior management interventions, and academic strategies for these students, with the end goal of helping them transition between educational levels into post-high school plans. You'll cultivate techniques for addressing safety issues and common concerns educators have about teaching students with low-functioning autism. You'll also gain valuable insights from parents and classmates of students with autism. No two students with autism are exactly alike. However, by the end of this course, you'll have a toolbox of resources and strategies that you can use to best meet their individual needs. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 516 The General Educator's Guide to Special Education 3 credits**

More than 7 million children with disabilities currently receive special education services across the United States, and this number continues to grow. The size of this population means that teachers in inclusive classrooms need the skills and knowledge to teach and support students with disabilities. In this course, you will learn about the 13 major types of disabilities, the laws governing special education, the individualized education program (IEP) process, and best practices for working with students and their families. You will develop actionable strategies to support the assessment, instruction, academic success, and social and emotional development of students with IEPs. With the strategies and best practices from this course, you will be equipped to better serve students with disabilities regardless of your grade, subject area, or teaching context. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 517 Understanding Dyslexia 3 credits**

Regardless of how much you know about dyslexia, it can be intimidating to determine how to best serve students who have this disability. After all, students who have dyslexia often struggle with oral language, reading, handwriting, spelling, and writing. How can you reach these students while balancing the needs of the rest of your class? In this course, you will learn to identify dyslexia's impact on your students' oral language, reading, and writing, and you'll develop specific strategies for how to support students in these areas. You'll also learn how to hone the positive contributions of students with dyslexia, which are often overlooked or misunderstood. Although many students who have dyslexia struggle academically due to their disability, they also typically possess significant strengths, such as expansive creative abilities. After taking this course, you will be able to help meet the unique needs of students who have dyslexia, and also teach them how to channel their strengths for a positive, dynamic learning experience. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 518 Teaching Special Education: Focusing on Abilities 3 credits**

Being a special education teacher is often a stressful experience. Whether teaching in an inclusion, self-contained, or resource classroom, a special educator has unique challenges to meet. Even the most practiced educator can become overwhelmed with the challenges of teaching children with special needs; for many, there is a substantial risk of burnout. This course is designed to help the special educator both acknowledge the challenges and embody a mindset that emphasizes the fulfillment and rewards of teaching students with special needs. After this course, the teacher will be better able to appreciate their own strengths, as well as feel better equipped to complete the meaningful and essential work they do. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 519 Supporting Students with Disruptive Behavior Disorders 3 credits**

Oftentimes, it's the students with the most serious behavior issues who need us the most. But how do we connect with and teach students who are unusually angry and aggressive, refuse to follow the rules, blame others for their mistakes, abuse drugs, or vandalize property? In this insightful course, you will learn how to constructively support students with disruptive behavior disorders (DBD), including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD). You'll explore effective, research-based strategies and interventions to prevent and manage behaviors associated with DBDs while maintaining a productive and positive learning environment. Finally, you will learn how to work collaboratively with fellow educators, families, and other stakeholders to set students up for success both inside and outside of school. Using the strategies and interventions from this course, you will be able to connect with students with intense and persistent challenging behaviors and give them the attention and direction they really need. This course is offered through Advancement Courses.

**SNGX 520 Understanding Oppositional Defiant Disorder 3 credits**

Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and disorders like it can confound parents, teachers, and students alike. Explosions of anger, seemingly needless defiance towards adults, and hostility towards peers all characterize students struggling with this disorder. The adults in their lives are often at a loss as to how to prevent and manage these behaviors and show students a better way to interact with others. In this course, you will examine the causes, diagnosis, and treatment of ODD as well as other disorders that may resemble or have high comorbidity with ODD. You'll learn how you can partner with parents (even those who seem apathetic) and school resources to implement consistent, effective interventions with these students. In addition, you'll explore the strengths of students with ODD, how to help them build executive function skills, and how to stay calm yourself when dealing with difficult behaviors. With the strategies from this course, you'll be able to build a practical, holistic strategy to support students with ODD while caring for yourself, students' families, and other students in the classroom.

**SNGX 521 Leadership in Special Education 3 credits**

School leaders are uniquely positioned to bring together special education teachers, parents, and outside agencies to give their special needs students the best support available in their district. However, in a 2018 survey by the Council for Exceptional Children, only 26% of special education teachers reported feeling that their principal was well-prepared to help them support their IEP goals. In this course for school leaders, you will take a deep dive into the processes and procedures for helping students with special needs, from the early stages of intervention all the way through to facilitating productive IEP meetings. You'll learn how to evaluate and coach special education teachers, and how to guide best practices for both self-contained and inclusive classrooms. Finally, you'll review the history of special education law and recent legal cases that are impacting special education.