

# Chapter 5

## Interdisciplinary Special Education and APE Teacher Preparation Using Evidence-Based, High-Leverage Practices

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### ABSTRACT

*Preparing teachers to teach in inclusive, interdisciplinary settings is critical for teacher preparation programs if all students are to have access to general education curriculum. High-leverage practices have been proven to academically benefit students with disabilities. Using a continuous improvement cycle, the programs discussed in this chapter integrated evidence-based, high-leverage practices deliberately into special education and adapted physical education programs using an interdisciplinary approach. An audit at the program and course levels was completed and high-leverage practices and competencies were then integrated into teacher education courses where gaps were identified. Preservice teacher data was collected pre and post program to measure the effectiveness of the integration of these evidence-based practices into the programs. The steps the authors took to complete this work are detailed to be of use to other teacher preparation programs.*

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## INTRODUCTION

This chapter will address the following themes related to interdisciplinary program and course revisions in the authors' special education and adapted physical education programs:

- 1) Interdisciplinary and inter-professional preparation to enhance service delivery for students with disabilities; and
- 2) integrated preparation approaches that allow personnel to cross disciplines, learn from each other and other fields to advance their own knowledge and skills to enhance outcomes for K-12 students.

Examples will be shown of the curriculum audit that was used at the program and course levels to strategically integrate high-leverage practices along with details about the key interdisciplinary assignments that were developed and implemented throughout the programs. A gap analysis matrix will highlight key competencies that were integrated into teacher education courses where gaps were identified. The authors will present samples of preservice teacher data that was collected pre- and post-program to measure the effectiveness of the integration of these practices into the preservice programs. The steps the authors took to complete this work are detailed to be of use to other teacher preparation programs to increase interdisciplinary learning and collaboration between programs. The objectives of this chapter are to a) detail the process the authors followed to integrate high-leverage practices deliberately into the special education and adapted physical education programs using an interdisciplinary approach, and b) provide exemplars and sample data to demonstrate effectiveness of a continuous improvement model for replication in other teacher preparation programs to continue to provide high quality teachers and quality content for students with disabilities.

Per federal legislation, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) explains education for students with an eligible disability. The IDEA defines special education in Section 300.39(a)(1) as: specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including—

- i. Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and
- ii. Instruction in physical education. (2004)

This definition is imperative because of the inclusion of physical education (PE) instruction within a special education program for students with disabilities. IDEA (2004) requires that students with disabilities who have an individualized education program (IEP) have access to specially designed PE to meet their unique needs as determined appropriately by their education team. Typically, the special education teacher is responsible for academic and/or behavioral instruction and support in the classroom and serves in a dual role of IEP case manager for their students. Often the special education teacher is responsible for preparing, implementing, and progress monitoring IEP goals in collaboration with service providers within the school setting. Therefore, special education teachers need to be aware and knowledgeable about PE and Adapted Physical Education (APE). Our interdisciplinary approach applied within higher education between two separate pre-service programs, special education (i.e., Education Specialist) and APE, emphasizes the importance of collaboration of educators early on for new teacher candidates.

IDEA further provides guidance by defining what PE is in Section 300.39(b)(2):

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