

# EDCG 630 Media Assignment – Spring 2011

## Acceptance (E1)

The theme of **acceptance** is increasingly imperative because special needs students are important members of the school community, as well as important members of the general education classroom. In particular in elementary school classrooms, inclusion provides the perfect springboard for a discussion on what makes us different, as well as what we have in common. Partnered with this, and perhaps more importantly, is teaching children to accept these differences in one another. Differences can be viewed as scary, which can create a climate of fear, exclusion, and isolation. This is a lesson that students will carry with them, once learned, for the rest of their lives. In an increasingly diverse world, acceptance is a lesson that can be applied to both special needs community members, as well as to those of different cultures, ethnicity, and genders. Accepting others despite their differences, and furthermore celebrating one another for our differences, is a lesson that is vital in creating a safe and pleasant atmosphere in which all students can succeed.

In keeping with the theme of **acceptance**, our group selected the following media to exemplify this idea:

### **You Tube Video: “Educating Peter”**

Educating Peter is a documentary video of a young boy named Peter who has Down syndrome. The video is about Peter’s first year in a regular education classroom. Before this year Peter had been educated with children who are like him. The video begins with Peter’s first day of school. Here we see Peter having multiple outbursts and disturbing the class constantly. We listen as the teacher and other students comment on Peter and his actions and how and what they think of him. We learn from the comments that they do not have much faith in Peter and are scared of him. As the school year goes on the teacher and students figure out ways in which to help Peter learn and fit in. By the end of the video Peter is accepted by the teacher and students and their views have significantly changed. They felt that Peter was a friend and they enjoyed his presence. They also felt that he taught them by making them think and react to problems. This video has two parts and can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBv0AedUNI8&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGJcYoKzHUc&feature=related>

### **You Tube Video: “Graduating Peter”**

Graduating Peter is a continuance of a documentary on the stages of Peter’s life as laws and regulations change to fit the needs of children with special needs. Peter is a child with Down syndrome and one of the first children to be integrated into the main stream classroom. As Peter goes through his twelve years of school and develops relationships with peers, develops the ability to be educated into the classroom, and be a part of the school community. He is also developing functional skills that will get him ready to enter the world outside of the

school walls. A goal his mother wants for him is to be able to hold a job and function in society like a normal person. As this seven part video develops the children have learned to accept Peter's differences and learn to enjoy his company. They are developing true friendship bonds that have not only helped develop Peter and his needs, but have helped the other children. It is helping them understand and embrace everyone's differences not only Peter's. Acceptance is a great skill that Peter has helped the children in his school develop and Peter himself has learned that being a little different isn't a bad thing it just means that he is special in his own way.

The video can be found on youtube.com and in the links below:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6AwCVg\\_3fE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6AwCVg_3fE) : part 1

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nh2c0WSTIAM&feature=related> : part 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy2gRMxmM3Y&feature=related> : part 3

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCM2qsaWqqk&feature=related> : part 4

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJZ3zpmVFpE&feature=related> : part 5

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvX6A4WK0wc&feature=related> : part 6

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vA8zrCbrPlo&feature=related> : part 7

### **Movie: "Forrest Gump" (Robert Zemeckis, 1994)**

Forrest Gump is a mentally delayed character in the movie Forrest Gump. However, Gump rose above his challenges. He proved that courage, acceptance and love are more significant rather than ability. With his limitations, Gump received a Scholarship to the University of Alabama for football. Receiving this scholarship was a door to acceptance because he was able to run rapidly. He was not judged on his ability but the importance or quality he would attribute to the University. With his amazing character, Gump became an "All American" which led him to meet President John F. Kennedy at the white house. Moreover, Gump was a supportive boyfriend to his girlfriend Jenny in the movie. Gump would defend his girlfriend from bullies despite any limitations. His ability of strength went beyond when he and his best friend Bubba went to the Vietnam War. Gump rescued several men from his unit. When Bubba was fatally wounded from the war, Forrest Gump took his best friend's body and brought Bubba's body back to safety. Gump received a medal of honor for heroism by President Lyndon B. Johnson. All in all, his character showed that because one may have a certain limitation(s), he or she can be a significant factor in another's life. Gump showed courage when he defended, loved and supported his girlfriend Jenny from school bullies. His acceptance to the University of Alabama was a prime example of inclusion. Receiving a medal of honor and heroism proved that he indeed rose above his challenges.

## **Friendships, Dreams, Perseverance (H2)**

### **Book: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck**

Of Mice and Men is a classic novel by John Steinbeck. The basis for this story is an unlikely pair of friends, George and Lenny. The central conflict in the story is Lenny's disability and how it is misinterpreted by society causing Lenny to constantly be in compromising situations. The resolution of the story is: as George's last act of friendship to Lenny, he

shoots him so Lenny does not have to undergo the pain of being scared and attacked. The possible themes of this novel can be friendship, loneliness, dreams, or mercy. This novel is a classic book for high school students because it shows the complexities of human nature and teaches students why it is gravely important to be compassionate to those with disabilities.

Steinbeck, J. (1993). *Of Mice and Men*. New York: Penguin Books

### **Documentary: *Her is Sabine* By Sandrine Bonnaire**

This documentary follows the French actress Sandrine Bonnaire's portrayal of her younger autistic sister. As a child, Sabine's disability does not compromise her strong spirit and beautiful nature. The film shows how a huge part of Sabine is lost when she was hospitalized as an adult in a very limited psychiatric facility. The film presses viewers to think about what aspect of her hospitalization caused her drastic decline? Was it: lack of friendship, stimulation, ability to obtain her dreams and or/ loneliness? The film causes students to question the complex nature of autism, see the humanity and struggle of individuals with disabilities. This film shines light on how French culture explains and understands autism. This is a French movie with English subtitles.

Bonnaire, S. (Director). (2007). *Her Name Is Sabine* [Documentary]. France: Film Movement.

### **Movie: “*Forrest Gump*”**

In *Forrest Gump*, Forrest Gump, a man with multiple disabilities, relates his life story to strangers at a city bus stop, as he travels to meet an old friend. At first, it appears he only has an intellectual disability however, in flashbacks, the viewer learns Forrest also had physical disability as a child. Forrest overcomes his physical disability through running. Running turns out to be Forrest's key characteristic, allowing him to attend college as a football player, survive as a soldier during the Vietnam War, and become a national celebrity. When Forrest begins running, the focus shifts from his physical disability to his cognitive disability and his relationships with other characters. The other characters face many disabling challenges as well, such as childhood sexual abuse, alcoholism, and drug abuse, although some characters experience physical traumas, the focus is on their emotional disabilities (PTSD). *Forrest Gump*, rather than being about the disabilities of the lead character, turns out to be about the growth and resiliency of numerous people who face (and overcome) both internal and external challenges. The possible themes of this movie are attaining dreams, friendship and perseverance.

Zemeckis, R. (Director). (1994). *Forrest Gump* [Feature Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

## **Acceptance/Understanding of Family/Friends (E2)**

**Book: *Different Like Me: My Book of Autism Heroes* by Jennifer Elder and Marc Thomas - Target Grade: 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Different Like Me: My Book of Autism Heroes* by Jennifer Elder and Marc Thomas introduces

us to Quinn who is “eight and three-quarters.” He tells the reader about his favorite things, “baseball, dolphins, and ancient Egypt” and adds, “Oh yeah, and I’m autistic.” This is set up under an “About Me” at the very beginning of the book establishing Quinn as narrator. Quinn discusses the history of autism in general terms explaining that people have had autism long before there was a term for it. On the opposite page is a drawing the reader assumes is of Quinn. The rest of the book is set up in a similar manner. A historical person is named, for instance, Albert Einstein, and is described by Quinn, and there is a picture on the adjacent page of the person engaged in some of their favorite activities. This book introduces children to inspirational people with autism. These people succeed in different areas, but all are unified in the regard that they found it hard to fit in socially.

Jennifer Elder and Marc Thomas succeed in giving Quinn a voice where he is able to share the stories of his autism heroes. He is able to explain their achievements as well as include information about how their autism was observed by their families and peers. Children will be able to not only learn about influential people with autism, but learn that all people in general have more in common than we think.

*This book can be found on Amazon:*

<http://www.amazon.com/Different-Like-Me-Autism-Heroes/dp/1843108151>

**Book: *The Best Worst Brother* by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen**  
**Target Grade: 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>**

Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen explores the relationship between a girl and her younger brother with Down’s syndrome in her children’s book *The Best Worst Brother*. Emma, now in elementary school, is frustrated by her three-year old brother’s slow development. She is upset that, as he grows older, his behavior has changed becoming less ‘normal’ and more embarrassing for her. She wishes that he would simply learn faster, especially when it comes to the sign language she and her mother are trying to teach him so that he can communicate more easily. By the end of the book, though, she begins to understand his disability and can celebrate when he begins to succeed.

This illustrated children’s book provides a realistic glimpse into a sibling relationship where one of the two has a developmental disability. It can be helpful for children who find themselves in Emma’s position by being honest about the fact that having a family member with a disability can be hard and that feelings of frustration and embarrassment exist. Stuve-Bodeen’s book can also teach children that everyone develops and learns at a different pace and that acceptance of family/friends and hard work can pay off. A nice aspect of this book is that it is a sequel (the first book is called *We’ll Paint the Octopus Red*) and for children that have not read the first it is not necessarily apparent what Isaac’s condition is. It could be a nice catalyst for discussion.

*This book can be found on Amazon:*

<http://www.amazon.com/Best-Worst-Brother-Stephanie-Stuve-Bodeen/dp/1890627682>

**Book: *My Friend Isabelle* by Eliza Woloson and Bryan Gough**  
**Target Grade: K – 1st**

Eliza Woloson's children's book *My Friend Isabelle* introduces the reader to two young friends, Isabelle and Charlie. The two friends share a special bond together, but are both different. Isabelle has Down syndrome and does things at a different pace and different ways than Charlie, but that doesn't take away from their friendship. The story emphasizes the importance of difference and reiterates that, "differences are what make the world so great." The story is accessible to young children through Woloson's straightforward text accompanied by Bryan Gough's colorful, bold, and engaging illustrations. Many readers might not realize the any particular differences between the two children until the post-script, whereas the readers are introduced to the real Isabelle and what makes her so special. This story is very accessible and engaging for children of young ages as means to introduce them to children who are special in different ways. It has received much acclaim, including a 2004 iParenting Media Award Winner. One of the most useful tools that accompany this story is a free teacher's companion guide. The guide emphasizes use in an inclusion based elementary classroom as means to embrace tolerance and understanding. It also prepares teachers for class discussions regarding the story, alternative means of communication, and offers creative ideas for class projects in response to the book.

*This book can be found on Amazon:*

<http://www.amazon.com/My-Friend-Isabelle-Eliza-Woloson/dp/189062750X>

*The teacher's guide can be found here:*

[http://www.woodbinehouse.com/my\\_friend\\_isabelle\\_teachers\\_guide.pdf](http://www.woodbinehouse.com/my_friend_isabelle_teachers_guide.pdf)

**Documentary: *Black Light Dreams: 25 years of the Famous People Players.***  
**Produced by Barbara Barde**

This documentary follows the black light puppeteers, "The Famous People Players," of whom 12 of 15 have developmental disabilities. This theater group has performed across the United States and Canada. This documentary shows their rise to Broadway status and the journey that they took. Teachers in an elementary classroom setting could use this documentary as a way of broadening students' view of people with developmental disabilities past mere assumptions that they may already hold. In a classroom, students could watch clips of the performances before meeting the performers (the behind the scenes puppeteers). Discussions could ensue about how beautiful art and performance can be created by all types of people.

*Information on the Famous people players can be found at their website:*

<http://www.fpp.org/about.php>

*Documentary distribution is handled by Telefilm Canada:*

<http://www.telefilm.gc.ca/en/catalogues/production/black-light-dreams-25-years-famous-people-players>

## **Perspective (H3)**

Keeping perspective is considered an attractive quality among individuals; that ability to always see things from that a particular view or prospect. But what happens when we have to change our views or opinions? When keeping a particular perspective is no longer relative to our daily lives, and taking on a new perspective is necessary for emotional growth and change?

Changing perspective is necessary to becoming well-rounded and understanding individuals. To demonstrate this theme, we took upon stories of people with a range of disabilities, both physical and mental, and tried to show how they had changed their own perspectives on life, or facilitated in changing others' perspectives. All of three of these stories illustrate change of perspective in terms of life, love, happiness or meaning, and have inspired others to think about disability in a new light.

### **Book: The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet**

In The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet, Reif Larson tells the story of a young boy who strikes off on his own, hitching from Montana to Washington D.C. by train. Young Spivet has a wild imagination and obsession with mapping things; firefly frequencies, The Continental Divide, and even facial features. His unique take on the world could be considered disabilities (OCD and Asperger's Syndrome), and they do present many challenges throughout the book, yet he overcomes each of them to earn the admiration and intellectual kudos from adults and his peers. Included throughout are Spivet's beautiful maps and illustrations chronicling his trek across the country which offer a unique perspective on the ordinary and mundane.

<http://www.amazon.com/Selected-Works-T-S-Spivet/dp/1594202176>

### **Blog: Stephanie Nielson**

Stephanie Nielson, a survivor of a plane crash, has burns on 80% of her body. She maintains a blog about her experiences, while raising her children with her husband in Utah. The topics of her blog range from the activities of the family, posted photos of their vacations, and discussing the different ways she's able to stay positive (in her opinion, mostly due to her faith and her family). The name of her blog is called NieNie Dialogues.

<http://nieniedialogues.blogspot.com/>

### **Documentary: Stepping Into the Unknown**

The documentary "Stepping Into the Unknown" starts off with them at a cliff preparing to bungee jumping. They compare bungee jumping to getting tested for HIV, "it's something

anyone can do, in just same way that anyone can go for an HIV test. However people are scared and uncomfortable as one literally has to take a plunge in both instances.” There disabilities ranged from being deaf, to physical ailments but at that moment when jumping off a cliff it doesn’t matter if you have a disability or not, everyone has the same fear. This article could be used in a general education setting because it shows people who have disabilities able to participate in activities that people who do not. It illustrates how they have the courage to do something out of the ordinary (i.e. getting tested for a HIV or going bungee jumping) and how they encounter the same fears and emotion as someone who does not have a disability.

<http://www.e-bility.com/articles/disability-and-hiv-film.php>

## **“I’m not that different from you.” (M1)**

### **Poem “Like Me”**

This poem is titled “Like Me” and will be of good use for appreciating differences among students in the classroom. The premise of the poem is that a new kid who is labeled “special ed” comes to school and the father of the general education kid shows that they are not that different.

This poem would be best served in a middle school classroom or grades 5-8, but is applicable to all grades. The poem is short, easy to access, and cheap to provide to students, as one sheet of paper will cover the entire poem. This poem is free and available at the following link, enjoy. <http://www.barstows-ds-support-group.com/id70.html>

### **Book: *A Very Special Critter* by Gina and Mercer Mayor**

*A Very Special Critter* by Gina and Mercer Mayor is a children’s book that is about a new student who uses a wheelchair who joins the main character Critter's class. Before long Critter and his friend's realize although the new boy is in a wheelchair, he is no different than the rest of them. The main purpose of including this children’s book in General Education is that it is a tale of accepting the differences in all of us in a style that children can understand and relate to. It would be a good choice for teachers to share with their class because it is an easy, enjoyable way to expose kids to the reality of disabilities. It shows sensitive and realistic ways kids deal successfully with the unknown and how even though children with disabilities may look different on the outside, they feel the same way as other kids do on the inside.

## **YouTube Video: Eric Duquette Graduation Speech**

A story about a 2010 high school graduation speech delivered by Eric Duquette, a student with autism, was featured last year on ABC's World News and is available to watch on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSactvpsla0>). Duquette, who could not even speak until he was five years old, explains how doctors had predicted that he would "probably end up in an institution." He proceeds to make a clever play on words by stating, "Today I stand before you, accepted into every institution of higher learning that I applied to." This news report would be valuable for students of all ages to view because it shows how, through his own hard work, his parents' dedication, and the support of his friends, Eric was able to overcome such a grim prognosis. Teachers could use this short video clip in general education classes to prompt students to think about people they know with disabilities, to consider how they themselves might be able to support those peers, and most importantly to see how Eric, dressed in cap and gown with the rest of his class and speaking before all, has so very much in common with them.

### **Perseverance (H1)**

Our group decided to research physically disabled people and characters, who demonstrate perseverance. Although our subjects are physically restricted, they haven't let them stop that from accomplishing their dreams. While each has a different story and a different limitation, they are all an inspiration.

## **YouTube Video & News Article: Kevin Bramble**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/13/sports/othersports/13ski.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/13/sports/othersports/13ski.html?_r=1)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y91mTwwIoFg>

Two time Para-Olympian and owner of KBG Adaptive Ski Equipment fractured his T12 and L1 vertebrae when he was 21. Not content to accept the terms of his lower extremity paralysis, Bramble went on to revolutionize the Sit-Ski. The Sit-Ski was one of the first sitting position skis developed for people with lower extremity limitations. This includes people with multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, lower extremity amputations, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, brain injury, or spinal cord injuries.

The purpose of using Bramble is that he shows that despite having physical disabilities he has turned his love of skiing into his profession. Bramble has taken an existing sit-ski design and improved upon it. His two Olympic gold medals and successful business has helped benefit others with similar injuries and through his perseverance Bramble has promoted a 'can do' spirit, which proves physical disabilities can be overcome, and turned into strength.

Bramble's example could be useful in many settings but could be used in a physical education class. Although Bramble has physical limitations, he has made no excuses and has found success.

### **TV Show: Glee-Wheels.** (Season 1, Episode 9)

Behind the Scenes of Wheels.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mu3f8ktQX0I>

This episode showcases numerous elements of perseverance; including teamwork, acceptance, and achievement. The characters, a group of singing and dancing high school students, include one student in a wheelchair. The disabled student has difficulty dancing like his classmates, but more importantly, cannot travel to the upcoming competition with them because the club cannot afford a bus with wheelchair access. By the end of the episode, the students have raised enough money for the disabled student to travel and have choreographed a dance in which all of the students perform in wheelchairs.

This episode would be most effective in an after-school club or a classroom setting that requires collaboration where a disability might seem like it would hold everyone back. The students will learn strategies for adapting "normal" behavior to include a disabled student and witness how rewarding it is for the group to come together as a community to support that student.

\*Must be purchased on Amazon or iTunes for classroom use due to copyright infringement)

### **YouTube Video: Derek Paravicini**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kwjDLHX92w>

Derek was born a premature baby, who fought to keep alive in the first few critical weeks of life. The oxygen used to keep him alive, ultimately blinded him and forever effected his development. As Derek grew older he started to show symptoms of autism. Despite being blind and having autistic tendencies, Derek is a musical savant. At age nine he performed with the Royal Philharmonic. Since then, Derek's piano skills have only grown. He is able to hear a song only one time and play it perfectly from memory on the piano. He is able recognize notes from his keen hearing and although he lacks basic skills, he is a musical genius famous all over the world for his unique talent. Derek has persevered through life from the very start and continually amazes the most talented musicians of our time.

Derek's example could be useful in a special education classroom. It is important for students with severe disabilities to understand that they too are talented and important to our society.