

IEP Group

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Assignment 2b: Contextual Inquiry

Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are an iterative tool for educators and parent/guardians to help identify and support students with learning and sometimes social/behavioral challenges. For our contextual inquiry we plan to pursue opportunities to apprentice regular classroom and special education teachers as they work on a student's IEP, interview parents with children who have IEPs, and potentially conduct interviews with the students themselves, although we are aware of the challenges inherent with interviewing minors. These efforts should lead to refining our project to help improve communicating the key informatics of IEPs between stakeholders.

So far we have reached out to teachers with varying special education experience known to group members (Susan Staiert and Joleen Franklin), the special education network of Teach for America in Washington, and the Seattle School has Special Education PTSA <http://seattlespecialdpts.org/>. We are awaiting to confirm observation/apprentice opportunities with established contacts for later this week. As of now we intend to meet with our known contacts in a home or cafe environment, classroom teachers in their classrooms as they work through IEP documentation, and parents at the established building for PTSA meetings.

Teachers:

- Our ideal inquiry is to observe a teacher as they work on a student's IEP, inside and outside of the classroom. So we don't interrupt the classroom setting we would hold any questions until they have a break.
- Topics we are curious about:
 - How are IEPs currently designed?
 - How are student centered measurable IEP goals are created?
 - How IEP goals are implemented?
 - How is the data collected, stored, processed, shared, and used?

Parents:

- Ideal inquiry would be to observe how the parent currently gains access to their child's progress and what opportunities they have to ask questions or contact the teachers working with their child.
- Realistically we think we would only be able to interview parents. Some of the questions we are interested in asking
 - What was your experience with your student's IEP process?
 - How did you prepare for the the IEP's Meetings and specifically goal development?
 - Do you feel informed about your child's progress?

- How do you want to be informed about your child's progress: frequency, mode of communication, what information is more important to you i.e. attendance vs. test scores.

Students:

- Ideally we would like to meet with students who are currently receiving IEP services and focus a contextual inquiry into (question rigor will be adapted based on student's education level).
 - What goals you are working on in school?
 - Did you develop these goals?
 - How do you know when you have successfully completed this goal?
 - Do you feel like your IEP is contributing to your success as a student?
 - What supports/ tools help you the most?
- Since there are issues with interviewing minors, we could reach out to the Disability Resource Center at the University of Washington to try to get in contact with students at the UW who have been through the Seattle public school system with an IEP.
- We would like to gain insight on their experience with an IEP and have them reflect on how their IEP was managed as they grew up. Additionally how they feel their IEP was affected by data communication. We recognize that we would be losing concrete data through these means as we would be asking the individuals to recall their experiences rather than observing them. However, this would be the next best solution without breaching their right to privacy.