UNIT 5: E kāko`o kākou - Advocacy
Lesson #2

Nā mea i hiki`ole ke hana`ia
Understanding what it means to have a disability

LESSON OBJECTIVES:
Students will:
- Discuss the concept of disability and rights of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
- Read and review their own IEP to learn about its content and the IEP review and revision process.
- Review key concepts about Advocacy; identify powerful advocates and self-advocacy needs.

MATERIALS: provided*
- Chart Paper and pens
- Helpful Information for Students with an IEP handout
- Students’ own IEPs

PROCEDURES:
• INTRODUCE LESSON:
- Write the following on a board with space to write below:
  *PERSPECTIVE  *VISION  *CHOICES
Have students form the same groups from lesson #1. Ask them to review the video they watched about Nick Vujicic, and have each person come up with one specific word that describes his perspective, another that describes his vision, and one word that describes his choices. Allow students a few minutes to talk and help each other select one descriptive word for these three ideas.

- List words the students share and discuss the perceptions students have of Nick.

- Share that the group is going to talk about disabilities, education, and advocacy, including learning about IEPs, Individual Education Plans.

- Ask students to share what prior knowledge they have about their IEP and the disability or learning difference it describes. Invite students to talk about any IEP meetings they have attended and what they currently know about accommodations and supports they are supposed to receive from their teachers.

- Clarify the purpose of IEPs if needed. Discuss how everyone has unique and individual differences - both strengths and abilities as well as areas where they are not strong or easily able to do something. Talk about the importance of using supports and accommodations to increase abilities to do most things.

- Read aloud the following quote from another video by Nick:
“What is a disability? It is something that would hinder you to achieve something. Now, just because I have no arms and no legs, it doesn’t mean that I can’t be successful. It doesn’t mean that I can’t do a business degree like I have done. What really stops you? Your mind. The way you see your life and where you are going will determine how successful you will be in life.”

(from YouTube: No Arms, No Legs, No Worries! Part 2)

- Discuss Nick’s perspective toward the term “disability,” and revisit what students think the name of his website represents (Attitude is Altitude). Ask students to keep Nick’s perspective about disability in mind during today’s class.

• MODEL LESSON:
- Share that students are going to prepare to advocate for their own future and the education and training needed to support their dreams. Distribute the handout Helpful Information for Students with an IEP and begin by discussing the twelve points listed as important rights for students with IEPs.

- Next, read the backside with students, discussing the differences between obtaining a certificate versus a diploma. Encourage students to reflect upon their desires for the future and make sure they set their current academic goals to support these dreams and plans.

- Share that they’ll review the handout inside page on advocacy at the end of class.

• GUIDED PRACTICE:
- Distribute to each student his or her own IEP. Talk about their need to understand this information and to also be respectful of each other’s privacy about what is in their own files.

- Walk through each part, helping students understand the purpose for each section and what has been recorded about them. Point out areas where students have some influence (I.e.: goals, effective accommodations, information on ways you can successfully show what you know, etc.)

Supplemental Materials:
- Introduce the Legal Terms Dictionary to students as needed; walk through how to use it by sharing a few definitions when needed during the IEP review. Provide a few dictionaries for student reference.

- Share the Understanding IEPs handout (page 3) as needed to clarify the purpose of IEPs.

• CLOSURE:
- Ask students to look at the inside of their Helpful Information and to complete the left side of the handout (listing 3 advocates and their causes) before they leave class. Ask students to reread
information about advocacy and think of three ideas about self-advocacy and education before returning to class.

**EVALUATION:**
- Invite students to identify any parts of this lesson that have been helpful. Ask for ways to better teach about IEPs.

**RESOURCES:**
[http://doe.k12.hi.us/specialeducation/index.htm](http://doe.k12.hi.us/specialeducation/index.htm) - Hawaii DOE Special Education page; note: “Your Student Rights” handout
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~Understanding what it means to have a disability
UNDERSTANDING IEPs

Adapted from the Hawai‘i DOE website: [http://doe.k12.hi.us/specialeducation/iep.htm](http://doe.k12.hi.us/specialeducation/iep.htm)

What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?

* A written statement about the educational program for a student with a disability
* A management tool to make sure needed special education and related services are provided
* An evaluation device to determine progress toward accomplishing projected goals

What must be included in an IEP?

- Present levels of educational performance
- Annual goals, including short-term instructional objectives
- Specific special education and related services to be provided
- Extent of student participation in regular educational programs
- When services might start and how long they expect them to last
- Appropriate criteria and evaluation procedures to assess goals / objectives (minimum review at least once a year)
- Statement of needed transition services (age 16 or earlier if needed)

How often should IEP meetings be held?

* at least annually (depending on the needs and progress)

Who can initiate IEP meetings?

Though usually initiated and conducted by the school, it is appropriate for parents to request an IEP meeting when they believe their child is not progressing satisfactorily or they feel there is a problem with the current IEP.

Does the IEP include only special education and related services or does it describe the total education of the child?

* IEPs are required to address only areas concerned with:
  - providing special education and related services
  - the extent that the student can participate in regular education programs

Each student’s abilities are unique; the amount of information in the plan depends on each student’s needs.
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