Development and change permeate society in all its facets: history, culture, ecology, economy, politics, science and technology, social groupings, and a society’s place in the world, to name a few. As individuals and professionals who face contemporary societal challenges particularly in the field of Special Education, we need to understand the context in which change takes place, the variety of forces that operate to bring about a myriad of changes in different spheres, the consequences of change at different levels, and our own role as agents of positive social change.

The world is not the same as the world our recent forbearers occupied, and it will not be the same as the one our children or children’s children will inhabit. All that we know as our reality has been shaped by forces from the past and will in turn give rise to new forces that will mold the future. Some of these forces have been quite intentional: one thinks here of the civil rights movement, which as a by-product fostered the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and schools, as a purposeful force that has shaped our society. Other forces have come about as a consequence of natural developments: the impact of the environment, genetics, and changes in the family dynamic. Still other changes have come about as a direct result of human intervention, planned or otherwise: deinstitutionalization, globalization, advocacy, legislation, first the industrial revolution, and then the technological revolution, the distribution of wealth within a society, interactions between groups of people, and the development of new domains of knowledge.
Clearly change has brought both greater happiness and greater threats to happiness, improved conditions for many and the potential for diminished lifestyles for too many, new challenges, and new opportunities. And these changes at the macro-level of the society have an impact on the micro-level of our daily lives as well as on our professional environments, for good or ill. Acknowledging change in these terms, ongoing change provides opportunities for us to become responders to, participants in, and shapers of societal change.

Overall Objectives for KAM 1

The purpose of this Knowledge Area Module (KAM) is to explore the causes and consequences of social change to examine ways in which these changes have an impact on our professional worlds and to find ways of responding to these changes to make a positive difference for those for whom we work in our daily settings.

When you have completed this KAM, you will be able to:

1. Analyze and explain a chosen sphere or aspect of social and cultural change involving individuals with disabilities, using concepts and information drawn from the existing body of classical and/or contemporary theory.

2. Critically examine current research to assess the problems and challenges in the education of, and advocacy for, individuals with disabilities from the perspective of the social change discussed in the Breadth paper.

3. Propose and/or critically assess a response to this force of change within your professional context.

Plan to accomplish objective #1 in the Breadth component of the KAM, objective #2 in the Depth component, and objective #3 in the Application component. These objectives are further explained with examples in the discussion of each component that follows.
Challenges and Opportunities in KAM 1

Your first challenge in this KAM will be to identify a force or group of forces that change society and that are particularly relevant to individuals with disabilities and your own professional interests, and then to pursue your examination through theory and research on its practical implications and applications. This KAM may provide you with a larger context in which you may eventually place your dissertation research project. Since all dissertation studies undertaken at Walden are intended to have significance for social change, here in this KAM you may begin to build a foundation for satisfying that eventual outcome.

In the Breadth component, which is designed to give you the opportunity to study the theoretical explorations of the dynamics of social change, you will need to identify sources that go beyond mere description of the forces for change to examine the root causes, means, and consequences. The most helpful theories will be those that explain the force for change more generally, abstractly, and beyond the limits of your own localized context. To begin, ask yourself: what have theorists said about what this force for change is all about; where did it come from; and how is it shaping and having an impact on society and the human family. Then you will be able to write about how theorists have given different answers to these questions and make a determination about which answers make the most sense and why they are useful in the education of, and advocacy for, individuals with disabilities.

In the Depth component, you have the opportunity to bring your theoretical foundation to the examination of particular manifestations of social change in special education and/or disability studies. Build out of your knowledge of the particular change issues you examined in the Breadth by critically examining how they influence your professional context (e.g., inclusion, universal design, assistive technology, transition, self-determination, interventions for specific
categories of disability) are addressed in different ways by researchers in your field. You will write about these developments in a way that shows you not only know what current researchers have discovered in their studies, but you are able to identify where their research is helpful, perceptive, and well grounded or not. In addition, you can point out what gaps remain in our understanding of this phenomenon within the profession that still need to be addressed. By finding gaps in the research you may be able to identify possible questions for your dissertation and begin to build a body of research for your literature review.

In the Application component, the opportunity presents itself to respond to the social change issue or issues you have been focusing on throughout this KAM. You may design a project of your own, or assess the strengths and weaknesses of others’ projects in terms of what you have gathered from the study of the underlying theories and research already examined in this KAM. Bring your critical and creative eye to this component.

Breadth Component

SBSF 8110 Theories of Social Change (5 cr.)

Social change can be examined in terms of particular phenomena, such as inclusion, assistive technology, universal design, transition, self determination, standardized testing of individuals with disabilities, and/or changes in knowledge including what is known about societal change itself, to list a few. In society, these forces are interconnected and sometimes mutually dependent and collectively influential, but you will need to find one specific theme on which to focus your attention.

Breadth Objectives

Listed below are some suggestions for the kinds of issues you might want to pursue in the Breadth component of this KAM. They are intended to be suggestive only but will give you an
idea of the kinds of topics your paper should address, and the kind of objectives and/or questions you should be asking. In KAM I you will be exploring the development and history of treatment of individuals with disabilities and its impact on culture and society. A discussion of the historical development, societal treatment, and intervention of individuals with disabilities, and the way society has evolved as a result may be presented.

1. How has a particular social or cultural phenomenon (e.g., the civil rights movement, Brown vs. the Board of Education, technological and medical innovations, globalization, the regular education initiative and inclusion movement) been explained in terms of its causes and consequences for society?

2. What are the major theories or explanatory schemes in special education? How do various theorists differ in their explanations? How useful are these theories in helping us understand this phenomenon? (e.g. This is typified by portraying how Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory matures into theories of Universal Design, espoused by Rose and Meyer, among others. In addition, patterns are developed from Wolfensberger’s theories of Social Role Valorization, enhanced by the more modern theories of Gardner (multiple intelligences) and Prensky (Digital Native theory).

3. What is the interconnection between two or more social change forces and why do they interconnect in this way? What is their combined impact? (e.g. inclusion and the accountability movement,)

4. Considering the broader sweep of human societies: how has societal change regarding disabilities been defined in the literature? (e.g. how has the education of individuals with disabilities evolved over the last 50 years? How has disability legislation and case law of technology changed school and community in the last 30 years?)
5. What have been some of the differences among various explanatory theories, such as the cognitive developmental theories of Piaget and Durkheim; the functionalist theories of Skinner; the Social Development theory of Bandura; and the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky. While particular importance is placed on the classical theorists, and their role in the development of Special Education pedagogy, the ideas of the modern theorists must be taken into account, for it is their theories that further develop the curriculum and bring it into the 21st century. This could be typified by portraying how Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Theory matures into theories of Universal Design, espoused by Rose and Meyer, among others. In addition, how are patterns developed from Wolfensberger’s theories of Social Role Valorization, enhanced by the more modern theories of Gardner (multiple intelligences) and Prensky (Digital Native theory) and extrapolated by the futuristic theories of Alvin and Heidi Toffler, among others.

6. What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of different theories in explaining contemporary societal developments? Theorists may relate specifically to special education or be more general social change theorists like Daniel Chirot, David Cooperrider, Peter Drucker, Michael Fullan, Beth Rubin, or Peter Senge.

Demonstration of Competence

Using the learning resources chosen, write a scholarly paper that demonstrates a comprehension of the theories of societal and cultural change as they relate to a particular social phenomenon or group of phenomena regarding special education. The emphasis of the paper is not on summarizing the content of various theories but on a critical assessment including comparisons, contrasts, evaluations, and syntheses of different theories, assumptions, concepts, ideas, and elements encountered during the literature search and review. The expected length of
the paper for the Breadth component is approximately 30 double-spaced pages, plus references. The paper is considered equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.

Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.

Depth Component

EDUC 8125 Current Research in Social Change: Special Education  (5 cr.)

The purpose of the Depth component is to help you understand, analyze, and explain the current research regarding social change/societal development as it affects and involves special education. Your task in this component is to select a particular social change/societal development that has salience in the current time period, is of interest to you, and intersects in intriguing and important ways with special education in your professional context.

Depth Objectives

In the Depth you should consider the impact of the phenomena that you examined in the Breadth on some aspect(s) of your profession. The suggestions below are merely a few of the possible topics from which you might choose.
Depending on the focus of the Breadth component, you may want to consider some aspect related to:

1. Effects of disability advocacy on society
2. Historical perspectives on disability.
3. The effects of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
4. Brown vs. the Board of Education and its ramifications for individuals with disabilities.
5. Technology and the education of students with disabilities
6. The effects of the change of the AAMR definition of Mental Retardation
7. The effects of Response to Intervention on provision of special education services
8. The implications of celebrity lobbying on disability and research funding.
9. Overidentification of diverse ethnicities in special education
10. Standardized testing and the student with special needs
11. Perspectives on the genesis of the Combating Autism Now Act
12. Universal Design: True Inclusion?
13. The Highly Qualified Provision of No Child Left Behind: Implications for Teachers.
14. Resistance to assisted technology use in the classroom.
15. Special education and the individual with physical disabilities.

**Demonstration of Competence**

Compile an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 15 recent refereed or peer-reviewed research journal articles (or older articles if they are a particularly good fit) related to the social change/societal development theme that you identified for this KAM, including literature that places this issue within the historical development or contemporary context of your profession. For each source included on your list, prepare a critical analysis by synthesizing the
findings of the study, describing and critiquing the methodology, and sharing how the study provides a foundation for your application project. Arrange the bibliography in alphabetical order, following APA formatting. The suggested length is 1 to 1½ pages per annotation.

In addition to the bibliography, write a 25-30 page double-spaced typed scholarly paper describing, analyzing, and explaining the selected social change/societal development and relating it to developments in special education as it relates to your profession. In this paper, be sure to include evidence of higher order thinking (comparison and contrast, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation). The total Depth component assignment is equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.

Learning Resources

Because the Depth section is so individualized, it is difficult to offer reading recommendations. Both books and articles can be used to find research studies, although current research is more likely to be found in journal articles. While you are encouraged to review a wide range of sources for this assignment, focus particularly on dissertations and journal articles in selecting the sources that will ultimately comprise your bibliographic list.

Consult your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden library staff for further assistance in identifying sources in your literature search.

Application Component

EDUC Professional Practice and Social Change: Special Education (4 cr.)

In the Application component of KAM 1, your focus should turn to your own professional context. Here you may examine and critique a particular role of special education in engaging in or responding to the specific social change/societal development phenomenon you
have been examining throughout this KAM, or propose and justify a response to that change phenomenon.

In order for the Application component to be the most productive learning experience possible, it is useful for this component to draw on the themes and findings from the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM. You are encouraged to review the resources presented in previous components of this KAM, as well as the annotated bibliography compiled as part of the Depth component. In addition to these you are urged to reflect on your own professional practice and firsthand experiences with social change/societal development in your context.

Remember to secure Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct research or projects using human subjects. Please note that due to the time constraints, KAMs that require IRB approval are not advised.

Some suggestions of Application projects you might consider:

1. **Case Study:** Prepare a report that reflects your understanding of how your professional setting (school, administration, outreach agency, social service agency, public or private sector business) has engaged in a social change response (e.g., the integration of special education or disability accommodation in a setting, or how barriers encountered were overcome or not). The report could include personal interviews with key leaders/informants, documents, observations, and surveys. The case study report could address the following: (a) a description of the social change response; (b) a profile of the selected institution that engaged in the response; (note- do not identify the institution in your paper) (c) a description of the role(s) the institution played in attempting to address the social context; (d) a summary of the roles the leaders or key members played in engaging the institution in addressing the social change/societal development; (e) an
interpretative discussion of the data, including conclusions, implications, and
recommendations; and/or (f) a commentary on the insights you gained in the theories and
research studied in the earlier components of the KAM and the case study.

2. Program Assessment: Describe and evaluate a program that is intentionally dedicated to
addressing a social change issue involving special education or disability
accommodation, operated by a selected institution or organization. Your evaluation could
address the following: (a) a description of the program, including details such as its goals,
target audience, stakeholders, and delivery and implementation strategies; (b) a detailed
description of the evaluation goals, target population/sample, design (qualitative,
quantitative, mixed), data collection methods, and data analysis procedures; or (c) a
summary of the major results of the evaluation, including conclusions, implications and
recommendations, especially as you assess them in the light of the theories and research
studied in the earlier components of this KAM.

3. Proposal for an Intervention Project: Develop a project of your own that addresses a
specific social change phenomenon including special education or disability
accommodation. Building on the understandings from the earlier components of this
KAM, you might want to include: (a) a needs assessment that explains the social change
issue you are addressing and why this is important to your stakeholders; (b) a thorough
description of the program, its goals, delivery, and implementation strategies; (c) a
detailed description of how you would evaluate the degree of success in implementing
the program, including the evaluation goals, data collection methods, and data analysis
procedures; and/or (d) if the project is implemented, a summary of major results of the
evaluation, including conclusions, implications, and recommendations. If you choose to implement the proposal (not recommended for a KAM), IRB approval is required.

4. Analysis of Previous Work: Use a major work you have previously completed (e.g., a master’s thesis, curriculum design, published article, or professional project) to demonstrate your ability to apply the theories, concepts, methods, and research findings that are the focus of this KAM. Provide a brief rationale for the project and comment on how the situation might have changed since the project was first undertaken. In the light of the theoretical and research findings from earlier parts of the KAM, critically analyze what you might do differently if you were to plan and implement something like this again.

5. Grant Proposal: Write a grant proposal to address the acquisition of technology or the training of personnel to integrate technology in the workplace drawing from the work of your breadth theory and depth research. Include the needs assessment, justification, proposal, business plan, staffing needs, and objectives and vision for the first 5 years. Explain how the proposal draws on findings from the earlier components of this KAM.

6. Write a Training Manual: Develop a manual to guide managers/administrators in your organization in dealing with current forces of social change resulting from the introduction/advancement of special education or disability accommodation in your organization. Explain how this manual reflects your findings in the earlier components of this KAM.

Demonstration of Competence

The Application component of the KAM gives you the opportunity to put the theories and research pertaining to social change/societal development regarding special education or
disability accommodation into practice in your workplace. Think in terms of developing a project that addresses change in your setting. Your final demonstration should include both the project and reflective commentary on it, where you show how it is informed by the theories and research studied in the earlier components of this KAM. The Application is considered equivalent to 4-quarter credit hours of graduate work in a traditional program. The length of the application project will vary depending on the nature of the project undertaken. The reflective commentary will be approximately 10 double-spaced typed pages demonstrating the connection among the Breadth theory, the Depth research and the Application project.

Learning Resources

The resources you will use in this component are very specific to your particular project. If a theory or research paper is the foundation of the project, be sure to reference it. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians. You do not need to repeat any of the references you have included in the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM.