Stanford



Lakshmi Balasubramanian

Academic Prog Prof 3, Research Staff - Other

Bio

BIO

Lakshmi is a Lecturer and Researcher in the field of special education at the Graduate School of Education at Stanford University. She completed her Ph.D. in Special Education at the joint doctoral program at the University of California, Berkeley with San Francisco State University in May 2021. Her dissertation research examined the processes and practices of inclusive education for students with diverse disabilities in a school district in Northern California. The first part of the dissertation is a theoretical articulation of a conceptual framework that school districts and local education agencies can use to design, implement, and sustain inclusive educational practices. This framework has three central tenets, which relate to (a) how students access general education, (b) meaningful ways in which they can participate alongside their peers, and (c) support structures that can undergird effective implementation. The second part of this dissertation consists of an empirical study that evaluated the deployment of this framework in implementing inclusive education in the kindergarten-through-12th-grade context. It brought under scrutiny the system-level processes and programmatic structures that were in place or being developed at this school district. Facilitators and barriers to inclusion were examined as they related to access, meaningful participation, and creation and provision of supports for all participants within their sociocultural context. She makes visible the ableist and disablist discourses and practices that sometimes frame the construction of disability and what it means to teach or parent a child with a disability within those confines. In this way, this research untangles the oppressive ideologies that are prevalent in narratives about the disabled and destabilizes any claims made to a normative ideal, while affirming that inclusion and receiving education in the least restrictive environment is a civil right for disabled students.

Lakshmi is the recipient of the Walter J Gores Award, Stanford University's highest award for excellence in teaching.

Prior to joining Stanford, Lakshmi worked as a special education teacher and inclusion specialist in a large public school district for 14 years. During this time, she spearheaded the design and implementation of inclusive education programs at the school district in grades K-12. Additionally she has worked as a professional development facilitator nationally and internationally on a variety of topics related to inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

CURRENT ROLE AT STANFORD

Lecturer & Sr. Researcher

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Walter. J. Gores Award, Stanford University (June 18th 2023)

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Credential, San Francisco State University , Multiple Subject Teaching Credential (2003)

- Credential, San Francisco State University , Education Specialist (2003)
- M.A., San Francisco State University , Special Education (2007)
- Graduate Certificate, San Francisco State University , Autism (2009)
- Ph.D, University of California, Berkeley with San Francisco State University , Special Education (2021)

Teaching

COURSES

2026-27

- Child Development, Learning Differences, and Inclusive Practices: EDUC 285C (Aut)
- Child Development, Learning Differences, and Inclusive Practices: EDUC 285D (Win)

2025-26

- Child Development, Learning Differences, and Inclusive Practices: EDUC 285C (Aut)
- Child Development, Learning Differences, and Inclusive Practices: EDUC 285D (Win)

2024-25

- Dis/ability and Access in the Elementary Classroom: EDUC 285C (Aut)
- Dis/ability and Access in the Elementary Classroom: EDUC 285D (Win)

2023-24

- Child Development in and Beyond Schools: EDUC 283 (Sum)
- Dis/ability and Access in the Elementary Classroom: EDUC 285C (Aut)
- Dis/ability and Access in the Elementary Classroom: EDUC 285D (Win)