Creating Access to General Curriculum for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Through Inclusion

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Who Am I Talking About?

- Students with significant cognitive disabilities
  - Other terms you may have heard
    - Students with MR
    - Moderate/ severe disabilities
    - Low-incidence disabilities
  - Require substantial modifications, adaptations, or supports to meaningfully access grade level content
  - Require intensive individualized instruction to acquire and generalize knowledge
  - Is working toward alternate achievement standards for grade level content
What experiences have you had with students with significant cognitive disabilities?
What Am I Talking About?

- Access to the General Curriculum
  - Academic progress-mastering some alternate achievement standards for each grade level
  - More than exposure, but not mastering all of the grade level content
Why Teach the General Curriculum?

- Federal Laws
- Provide equal access
- Do not underestimate student potential
IDEA 1997

- All students have access to general curriculum content
- All students assessed on state standards
- Creation of alternate assessment

- *All?*
- *Content?*
- *What is an alternate assessment?*
No Child Left Behind

- Schools accountable for ALL students
- AYP in language arts/reading, math, and science

- Did you say ALL?
- Schools are accountable?
NCLB Regulations/Guidance

- AYP: can use alternate achievement standards for up to 1% of Ss with SCD
- These standards must be based on academic content linked to grade level

- Really reading?
  - Really math?
  - Science??
Promoting Equal Access

- How do you know the progress a student can make if you don’t attempt to teach the skills?
- Just because he can’t tie his shoe or toilet himself doesn’t mean he won’t learn to read.
What About Functional Curriculum?

- Community, leisure, domestic, work related skills
- Focus on academic and functional skills
  - Grocery shopping—what academic skills are needed?
  - Using public transportation—what academic skills are needed?
Does inclusion achieve access to the general curriculum?

- Access to the general curriculum is not synonymous with inclusion
  - In gen ed-just because the student is there, doesn’t mean he/she has access
  - In a self-contained classroom-just because it is self-contained, doesn’t mean that he/she does not have access
What is inclusion?

- Educating students with disabilities alongside their chronological same age peers in general education within their neighborhood schools
  - “FULL INCLUSION”: “Belong” to the general education class
What is the rationale for general education inclusion for this population?

- Benefits for students with disabilities
  - Social interaction
  - Role models
  - Higher expectations for performance
  - Enhance lifelong inclusion in society

- Benefits for students who are nondisabled
  - Learn to get along with diverse people
  - Get to know students with severe disabilities as people
  - Learn about human service professions
Research Supports Including Students with Severe Disabilities

- Inclusion works when you have
  - Collaborative teams
  - Parent involvement
  - Curriculum planning & adaptations

- When inclusion works
  - Ss with severe disabilities learn IEP goals & make social gains
  - Ss who are nondisabled continue to make academic gains
    - Hunt & Goetz (1997)
What should inclusion look like for this population?

- Placement in natural, typical settings
  - Age appropriate classes
  - Home schools
  - For all or most of the day
  - On an ongoing basis
  - For instructional and noninstructional activities
What should inclusion look like?

- All students together for instruction and learning
- Supports and modifications within general ed to meet learner outcomes
- Belongingness, equal membership, acceptance and being valued
  - *this starts with the teachers
- Collaborative integrated services by education teams
Components of Inclusion

- Physical inclusion
  - Strategies to get student scheduled and present in general education

- Social inclusion
  - Strategies to promote the student belonging as a member of the class

- Instructional inclusion
  - Strategies that make it possible for the student to master IEP goals AND learn through general curriculum activities
Physical Inclusion

- Neighborhood School?
- What grade/age class(es) in the school?
- Any pull out time? If so- where & why?
- Paraprofessional support?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Integration in” peer buddies join the class</th>
<th>Inclusion in classes not related to EOGs - music, art, PE?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interaction after arriving at school?</td>
<td>Inclusion during academics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch with typical peers? At same table?</td>
<td>“Belongs” to general ed class and special teacher provides support</td>
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How Some Schools Have Made Inclusion Work

- Everyone in class works with peer buddy; peer buddies rotate
- Lunch buddy sign up program
- Paraprofessional support to not only student with disabilities, but all students
- Co-teaching by special education teacher
Social Inclusion

- Social network: a group of people who offer opportunities for socialization, fun, working together, emotional support
- Who is in the social network of students with severe disabilities?
  - (Circles of support)
What a Social Network Offers

- For many a “quality of life” indicator
- Social interactions skills are best learned in stable relationships
- As social contacts increase, need for behavioral support decreases
Teachers Can Promote Social Networks

- Encourage mingling in physical layout of class
- Use units on friendship
- Create a warm class environment
- Model social responses to person with disability
Instructional Inclusion

Cascade of Integration Options
A range of accommodations for students with significant disabilities who are included in general education.
How will the students participate?

- Unadapted participation in the general curriculum
  - Same activities, same objectives, same setting
- Ask yourself
  - Can the students complete the activity as written for a gen ed student?
  - Do one or more lesson objectives match the students’ IEPs?
How will the students participate?

- Adaptations to the general curriculum
  - Same activities, different (related) objectives, same setting
- Ask yourself
  - Can the students meet the lesson objectives with minor modifications (time, response mode)?
How will the students participate?

- Embedded skills within the general curriculum
  - Similar activity, different (related) objectives, same setting

- Ask yourself
  - Are there components of the activity that can be met by the student, even if not the central objective of the lesson but, match the IEP objective?
# Roles of the Teachers

## Preplanning

### General Education Teacher

- **Unit Plan Analysis**
  - What are the objectives of the lesson
  - What steps must students understand to complete the unit
  - Will the unit include individual and/or group activities
    - Cooperative learning groups, individual, group activities, individual & group
  - What learner products are expected?
    - Written report, oral report, tests, graphic displays
  - What is the time frame to complete the activities
  - What are the required materials?
  - How will student progress be assessed?
Roles of the Teachers - Preplanning

- Special Education Teacher
  - What are the IEP objectives for this student?
  - What areas from the IEP can be addressed within this unit?
  - Does the student have characteristics that will require adaptations?
    - Cognitive skills, motor skills, communication skills, social skills
  - What levels of adaptations from the continuum are appropriate for this student for different activities within this unit?
  - What required unit adaptations could be made in terms of this following: materials, time requirements, product expectations
Roles of the Teachers: Planning

- Collaborative Planning Meeting
  - What IEP objectives can be worked on during content area instruction?
  - What adaptations or accommodations will be required to work on these objectives?
  - What supports will the general education teacher need to successfully complete the activity (paraprofessional present, adaptive equipment, materials adaptation, co-teach with the special educator)?
  - How will progress be assessed?
Example

- Activity
  - Assign to 1 of 3 map groups (political, geographic, natural resources); start research for map information; textbooks, newspaper, CD-ROM, internet; 30 minutes library time

- IEP objectives
  - Reading-Identify parts of the newspaper for peers to find map information
  - Social Skills-take turns interacting with peers; maintain appropriate personal space
  - Gross motor-manipulate wheelchair to and within library
- Support needed from the special educator
  - Co-teach presentation of the map assignment to the class
  - Technical support-program communication device; teach peers to elicit communication

- What level of adaptation is this?
  - Activity-same, similar, different?
  - Objectives-same different?
  - Setting-same, different?
Example #2

- **Activity**
  - Continue map making; draw the map including scale, legend, major cities, and landmarks; draw or color features for the specific map in appropriate location; 1 hour-map making

- **IEP objective**
  - Fine motor-paste 3 objects on the map; math-paste the 3 objects in the proper coordinates; communication-initiate communication with peers using a device
- Support needed from the special educator

  - Technical support-objects for map; program communication device

- What level of adaptation is this?

  - Activity-same, similar, different?
  - Objectives-same different?
  - Setting-same, different?
Example #3

- Activity - 3 groups orally present maps to the class; 30 minute presentation for each group
- IEP objectives
  - Communication - introduce members of the group and participate in oral report using communication device; Math - keep time for the group, notify group when time is up
- **Support from special educator**
  - Technical support
    - Program device
  - **What level of adaptation is this?**
    - Activity—same, similar, different?
    - Objectives—same different?
    - Setting—same, different?
- The Chime Institute
  - Chatsworth, CA
- Questions?
- Concerns?

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