Accessing the General Curriculum for Students with Significant Disabilities

A Four Step Process

STEP 3: Identify Instructional Activities to be Used in the Unit

Anne Denham, Ed.S., ATP
Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (ILSSA)
By the end of this training participants will be able to:

- communicate the value of general curriculum access for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to colleagues and caregivers
- identify barriers that reduce access to general curriculum activities for students with significant cognitive disabilities
- utilize researched methods of support to provide access to the general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities
Four Steps to Access

1. Identify or link to the appropriate standard(s)
2. Define the outcome(s) of instruction
3. Identify the instructional activities
4. Target specific objectives from the IEP

A way to record the process

### Stepwise Process to Accessing Grade Level Content Standards and Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>IDENTIFY THE STANDARD(S) THE INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT WILL ADDRESS.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What is the state standard?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What is the grade level standard?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What is the standard all about?</strong></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td><strong>DEFINE THE OUTCOME(S) OF INSTRUCTION FROM THE INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT ON.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What are the desired outcomes for all students in general education?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What will classroom based assessment look like?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Which outcomes will be prioritized for direct instruction and monitoring for the target student with significant cognitive disabilities?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What will formative assessment look like?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What supports (already identified or additional) would be necessary for the target student to access the instruction?</strong></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td><strong>TARGET SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FROM THE IEP TO ADDRESS DURING THE UNIT.</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Which of the instructional activities provide opportunity to work on objectives?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What IEP objectives re: the general curriculum can be addressed within the instructional activities?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>What other IEP objectives can be addressed within the instructional activities?</strong></td>
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Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment, IHDI - UK
Meet Marvin

• 13 year-old middle school student with a significant cognitive disability

• **Physical**
  • Ambulates but has an awkward gait
  • He can manipulate materials but has poor fine motor control

• **Communication**
  • 1-2 word utterance
  • Uses yes/no and points or gestures
  • Uses Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), beginning user
  • Receptive vocabulary is higher than expressive

• **Learning Environment**
  • Recognize logos, some symbols and can visually discriminate
  • Loves to be with peers but stubborn
  • Loves to be involved in class activities but has a limited focus
  • Rote count to 7 or 8 but no comprehension
Marvin’s IEP Goals

- Improve communication skills - initial sounds, use of PECS
- Increase attention span
- Task completion
- Picture recognition
- 1:1 correspondence
- Behavior supports - rewards
Step 3: Identify the instructional activities that move students towards achievement of the standard.

Instructional activities for all students
- Typical classroom activities – lecture, note-taking, etc.
- What type of learning the activity addresses

Active participation for student with IEP
- All parts of instruction based on student strengths and moving student towards learning of prioritized outcomes linked to the grade level content standard

Previously identified and/or additional supports specific to instructional activities
- Identify barriers
- Determine supports
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- Determine supports

Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment, IHDI - UK
### Activities designed for all students

3. IDENTIFY THE INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO BE USED IN THE UNIT.

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<td>5. Work with a partner to brainstorm a list of characteristics of marine ecosystems. After five minutes, share answers with another pair. Students will contribute their answers to a list on the interactive whiteboard, board, or on chart paper. Watch introductory <a href="#">video clip</a>.</td>
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<td>Work as a member of a 4/5 person research team to research <strong>Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary</strong> or <strong>Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary</strong>. Use the <strong>Encyclopedia of the Sanctuary</strong> for research. Focus on the following: Location of the sanctuary (have them mark it on the map) Characteristics of the ecosystem the sanctuary supports (water temperature, physical geography, etc.) Wildlife present in the sanctuary Importance of the ecosystem in general or any particular species found in the sanctuary Proximity and culture of human settlements near the sanctuary Challenges facing the sanctuary, and whether or not they are human-induced</td>
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Barriers for Marvin

- Can the student actively participate in each part of the instructional activity?
  - Can the student *access* instruction? Is targeted information provided in student’s mode of communication?
  - Can the student *interact* with instruction and materials? Does the student have the means to *demonstrate* knowledge, skills, and concepts acquired?
  - What will *engage* the student in the activity? How will the student remain motivated long enough to learn?
Potential Barriers = Opportunities Missed

- Lecture and note-taking
  - Remain seated, hear, listen - focus on auditory information, keep up the pace, activate prior knowledge, understand information, read text, take notes, follow directions, etc.

- Cooperative learning groups
  - Follow directions, communicate with others, stay with the group, take notes, read, work on an experiment ….
Guiding Questions

- Is the student actively participating in each part of the instructional activity moving the student towards outcomes linked to the grade level content standard?
  - Can the student *access* instruction? Is targeted information provided in student’s mode of communication?
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Step 3: Identify the instructional activities that move students towards achievement of the standard.

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**Previously identified and/or additional supports specific to instructional activities**

- Identify barriers
- Determine supports
## What are the instructional activities planned for all students?

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<td>1. Small group&lt;br&gt;2. Brainstorm&lt;br&gt;3. Conduct research&lt;br&gt;4. Take notes&lt;br&gt;5. Contribute to discussion - speak&lt;br&gt;6. Create a graphic organizer - contribute&lt;br&gt;7. Use a computer</td>
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- [Loss of Diversity and Extinctions](https://example.com)  
- [Environmental Tourism at the Global Level](https://example.com)  
- [New Medicines at Risk from Biodiversity Loss](https://example.com) | • Share/Contribute ideas  
• Find information; record information  
• Record information  
• Contribute ideas  
• Help organize ideas  
• Use a computer | |
Repeated Tasks

- Share/Contribute ideas
- Share/Contribute ideas
- Share/Contribute ideas

Find Information

Contribute Ideas

Help Organize Ideas

Record Information

Record Information
Menu of Tasks

- Share / Contribute ideas
- Find information
- Record information
- Help organize ideas
## Menu of Supports

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<td><strong>Listen during lecture</strong></td>
<td>Hint: What will student do to demonstrate listening during the time a teacher lectures? For example, provide graphics that represent elements of the lecture and have student select the representative graphic as the teacher discusses each point. This could also be provided digitally.</td>
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<td><strong>Take brief notes or record an observation</strong></td>
<td>Hint: What will student do to take notes or record an observation during a science experiment for example? For example, the graphics provided above may serve as the student’s notes. Use software such as WWS. If digital text is provided a text reader may be used to read the notes. Take a digital picture.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ask / respond to a question / participate in discussion</strong></td>
<td>Hint: What will student do to ask or respond to a question in class? For example, the same graphics provided may serve as possible answers to questions the teacher may pose to the class. The student could be asked to select from two answers, or be provided graphics where there is no wrong answer to encourage the student to participate and receive recognition for his/contribution.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work in a group</strong></td>
<td>Hint: What will student do be able to participate in group work? For example, partner the student with a peer to share a role.</td>
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Guiding Questions

- Is the student actively participating in each part of the instructional activity moving the student towards outcomes linked to the grade level content standard?
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Once the activities are selected it is important to go back to the standard.
Step 3: Identify the instructional activities that move students towards achievement of the standard.

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**Previously identified and/or additional supports specific to instructional activities**
- Identify barriers
- Determine supports
Removing Barriers

- SETT Framework (Zabala)
  - Student
  - Environment
    - Physical
    - Instructional
  - Task
  - Tools

- Assume Competence
- Least Dangerous Assumption

- Universal Design for Learning, UDL (CAST)
  - Recognition Networks
  - Strategic Networks
  - Affective Networks

- Assistive Technology supports and services; AT devices, training, instructional strategies
- Access to the general curriculum; high expectations
- Multiple means of representation, interaction/expressions, and engagement
- Further strategies based on research.

- Other research

Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment, IHDI - UK
Tools – SETT Framework

• Whatever is needed by the **student** and **others** for the student to do the tasks in the environments in order to meet expectations

<http://www.joyzabala.com/>
Tools for Students

• Whatever is needed by the student to do the tasks in the environments in order to meet expectations

• Accommodations
• Modifications
• Technology – AT, IT, UDL, NIMAS
• Diversified Instructional Strategies
• Supports
• Services
• Training
• Documentation
• Etc.

http://www.joyzabala.com/
Tools for Others

• Whatever is needed by others for the student to do the tasks in the environments in order to meet expectations

• Support for Staff
• Training and support on:
  • Decision-making
  • Strategies
  • Accommodations
  • Modifications
  • Device integration and operation
  • Service delivery
  • Etc.

http://www.joyzabala.com/
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

- Provide multiple means of representation
- Provide multiple means of expression
- Provide multiple means of engagement

- Can the student access instruction? Is targeted information provided in student’s mode of communication?
- Can the student interact with instruction and materials? Does the student have the means to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and concepts acquired?
- What will engage the student in the activity? How will the student remain motivated long enough to learn?

http://bookbuilder.cast.org/
Instructional Materials/Representation

Support background knowledge

Make a connection to the student’s life that can be related to the new targeted knowledge.
Teaching Methods/Representation
Highlight Critical Features

AbleNet, Inc

Jonas is a boy.

Jonas is sensitive.

Story Bag containing objects representing critical elements of character

Voice output
Instructional Materials/Expression
Provide tools and media for expression

- Drawing
- Graphic Organizer
- TechTalk
- Sentence strips
- Writing with Symbols 2000, Widgit
- Tango! Blink Twice
- Boardmaker, Mayer Johnson

A plant has leaves

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Instructional Materials/Engagement

Provide alternatives for recruiting and sustaining interest

Variety of Genes

Differences in the tiny components of cells called genes lead to variety within a species.

Look at people. Height, curly hair, and eye color are some of the variations due to genes.

Use a personal area of interest to recruit attention.

A clickable puzzle created using Classroom Suite (IntelliTools), maintains student interest through physical movement with auditory feedback, contrasting color, music, and animation at completion.
Least Dangerous Assumption

- It is the least dangerous assumption to presume that with the right instruction and supports all students are competent to learn the general education curriculum.
- All students must have access to a communication system that allows them to communicate about age appropriate social and academic topics.
- Best place to learn is the general education classroom and other inclusive activities and environments in which there is a natural proportion of students with and without disabilities.

McSheehan/Jorgensen
TASH 2007
Step 3: Identify the instructional activities that move students towards achievement of the standard.

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<td>1. Using images of different ecosystems and organisms that make up each ecosystem, Marvin will group the organisms that are characteristic of each ecosystem. This will emphasize that each organism interacts with the other. Marvin will provide examples of ecosystems and biodiversity to illustrate the class definitions.</td>
<td><em>Laminated images of ecosystems and corresponding organisms using Boardmaker software, Mayer-Johnson (2 inch cells); computer</em></td>
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<td>1. Before the activity, Marvin will go outside with a partner and take digital pictures of organisms that are found within the local ecosystem. He can use these pictures as a way to contribute to the brainstorming session. Interview a science teacher to find ways in which 2 different organisms interact. Record the questions and examples provided on a communication device (e.g. Step-by-Step) or tape recorder so that Marvin can share this with the class when asked to contribute to the brainstorming session. Ask the teacher to comment on local biodiversity preservation which can be used in the next activity.</td>
<td><em>Digital camera, computer, communication device, digital recorder or tape recorder</em></td>
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<td>Marvin will review websites/magazines with group and look for specific information provided in symbols (A simple webquest would be helpful and would organize his information). If provided digitally, Marvin will be able to hear the text. Marvin can share the information collected from the interviews which will help the group and keep him engaged. Marvin can contribute to the graphic organizer using pictures he has found.</td>
<td>Communication device, digital recorder or tape recorder</td>
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<td>As a class, locate Cordell Bank and Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale national marine sanctuaries on the maps and read about how both sanctuaries were established to protect and support marine ecosystems.</td>
<td>Work with a partner to find the areas on a map. Provide Marvin with his own map showing an enlarged version of one area. Use Wikki stix to highlight critical features or an outline as well as graphical support, e.g. whales. This will provide a texture and draw Marvin’s attention to specified points.</td>
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An excerpt from Marvin's summarized text to help with his research (Writing with Symbols 2000, Widgit).

Too much fishing has destroyed the coral's habitat and more coral has died. Because there are not many fish now, the fisherman have to look harder for fish and that hurts.
Researching Coral

This is a cause.

Government plans

Write about the effect.

Government plans

This image shows the process of researching coral, with prompts to identify causes and corresponding government plans.
Use these choices to help show others what harms the coral.

1. cause
   - reef walking
   - boat anchor
   - catch too many fish
   - oil

Use these choices to help show others what happens to the coral when it is not protected.

2. effect
   - polluted coral
   - broken coral
   - dead coral
   - broken coral

- Overfishing destroys the reef habitat.
- Boat anchors destroy the coral.
- The oil darkens the water, causing the coral to die.
Back to the Standard

- Once the activities are selected it is important to go back to the standard.
I can now:

- communicate the value of general curriculum access for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to colleagues and caregivers
- identify barriers that reduce access to general curriculum activities for students with significant cognitive disabilities
- utilize researched methods of support to provide access to the general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities