

An Overview of a 4 Step Process for Accessing the General Curriculum

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Mike Burdge

Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment

University of KY

mburdge@uky.edu

Objectives

- Participants will understand the issues around moving to a general curriculum focus for students with significant disabilities.
- Participants will become aware of a method for adapting instruction focused toward access to and progress in the general curriculum.

Why are we talking about accessing the general curriculum?

- Assessment is the catalyst.
 - All students must be counted.
 - All assessments must be aligned with/linked to the general education standards (grade level).
 - Alternate assessments must promote access to the general curriculum.

Slide 3

JC1

This sort of threw me because it sounds like you are justifying why we are talking about Access to the General Curriculum instead of assessment. Are we in an assessment strand or something? Otherwise this makes sense but seems a lot to put right up front.

Jean Clayton, 12/5/2007

It's a difficult switch!

- History and tradition
 - Special education curricula
 - Special education training
- Experience
 - What we've taught is what we've got
- Current research (or lack of!)

STANDARDS

ASSESSMENT



CURRICULUM

LESSON PLANS



INSTRUCTIONAL

STRATEGIES

SKILLS

ACTIVITY(IES)

General Education Teachers

Special Education Teachers

Curriculum Myths

1. You either teach an academic curriculum or a functional curriculum.
2. You don't have to teach the entire general curriculum.
3. Academic skills aren't functional for some students.
4. Teaching the general curriculum violates the IEP.
5. If they could work on the general education curriculum, they wouldn't be in special education.
6. Physical disabilities represent cognitive abilities (e.g., "She can't even, so how can she learn biology?")

MYTHBUSTERS!

1. You either teach an academic curriculum or a functional curriculum.

- Most functional skills can be taught within the context of general education activities.
 - Social skills
 - Motor skills
 - Behavioral skills
 - Communication skills
- We have to be honest about functional skills.

2. You don't have to teach the entire general curriculum.

- Both IDEA (97 and 04) and NCLB specifically state that all students must be included in/involved in and progress in the general curriculum.
- How can we decide what parts are important for this student and what parts are important for this student?

3. Academic skills aren't functional for some students.

- Literacy and numeracy are the 2 most functional skills in our society.
- Standards are functional if we look the concepts.
- If we can teach students how to learn, they can learn anything.
- What is it that enhances our quality of life?

4. Teaching the general curriculum violates the IEP.

- IDEA states that the IEP must include goals that:
 - “(aa) meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
 - (bb) meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability;...”
 - Sec. 614. (d) (1) (A) (i) (I)

5. If they could work on the general education curriculum, they wouldn't be in special education.

- Special education is designed to “...enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum...”
 - IDEA Sec. 614. (d) (1) (A) (i) (I) (aa)

6. Physical disabilities represent cognitive abilities (e.g., “She can’t even, so how can she learn biology?”)

- Students should not have to wait until they are able to make a bed before they are taught to read or identify initial letter sounds before they are taught literature.
- Students should be presumed competent and not denied instruction offered to students of the same age (grade level content standards and curriculum).

Underlying Realities

- Teacher preparation
- Low expectations
- Lack of background knowledge and access
- Placement

Part IV Stepwise Process to Access

Grade Level Content Standards and Curriculum

Four Steps to Access

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

[Clayton, J., Burdge, M., Denham, A., Kleinert, H., & Kearns, J. (2006). A four-step process for accessing the general curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 38(5), 20-27]

Step 1

- 1. Identify or link to the appropriate content standard(s).**
 - State/District Standard
 - Grade Level Standard(s)
 - Determine what the standard is about

Step 2

2. Define the outcome(s) of instruction.

- Outcomes for all students
- Prioritized outcomes for student with IEP
- Supports typically used for student with IEP

Prioritized Outcomes

- Reduce complexity
- Reduce number of skills/ concepts

Should open up opportunities to access content standards vs. limiting participation in instructional activities

Step 3

- 3. Identify the instructional activities.**
 - Instructional activities for all students
 - Active participation for student with IEP
 - Previously identified and/or additional supports specific to instructional activities

Typical Types of Instructional Activities

- Lecture and note-taking
- Cooperative learning groups
- Research
- Practice activities and homework
- Culminating projects
- Classroom based assessment

Active Participation

- Must be meaningful
- Is based on student strengths
- Moves student towards learning of prioritized outcomes/grade level content standard

Determine Supports Needed

- Refer to the supports listed on IEP
- Select the supports that will help the student participate meaningfully
- Identify any additional supports that are needed to match the instructional task and environment
- Possibly create a menu of support ideas

Guiding Questions for Selecting Supports

- Is the student actively participating in each part of the instructional activity?
- What is needed to engage the student in instruction?
- Does the student have a means to demonstrate the knowledge, skills, concepts acquired?

Step 4

4. Target specific objectives from the IEP

- Instructional activities
- Embedded standards based objectives
- Other embedded objectives

Embedding IEP Objectives

- List the instructional activities in which IEP objectives can be addressed
- Plan how to provide direct instruction on IEP skills based on content standards
- Plan how to provide direct instruction and practice on other functional IEP objectives

Stepwise Process to Accessing Grade Level Content Standards and Curriculum

1. IDENTIFY THE STANDARD(S) THE INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT WILL ADDRESS.

What is the state standard?	What is the grade level standard?	What is the standard all about?

2. DEFINE THE OUTCOME(S) OF INSTRUCTION FROM THE INSTRUCTIONAL UNIT ON .

What are the desired outcomes for all students in general education? What will classroom based assessment look like?	Which outcomes will be prioritized for direct instruction and monitoring for the target student with significant cognitive disabilities? What will formative assessment look like?	What supports (already identified or additional) would be necessary for the target student to access the instruction?

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

What are the instructional activities planned for all students?	How can the student actively participate in the instructional activities?	What supports (already identified or additional) would help the student access the instruction?

4. TARGET SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES FROM THE IEP TO ADDRESS DURING THE UNIT.

Which of the instructional activities provide opportunity to work on objectives?	What IEP objectives re: the general curriculum can be addressed within the instructional activities?	What other IEP objectives can be addressed within the instructional activities?