

Need of Quality Curriculum for the Students with Disabilities in a General Classroom

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Abstract

The high quality curriculum for the pupils with disabilities comes with studying effects that are for an applicable stage and so are pursued inside regular course tasks (example., compact co operative teams, unit-based projects). Simply by choosing proper learning techniques are we can achieve a benchmark of quality training for those students. Individually customized curricula for the pupils with disabilities need to incorporate a compact group of family-selected goals that will set up a aim for the training, additionally a broadness of curricula that permits students possibilities to discover many choices that suits with state or local criteria. Most of us concentrate plenty of studies concerning education enhancement, education reorganization as well as education realigning. However, teachers can still have many queries that exactly how we need to offer a high quality education for handicapped students in ordinary classrooms. This paper provides concentrate on present research on accomplishment as well as effective procedures, associated with teaching students with disabilities in inclusive common education classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

The National Longitudinal Transition Study found that 1.7% of students with learning disabilities made progress in math in general education classes compared to 34% in traditional special education settings, without the presence of nondisabled peers. Gains in reading were comparable in both settings. When comparing progress with their typical peers, 43.3% of students with disabilities made comparable or greater progress in math in inclusive settings versus 35.9% in traditional settings. Positive educational outcomes are not in the area of academics alone. The National Longitudinal Transition Study examined the outcomes of 11,000 students with a range of disabilities and found that more time spent in a general education classroom was positively correlated with:

- a) Fewer absences from school,
- b) Fewer referrals for disruptive behavior, and
- c) Better outcomes after high school in the areas of employment and independent living (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2006).

Several myths surrounding the needs of students with disabilities have been used to perpetuate the status quo. Over time, what Ms. Brown came to realize was that she had unwittingly bought into some of the historical myths of special education. Some of these myths are:

1. General education teachers are not capable of teaching students with disabilities.
2. Only special education teachers know the specialized approaches that are effective for teaching students with disabilities.
3. Specialized instructional approaches are beyond the capability of general education teachers within the context of a regular class.

4. Special education is synonymous with a place, such as a resource room, special education class, or special education school.
5. Curriculum content and grade level placement are synonymous; in other words, all children placed in a fifth grade class must do "fifth grade level" work.

FEATURES REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

- 1) All the students tend to be appreciated in general education classrooms in their particular localized academic institutions. The general education class within the institution students might attend if they did not have a disability.
- 2) Students tend to be educated in classrooms in which the number of those with as well as without having disabilities is relative with the localized society (example., 10% to 12% have actually determined disabilities).
- 3) Pupils tend to be educated with colleagues in the same age groups accessible to individuals considered disability tags.
- 4) Students along with different qualities as well as capabilities take part in distributed learning activities while following individually proper learning results using essential helps as well as accommodations.
- 5) Distributed academic activities take place in methods mainly visited by individuals with no disabilities (e.g., common education classrooms, society work places).
- 6) Academic experience are created to improve separately motivated valuable life results for college students and as a consequence seek a personalized balance in between the educational or even practical as well as cultural or individual facets of education.
- 7) Inclusive education exists whenever each one of the formerly mentioned features happens during an constant, every day schedule.

TEACHING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Increasingly, the myths and their corresponding practices are being replaced by new standards. While these newer standards of practice are not necessarily common across the country, they are present to some extent in every state and they represent a fundamental shift in how increasing numbers of educators, parents, consumers, administrators, and community members are thinking about the education of students with disabilities.

Some of the principles underlying these new standards include

1. Qualified general education teachers with inclusive attitudes and appropriate supports can successfully teach students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities.
2. The principles of teaching and learning are the same whether a student has a disability label or not, although these principles may need to be applied differently, adapted, or used more systematically for some students.
3. Just as many instructional approaches used by special educators are effective when used with students without disabilities, many instructional approaches that are effective within general education can also be effective for students who have special educational needs.
4. When general education teachers expand their skills to address the diversity resented by their students with disabilities, they often learn skills that improve their teaching for all students.

5. Special education, namely, specially and individually designed instruction, is a service, not a place. It is portable and therefore need not be bound by location.

6. Grade level placement and curriculum content need not be synonymous.

Rather, grade level placement and curriculum content can be independent of each other. For example, in a fifth grade class, while most students might be pursuing what people think of as "fifth grade" curriculum (knowing that varies from place to place), some students will be pursuing individually appropriate curriculum content that is below or above that level through the use of multi-level instruction or curriculum overlapping (both are discussed later in this chapter).

7. We need to change the way we think about educating students with disabilities so that, regardless of what positive intentions we might have, our actions (e.g., to include or not) are not considered a "favor" to students with disabilities. If you, as a general educator, are unaccustomed to having students with disabilities in your classroom, you are not alone in your anxieties, apprehensions, and even fears about inclusive education. These concerns are real and should be taken seriously by colleagues and families. The purpose of this chapter is to help you acquire the attitudes and skills that will assist you in successfully teaching your students with disabilities, rather than excluding them from the classroom or segregating them within it. Recently, we heard a teacher say, "I am concerned that inclusion takes time away from the regular education students because the teacher's emotional energies and attention are redirected toward the challenging student." Although we know that this sentiment may be shared by some general education teachers, it reflects one of the most basic problems facing students with disabilities and their families, namely, that they are considered to be in a different category than "regular" students

. Almost every classroom has students without disability labels who sometimes need extra "emotional energy and attention" from their teachers for any host of reasons (e.g., impact of divorce, child abuse, challenging temperament, issues of normal adolescent development). The same holds for students considered "gifted." Someone could say, "Aren't those gifted students an emotional drain on the teachers because they require specialized planning to be sufficiently challenged and therefore they take teacher time and attention away from the majority of the class who are all at a similar level?" As teachers, we have to be prepared to offer differential amounts and types of emotional energy, attention, support, and individualization to our students, regardless of labels and needs. Good teachers build on the individual strengths of each student and recognize that all students have something valuable to contribute to the classroom community. A competent, caring general education teacher who is effective with students without disabilities already possesses most of the critical skills necessary to successfully educate students with all kinds of learning challenges, including various disabilities (Giangreco, 1997). However, when teaching students with disabilities, you and the members of your collaborative team may need to apply the principles of teaching and learning in different ways. The remainder of this chapter addresses five of the most common questions posed by general education teachers who are interested in successfully including and teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms. These five questions, each related to curriculum and instruction, are:

1. What does a quality curriculum for a student with disabilities in a general education classroom look like?
2. How should the content of the curriculum be determined?

3. How can individualized curricular content be addressed appropriately in the classroom when students without disabilities are pursuing different curricular content?
4. How can appropriate learning opportunities to include students with disabilities in classroom activities be identified or adapted?
5. How can instruction be individualized within the context of general class activities?

WHAT DOES A QUALITY CURRICULUM FOR A STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES IN A GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM LOOK LIKE?

When considering educational curriculum content for students with disabilities, it is important to recognize that the population of students labeled "disabled" is enormously diverse. For example, when a student has a physical disability alone, with no concurrent cognitive disabilities, it is generally accepted that he or she should pursue the full general education curriculum established for students without disabilities. Similarly, students with mild learning disabilities also are generally expected to pursue much, if not all, of the general education curriculum. So, for many students with disabilities, the question is not what these students should learn, but rather how they will access the curriculum and what accommodations will be needed. Decisions about curricular selection become more complex and the curricular content tends to be more individualized when students have more severe disabilities or have combinations of physical, cognitive, sensory, or behavioral disabilities. A quality curriculum for a student with disabilities includes learning outcomes that are at an individually appropriate level and are pursued within typical class activities (e.g., small cooperative groups, unit-based projects). Selecting appropriate learning outcomes has long been, and continues to be, considered a marker of educational quality for all students. Individually determined curricula for students with disabilities should include a small set of family-selected priorities to establish a focus for instruction, as well as a breadth of curricula that allows the student opportunities to explore many options that coincide with state or local standards. As team members review general education curricula, they are often surprised to learn that many of the learning outcomes in them are applicable to students with disabilities, including those with severe disabilities. Although this core of curricular content should be reasonably attainable based on the student's current level of functioning and characteristics, a quality curriculum also should provide ample opportunities for students to surprise us with their capabilities. Therefore, we should never presume to know the upper limits on a student's abilities, especially if the student has never been exposed to something or received competent instruction.

HOW SHOULD THE CONTENT OF THE CURRICULUM BE DETERMINED?

Such active solicitation of parent input can have a positive impact on relationships between families and professionals. Parental selection of priorities does not infer that professionals are nonessential, but rather that their curricular role has evolved from telling parents what is best for their child to assisting families in determining and articulating their own priorities based on their individual and cultural perspectives. Important aspects of curriculum design today are choice and selfadvocacy by students with disabilities (Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Curtin, & Shirkanth, 1997). Such choice-making to select curricular content may coincide with the cultural norms of the family and/or the norms of the community. For example, young children may be given

choices within the context of activities, while older students may select some or all of their own learning priorities. Professionals still retain an important role in developing the breadth of curricular content that is available to students in the school

HOW CAN APPROPRIATE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES BE IDENTIFIED OR ADAPTED?

All too often, school personnel expend significant effort developing an IEP that is not necessarily reflected in the daily schedule of activities for a student. Students may even be welcomed and included in general education activities, but not be pursuing the individualized learning outcomes that were selected as priorities in their IEP. Use of a Scheduling Matrix (Giangreco, Cloninger, & Iverson, 1998), is designed to prevent this from happening by explicitly comparing a student's IEP goals and additional learning outcomes to a list of the class's planned activities (e.g., arrival routine, opening routine, language arts, science, physical education). The scheduling matrix is a divergent activity where team members consider the possibilities for working on a student's learning outcomes within the various class activities. This process is aided by decisions made by the student's team about the nature of participation (e.g., multilevel, curriculum overlapping) in various class activities. A student schedule is then developed, based on possibilities generated using the Scheduling Matrix.

- Are there sufficient opportunities for the student to work on identified learning priorities?
- Are there sufficient opportunities that pertain to the student's identified additional learning outcomes?
- Does the student's schedule follow the class routine as much as possible?
- Are learning outcomes and general supports addressed at the most naturally occurring times?
- Does the student have the same opportunities for breaks as students without disabilities, so he or she has time to just be a kid?

Answers to these and other questions that arise as a result of scheduling may lead your team to rethink the range of learning outcomes in the student's program as well as how to adapt instruction. A completed student schedule provides increased clarity to expectations for a student's participation throughout the school day. By looking at the schedule, a teacher or assistant would know what the instructional focus should be for a student with disabilities when he or she is in any class. Of course, each of the teachers should be involved in making such decisions. As the student progresses through the school year and as team members learn more about the student, the schedule should be adjusted accordingly

CONCLUSION

Overall education of teachers is performing latest as well as vital roles in training students with disabilities with the help of specialized teachers, associated service staff, para-professionals, and other college or school workers and community people. Although teaching students with more serious disabilities could present challenges, general education teachers can easily have a principal, positive impact on the students with disabilities. By helping to create these new opportunities, teachers will develop skills that improve their teaching of all children and will model many important behaviors for their students without disabilities. Teachers who successfully include students with disabilities demonstrate that they value the uniqueness of each child and

model both problem-solving behaviors and coping strategies for dealing with change in constructive ways. In doing so, they help break down barriers that artificially limit students with disabilities and they help debunk stereotypes. As the role of the general education teacher continues to evolve in regard to educating students with disabilities, today's teachers have already demonstrated that inclusive education can be done successfully anywhere competent and caring people choose to extend their own learning on behalf of children.

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