

Putting it All Together: Providing Access to the General Education Curriculum and Meeting the Accountability Challenge

Margaret J. McLaughlin
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Part I: What do we know and What do we need to do?

- NCLB is a dynamic law and we don't know where it is going
- IDEA is also a dynamic law and is moving toward one law with two applications: one for high and one for low incidence students

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What do we know about the implementation of accountability?

- Assessment participation has increased dramatically
- Performance is increasing, particularly at lower grade levels, but the gap has not narrowed
- Assessment design and procedures impede performance of students with disabilities & accommodations don't always improve performance
- Alternate achievement standards and assessments remain troublesome...BUT
- Accountability is forcing schools to take notice of what students with disabilities are being taught and how well they are learning

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What do we know about the implementation of accountability?

- The school is the unit of improvement
- Good general education is necessary
 - Strong curriculum aligned with standards
 - Pedagogy matches curriculum demands
 - Strong collaborative culture and "collective responsibility"
 - Use the "right" data

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What do we need to do to make accountability work for students with disabilities?

- Understand the purpose and implications of accountability (NCLB) for students with disabilities
- Increase real access to general education curriculum – not what we currently call "access"
- Link IEPs to general education curriculum and assessments
- Match teaching to the demands of demands

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What are the Implications?

- **Technical issues** – some may be fixed through regulation, policy guidance, research and development, and technical assistance
- **Conceptual issues** – pertain to the underlying assumptions of NCLB and the purpose of "special education and related services" as defined through the IDEA

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Technical Issues

Issues result in inaccurate inferences about performance trends:

- Assessment design and administration unfairly limit performance of some students
- Accommodations continue to pose problems
- Alternate assessments and “Alternate Achievement Standards”
- Statistically significant subgroup size and waivers for large N

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Conceptual Issues

These issues go to the core of Title 1 accountability and IDEA policy:

- Goal of Title 1 is to *close* the achievement gap between specific subgroups – *Is this the public policy goal for students who receive special education or is it to optimize performance?*
- IDEA requires an “Appropriate” education- *do standards change the meaning?*

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Accountability Means Increased Performance

The Challenge

Content and Achievement Standards have:

- narrowed the curriculum to academics
- expanded subject matter resulting in faster pace of instruction

Teachers must:

- teach more content in same amount of time
- determine priorities for instruction
- teach to an increasingly diverse group of children

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What do we need to do to increase performance?

- Provide meaningful *access to the general education curriculum!*
 - Not synonymous with inclusion
 - Must be driven by the IEP
 - Requires shared knowledge of curriculum and of how to match instruction to curricular demands
 - Good general education instruction is not enough

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We know that...

- Curriculum is essential to learning
 - Curriculum has a purpose and is linked to desired outcomes
 - Curriculum objectives lead to the development of the knowledge networks
- IEPs must be aligned with curriculum
- Special education must support curriculum

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Understanding Curriculum “Access”

We must understand that “Ready Means Never” :

If we wait until students are ready to work on challenging standards by virtue of having mastered basic skills, they will never work on challenging standards.

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Understanding General Education Curriculum

- There are 3 “curricula” in the schools that must be understood
 - Intended
 - Taught
 - Learned

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Understanding the *Intended* Curriculum

- The body of content that students are *expected* to learn as a result of their school experiences.
- Reflects educational theory and societal values at a given time.
- Implies or specifies pedagogy
- Content standards define the “intended” curricula.

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Understanding the *Taught* Curriculum

- Operationalizes the intended curriculum
- Includes the day to day, and week to week activities and lessons that actually occur in the classroom/school

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Understanding the *Learned* Curriculum

- Reflects the knowledge that students actually gain from instruction in the curriculum
- Demonstrated on state (and local) assessments as well as classroom-based assessments.
- It is necessary to monitor the “learned curriculum” in order to adjust the “taught curriculum”

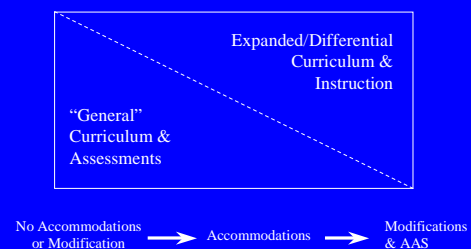
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Curriculum and Special Education

- Curriculum is the driver in special education; not the IEP
- The focus of special education needs to be on children learning important and challenging knowledge, skills, and processes
- Special education needs to be reconceptualized as a curriculum support

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Special Education and a “Curriculum Continuum”



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Final Thoughts: Accountability is Working for Students with Disabilities

- The focus on results has put the spotlight on curriculum and instruction
- Accountability is now shared and not abdicated to parents and individual teachers
- Accountability is forcing special education to consider its policies and practices
- Accountability can be a powerful tool for improving opportunities for students with disabilities

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Part II: Putting it All Together

- We must make a concerted and strategic effort to bring together the requirements of IDEA and the requirements of high stakes accountability
 - Need proactive not reactive policies
 - Need to consider the meaning and purpose of “special education”

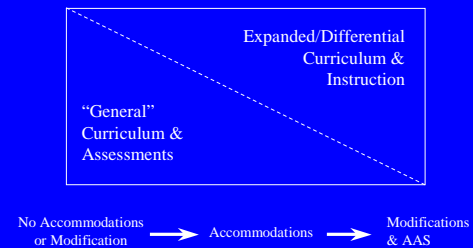
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Linking Curriculum to the IEP

- The *Individualized Education Program* (IEP) represents the core entitlement of a child with a disability to “FAPE”
- The IEP is both a document and an individually-referenced instructional decision-making process
- The IEP needs to be explicitly linked to the general education curriculum

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Special Education as a “Curriculum Continuum”



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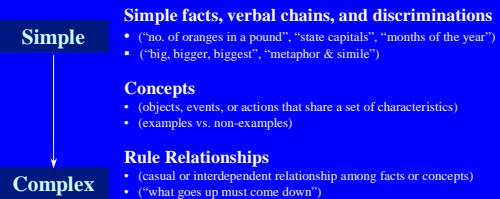
Teachers need new skills in developing IEPs

- Teachers need help in aligning IEPs with standards-driven curriculum
- They need to understand the curriculum and...
- They need to distinguish between:
 - Accommodations
 - Modifications

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Teachers Need to Match Curriculum with Instruction

Levels of Complexity within a Domain of Knowledge



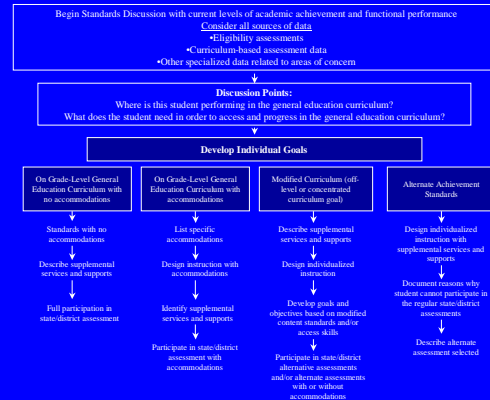
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Matching Curriculum to Instruction

Information Type	Cognitive Tasks Performed by Learner	Implications for Teaching
Facts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move information from working memory to long-term memory Recall information on demand Link new information with prior knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize information prior to teaching through use of chunking Build to sufficient practice Build elaboration into later instructional sequences
Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discriminate examples from nonexamples of concept class Generate new examples not previously encountered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully select examples and nonexamples Justify examples to focus on salient features Use a model-lead-practice format for instruction
Rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discern multiple parts of the rule relationship Predict outcomes from part of rule Discriminate occasions when rule applies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach each part of the rule Show relationship among rule parts Incorporate expanded examples into later instructional sequences
Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recall component parts of strategy Recognize occasions when strategy is useful Initiate strategy when needed Evaluate use of strategy through self-monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach each of the component parts of the strategy Model strategy and lead learner through use Show occasions when strategy is useful

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The IEP Decision Process



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Special Education Must Share in Creating the Conditions for Learning

- Create flexible and collaborative learning environments
 - Support multiple ways for teacher collaboration
 - Support joint general and special education professional development
 - Support “Collective Responsibility”
- Inform data collection and the inferences that are made from data

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