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But What About Recess?
Kayla Coburn, Education Specialist

A lot of discussion about inclusion is commonly focused on the classroom. What kind of activities can students do together while learning? What modifications and accommodations are easy to do for core curriculum work? How can I manage the everchanging schedule? I want to focus on these common inclusion questions, but instead of focusing on the classroom, we are going to focus on recess, lunch time, and breaks between periods. The most common challenge with these times of the day is that the adults use them as their break times too. **THIS IS NOT A BREAK FOR THE ADULTS!** Students with different abilities and varying communication needs require assistance especially during these portions of the day.

Let's first discuss activities. Recess and breaks are the time for children to play, communicate, and build relationships with their peers. Does your student love to play catch, hula-hoop, play card games, or race? This is a perfect opportunity to have your student participate in a desired activity with a peer. See other students playing catch? Have them include your student. See a group of students playing the latest card game? Have them include your student.

Have some hula-hoops in your classroom? Bring them out to share with the student's peers. Practice taking turns, practice rolling the hula-hoop to each other, swinging it on their foot, etc. This is also an opportunity to change a *behavior* happening at recess into an *activity*. I had a student who would get to recess, take off his shoe, and throw it as high as he could. We changed the activity by being prepared with a basketball and a friend and they took turns throwing the ball up to a hoop or as high as they could.

Modifications and accommodations at recess and breaks may look a little different too. The biggest challenge I see in schools that are trying to be inclusive during recess, lunch, and break time, looks more like *Figure 1* to the right. Integration is when you put the group of students in the same room but at their own table only communicating with each other. This is different from inclusive practices. To change this, adults need to be the example for all of the students. The adults need to teach the students in the general education classrooms how to communicate with their peers. The adults need to find connections between the students and encourage relationships. Accommodations might be a special seat for your student to be able to access the lunch table, specific eating utensils to eat more independently next to their peers, or ensuring access to their AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) device to communicate with their peers. You may need to modify how their food is presented to
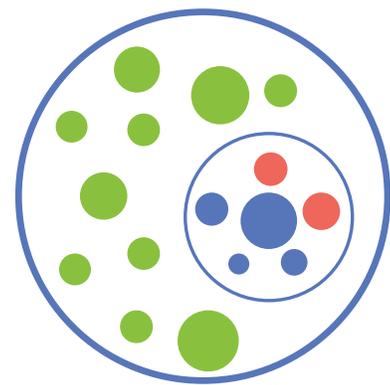
INTEGRATION
Fig. 1

them, one at a time, or hide their milk (if they're notorious for spilling it) until they need it. Inclusion looks more like this circle to the left (*Fig 2*). Children with different abilities should all be sitting with age-appropriate peers and be included in their conversations and activities during recess, lunch, and break time.

INCLUSION

Fig. 2

The schedule is also important. Sending multiple staff members on breaks during the student's breaks will not help with inclusive practices. I recommend doubling up on breaks during a quiet activity that doesn't require hands-on assistance, like circle time with stories or academic videos. Another possibility is alternating breaks, one aide going on a break after the first one comes back. Remind the aides in your classroom that **recess is not a socializing time for them, but an opportunity for our students to form genuine relationships with their peers**.

Lastly, I want to discuss how to fade out the adult prompting during social settings. You will start with direct prompting (physical or verbal), move to indirect prompting (verbal), and then independent. I would like to note that direct physical prompting happens for a specific activity (e.g., teaching how to catch a ball, etc), or if your child needs physical help navigating (e.g., uses a wheelchair or walker, etc.). Prompting is all about your expectations. Direct verbal prompting is stating your expectations to the students. Indirect verbal prompting is to provide a cue for the students to act on. Independent play requires the staff to encourage independent play providing your expectations were met. You can follow the *Fade Out* chart on the next page on how to prompt a social situation for your students and their peers.

The fade out

AND ALWAYS BE THE EXAMPLE

DIRECT VERBAL PROMPTING	INDIRECT VERBAL PROMPTING	INDEPENDENT
DIRECTLY TELLING THE PEER OR STUDENT WHAT IS EXPECTED	PROVIDING A CUE THAT SOMETHING IS EXPECTED OF THE PEER OR STUDENT BUT NOT GIVING ALL OF THE INFORMATION	WITHOUT ANY PROMPTING THE PEER OR STUDENT DO WHAT IS EXPECTED BASED ON WHAT YOU TAUGHT THEM
EXAMPLE	**EXAMPLE**	**EXAMPLE**
"I SEE THAT YOU ARE PLAYING CATCH, LETS THROW THE BALL TO SVEN FOR HIM TO HAVE A TURN"	"I SEE YOU ARE PLAYING CATCH, WHO ELSE DO YOU THINK WILL WANT TO PLAY?"	"I LIKE THAT YOU ARE PLAYING CATCH TOGETHER!" [AFTER PLAY HAS STARTED WITHOUT PROMPTING]

When we go back to in-person learning, students will be needing these breaks to play and communicate with their peers. Our students need to be taught how to communicate and play with each other and that responsibility falls on the adults in the classrooms. Recess is not a break for adults; it is an important time for our students to be included in their school communities and these social settings are the best way to keep building inclusive communities.

References:

McBeth, K. (n.d.). *This is a great visual about inclusion but it's wrong.* Affective Consulting. Retrieved July 28, 2021, from https://kevan-mcbeth-1gm1.squarespace.com/blog/2016/4/25/this-is-a-great-visual-about-inclusion-but-its-wrong

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CDBS to Implement
Improved Technical Assistance Model

by Maurice Belote, CDBS Project Coordinator

CDBS staff is excited to announce a new model for child-specific technical assistance. We are confident that this new model, which will launch in September for the 2021-2022 school year, will more effectively meet the needs of families and educational team members. This new model is built on three levels of technical assistance: foundational, targeted, and intensive.

All new requests for CDBS technical assistance (TA) will begin at the foundational level. Once CDBS receives your completed request for technical assistance, we will assign one member of our team to be your service coordinator (i.e., primary point of contact). Requests can be made on behalf of individuals (a family member or educator) or on behalf of a group of stakeholders. You will meet with your CDBS service coordinator on the Zoom meeting platform so that your service coordinator very clearly understands your specific needs and desired outcomes, and together we will generate a technical assistance agreement. Based on all of this information, your service coordinator will recommend one or more trusted resources that are identified to meet your needs. These resources might include one or more of the following: Open Hands, Open Access deafblind learning modules, webcasts, archived training videos, articles, fact sheets, and other resources as identified. Once everyone involved in the technical assistance activity has completed all or part of the recommended resources, you will meet with your CDBS service provider to ask questions, get more information, and apply the information to your specific situation (think of this like a book club). At this point, it is possible that your needs will have been met and the technical assistance activity will be closed.

If, after receiving technical assistance at the foundational level, the technical assistance recipient(s) and CDBS staff determine that additional more targeted assistance is needed, the technical assistance agreement can be elevated to the targeted level. Targeted technical assistance can be for a single recipient or a group of people, although technical assistance provided to a larger team that includes family members is much more likely to result in child change and changes in educational practices. In order to be eligible to move up to targeted technical assistance, the recipients must demonstrate readiness for this level of assistance. Readiness is defined by a set of nationally-recognized readiness indicators for child-specific technical assistance at the targeted level:

Team Member Beliefs and Attitudes

- Recognize a need for improvement in the child's program.

- Agree about concerns and desired outcomes.

- Have a positive attitude toward family–school collaboration.

- Are open to trying new ways of doing things.

- Recognize their own need for training related to deafblindness.

- See the advantages of the new practices and believe them to be better than other options (including what they are currently doing).

- View the new practices as being easy to understand and use.

- See the practices as having flexibility (i.e., can be adapted for changing situations or circumstances).

- There is a champion on the team—someone with influence who puts energy into supporting new practices.

Targeted technical assistance represents a time commitment of a few months and may include training and coaching by CDBS staff members using the Zoom meeting platform. CDBS staff members will utilize best practices in providing technical assistance via a virtual platform to ensure that our services are of the highest quality and meet your specific needs. It is highly likely that this level of technical assistance will be adequate to meet your desired outcomes.

Intensive Technical Assistance
Designed for educational teams that successfully complete foundational and targeted TA and require this intensive/sustained level of TA in order to design and implement evidence-based strategies to best meet the needs of children and youth who are deafblind. Key features include:
- Agreement of entire team: family, teachers, specialists, and administrators.
- Minimum time commitment of one academic or calendar year.
- Onsite school and home-based TA and training activities as required.
- Commitment to programmatic and systemic change to meet clearly identified TA outcomes.
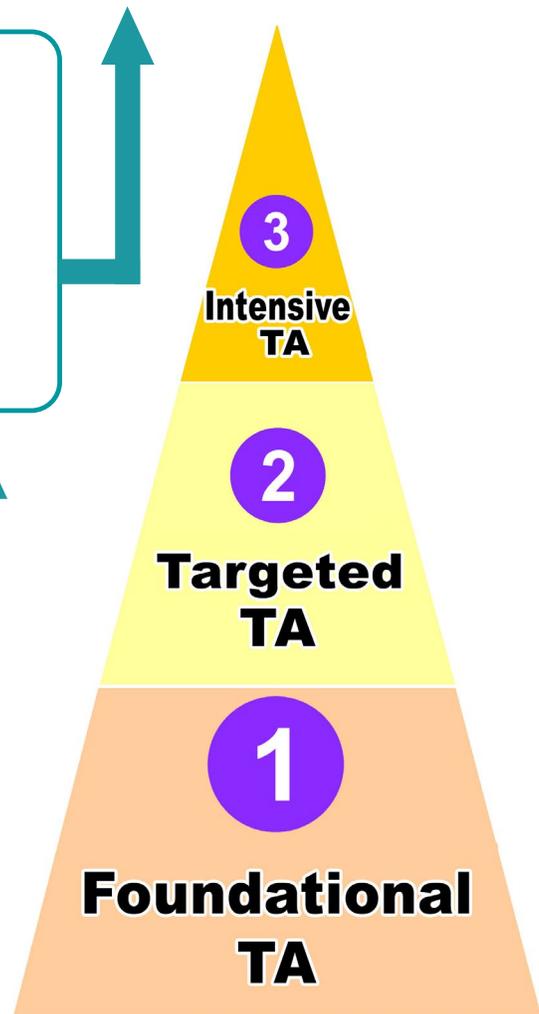
Targeted Technical Assistance
Available to individuals or teams who successfully complete foundational TA activities and still require additional TA in order to meet specific needs. Key features include:
- Designed to address basic needs identified by TA requestor (i.e., one member of a child's team or a small number of educational team members).
- Conducted on the Zoom meeting platform (provided by CDBS).
- Time limited (e.g., 2-3 months).

Foundational Technical Assistance
All requests for TA begin at this level.
CDBS staff meet with TA requestor(s) via Zoom to determine needs and identify existing resources based on these specific needs. Resources recommended at this TA level might include one or more of the following:
- Web-based Open Hands Open Access modules.
- eLearning webcasts from Perkins School for the Blind.
- Online modules from Foundational Knowledge in Deaf-Blindness.
- Podcasts from Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.
- Video fact sheets.
- Articles/print resources.

3
Intensive TA

2
Targeted TA

1
Foundational TA

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In a limited number of circumstances, technical assistance recipients and your CDBS service coordinator may determine that the needs and desired outcomes of targeted technical assistance require a more intensive level of assistance that will likely include onsite (i.e., face-to-face) training, demonstration of potential strategies, and coaching. Intensive technical assistance typically represents a time commitment of at least one year and requires the active participation of the entire educational team, including family members. Readiness for intensive technical assistance is based on the same readiness indicators previously listed, plus two additional sets of nationally-recognized indicators:

Team Member Knowledge and Skills

- Have the foundational knowledge and skills needed to learn the new practices.

- Have collaboration skills that enable them to work together effectively.

- Have clearly defined areas of responsibility on the team.

- Have clear expectations of the TA process.

Administrator/School Characteristics

- There is a good work climate at the school (e.g., low staff turnover, positive labor relations).

- There is strong administrative support for the team to receive technical assistance (i.e., administrators are willing to provide time and meeting space for staff to attend training, hold team meetings, and work with the state deafblind project; and onboard with state deafblind project recommendations for the child, such as supporting the new practices).

- Materials or equipment are available to use for specific practices (e.g., items needed to create a calendar system).

- Adequate computers and Internet access are available for team members to communicate with each other and the state deafblind project technical assistance provider.

To request CDBS technical assistance, complete and submit the Technical Assistance Request Online Form here: CDBS Technical Assistance Online Request. If you have questions or need more information, please contact anyone at CDBS. CDBS staff is ready to support you as you begin the new school year, whether it be face-to-face or virtual instruction.

Reference

National Center on Deaf-Blindness (2017). Readiness indicators for child-specific technical assistance. Monmouth, OR: The Research Institute at Western Oregon University. [Available to view and download at: https://www. nationaldb.org/media/doc/Readiness-Indicators.pdf.]

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An Interveners Perspective

By Ciara Guttierez, Educational Intervener

When I first learned about the role of the intervener, I was blown away. Not only by the immense role interveners fill for individuals with deafblindness, but that I had never heard of it! After chatting with many individuals in my life, I discovered that no one really knew what an intervener was. Even now, I enter classrooms where the staff are completely unaware of the unique services an intervener provides. To summarize: interveners are highly-trained specialists that work specifically with individuals with combined hearing and vision loss - also known as deafblindness. The intervener provides environmental and communication access to the individual that would normally be obtained through vision and hearing. The intervener develops and maintains a trusting relationship with the individual who is deafblind in order to facilitate the development of the individual's receptive and expressive communication. The intervener also promotes social and emotional development and the well-being of the individual.

After being in this field for three years, I've learned that the word intervener has more than just one meaning. It can mean an advocate, sometimes an interpreter, but mostly intervener means access. With less than ten credentialed interveners in the state of California and deafblindness being one of the lowest incidence disabilities, my job is pretty unique. Crazy to think about, right? One of the most significant things I have learned being in this field is that an individual may have deafblindness, but it is very often not the only disability the individual lives with. Each individual has different levels of hearing loss, vision loss, and may or may not have additional disabilities impacting their learning. This challenges the intervener to create unique plans that best assist the individual and their unique needs. What may work for one individual, may not be the best for another. Not only does being an intervener allow you to assist an individual in a very meaningful way, you are able to understand how much patience and understanding are needed to have a successful outcome.

Prior to this job, I had no idea I could make the world come alive for an individual. Being able to watch as individuals realize they are capable of language and communicating their wants and needs is something I will never be tired of. It is a truly wonderful moment to watch and be in awe as an individual branches out into the world around them. Watching their facial expressions as they become excited to know that they are communicating and someone is communicating right back! Watching the individuals feel accomplished with themselves gives me a whole other definition to what meaning is. One of my most memorable and favorite moments I have as an intervener was watching an individual practice signs they had just learned to themselves, to help them remember it.

Each connection I've had with the different individuals I've been able to work with have been so unique and different. It would be nearly impossible to decide which had the most impact on me. I believe that to connect and bond with an individual with deafblindness, I need to be fully present and think to myself, "How would I feel being in their shoes? How can I trust you to guide me?" The most important thing that I've learned about being an intervener is the importance of remaining consistent inside and outside of the classroom. To remain consistent, you must be eager to want to help create a better life for individuals with deafblindness. You must advocate for them and their needs, and help be their voice while they are learning to have their own.

People always talk about how amazing interveners are for the impact they have on the individual's life, but I don't think others realize how much of a positive and powerful impact they have on ours.

Ciara Gutierrez grew up in the Inland Empire city of Riverside, CA. and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area a few years ago. One of four sisters, Ciara was introduced to the Deaf Community at a young age as the sibling of a Deaf older sister. This experience motivated her to enroll in an ASL interpreting program at her local community college, which later transitioned into learning about deafblindness and finding a job as an intervener. Ciara is proud and honored of the National Intervener Credential she earned through Utah State University in 2021, which makes her one of a handful of nationally credentialed Interveners in the state. In her spare downtime, Ciara enjoys spending time with her loved ones and participating in mixed martial arts training.

Equity and Inclusion:
Ensuring Meaningful Participation in General Education
By Julie Maier, Educational Specialist

Diversity, equity, and inclusion have been central to discussions related to the educational needs of students across our state and country in the past year and a half due to the pandemic and subsequent move to distance and hybrid learning models and the racial and social justice movements occurring across the country. I view these discussions, forums, and comprehensive planning as essential to addressing the inequities and barriers that many students have faced in their past and current educational environments. I also recognize this moment and these discussions as an opportunity to work to further ensure that students who are deafblind are receiving equitable access and inclusive opportunities to more fully engage in their school communities, grade level curriculum, and within their peer groups.

This past June the Secretary of Education, Miguel Cardona, shared the following vision at the Department of Education's Equity Summit for increasing meaningful equity for ALL students: *"Equity in education is about providing all students, from all backgrounds and all parts of the country, with the resources and supports that they need to succeed and thrive in our society. It's about providing them pathways to contribute to their communities, and to make the world a better place. Equity is not a passing buzzword, but an ongoing, continuous effort to make sure that every student feels supported in their classrooms and in every educational environment."*

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Some may view inclusion and equity as "buzzwords" of the moment. Personally, I agree with Secretary Cardona that we must recognize that in practice equity and inclusion require a commitment to purposeful and sustained efforts to ensure all students have the opportunities, access, and the supports they need to reach their potential. Inclusion and equity are goals that many disability rights advocates, educators, policy makers, and families have been pursuing for students with disabilities for decades and that vision and those efforts have included ALL students, regardless of their perceived abilities and the services and supports they require.

Educational Equity

Educational equity denotes "fairness" by acknowledging that some students require different or additional resources and services. Equitable educational practices ensure every student has equal opportunities to succeed by recognizing the barriers certain groups of students face and providing resources and supports that remove those barriers. Equity for students who are deafblind recognizes that the loss or limitations of both vision and hearing, our primary distance senses, fundamentally limits access to information in our world. This lack of information, if not gathered through other senses, affects the development of communicative and social skills and concepts that naturally occur for sighted and hearing children through incidental learning. Equitable practices for students who are deafblind will address environmental barriers, curricular and instructional barriers, and relationship barriers. True equity and inclusion for students who are deafblind includes meaningful access to grade level curriculum and grade level standards through recruitment and retention of qualified, dedicated professionals and the provision of curricular resources, assistive technology, and accommodations and modifications.

Inclusive opportunities for a student who is deafblind must be tailored to the individual student's IEP and all opportunities to participate in core curriculum and engage in learning opportunities with peers in general education classes should lead to improved post-school outcomes. These outcomes might include college, vocational training or apprenticeships, customized paid employment or volunteer opportunities, as well as, the development of reliable and effective communication and self-determination skills and a sense of membership in their community. We know that students who are deafblind often require specialized environments and instruction indicated through an assessment of their abilities, interests, and unique instructional and support needs. Given the heterogeneity that these students represent, one article cannot address the wide variety and types of services and supports, assistive technology, instructional approaches, accommodations, and adapted curriculum considerations that these learners may need or use. Some students will participate in general education programs and course sequences with the use of assistive technology and accommodations and specific support services, such as interveners and/or ASL interpreters. Others may earn high school certificates of completion by participating in adapted core curriculum and building skills in other areas focused on independent living and vocational training using a variety of augmentative and alternative communication systems, adapted and tactile materials, and intervener services. One commonality across all of these students is that meaningful inclusion and equitable access require individualization and effective collaborative planning.

For this article I will focus on some processes and practices that can increase equitable access and inclusive opportunities for students with emerging communication skills and complex instructional needs and who participate in alternative state assessments. Our next edition of *reSources* will include an article on access and equity considerations for learners who communicate proficiently, attend general education classes, and complete yearly state curricular assessments.

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Inclusive Education

One widely accepted definition of inclusive education is from Halvorsen & Neary (2009) which states, *"Inclusive education is supporting students with disabilities in chronologically age-appropriate general education classes in their home schools (or magnet schools if they exist within the district) and providing specialized instruction and supports and services delineated by their IEPs within the context of core curriculum and general education activities."* A key feature of this definition is the emphasis of the provision of supports and services to ensure all students, including those disabilities, participate and make progress in grade-level core curriculum, which is also a key tenet of *IDEA (2004), No Child Left Behind Act (2001),* and *Every Student Succeeds Act (2015).*

In the early 1990s I worked with several children with low incidence disabilities in inclusive general education classrooms, including two students who were deafblind. There were a few keys to success for those students. One was consistent collaborative planning to identify barriers present in the curriculum, activities, and routines of their classes and adjusting instruction and adapting the environment and activities to reduce those barriers. Another was ensuring the classroom environment and activities provided the structure, predictability, and visual, auditory, and physical accommodations each student needed to engage in instruction and join activities with peers. Finally, instructional support was provided to these students by staff with knowledge of deafblind intervention practices who could support communication and concept development, pace instruction, modify materials or activities, and build relationships between the student and their classmates.

Halvorsen & Neary (2009) stress "*the single most identifiable characteristic of inclusive education is **membership**. Students who happen to have disabilities are seen first as kids who are a natural part of the school and the age-appropriate general education classroom they attend.*" The students I served certainly were recognized as full and valued members of their school communities in large part due to the educational team's shared vision of what they could achieve and their collaborative efforts to establish an engaging learning environment adapted for their individual needs.

Hold High Expectations

I believe a large part of the success of efforts to include learners with complex support needs in general education classes and curriculum lies in the expectations that adults hold for these students. Current federal educational policy certainly promotes the expectation for and the value of access and opportunities to participate in the general education curriculum (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001; ESSA, 2015). We know that many of these learners require modified or adapted content, materials and, oftentimes, steps in a learning activity in order to understand, absorb, and use the content presented to them. This need for adaptations or changes should not exclude the learner from engaging in the curriculum or activities. Instead, when using an equity lens we identify the barriers within the curriculum or lesson and then adapt or change it as needed to provide meaningful access and opportunities to engage and respond to the material and within the activity. If this sounds like universal design for learning to you, you're on the right track. We need to expect that if students with emerging communication skills are provided with information at the appropriate level for their symbolic understanding as well as meaningful opportunities to engage with content and practice new skills in natural contexts, these students will learn.

Often students who do not yet demonstrate the skills to fully engage in the content taught to their same-age peers or to communicate proficiently with others are held to lower expectations than their peers. An assumption is made about their interests or ability to learn new content and skills based on our perceptions of their abilities, interests, and potential. At times well-meaning adults may act as gatekeepers of knowledge

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and decide to limit a student's exposure to and experiences with new content, materials, and activities because they think that information, experience, or skill set holds no interest, usefulness, or necessity for the student. The danger here is that these assumptions can lead to decisions that deny access to content that could be interesting and useful to the student today and in the future and limits countless meaningful learning opportunities beyond core curricular content.

If instead, we assume that with thoughtful planning and consistent, systematic implementation and use of adapted materials and individualized instructional supports, students will be interested in new academic content and can learn new concepts and skills, then we provide students with the exposure, experiences, and practice to develop knowledge and skills in multiple areas.

In 1984, Anne Donnelan, a respected special education researcher, described the *[concept of the criterion of least dangerous assumption](#)* which "*holds that in the absence of conclusive data, educational decisions ought to be based on assumptions which, if incorrect, will have the least dangerous effect on the likelihood that students will be able to functional independently as adults.*" (Donnelan, 1984). She believed, as I do, that we must presume students are competent and can learn. Without this assumption educators severely limit access and opportunities today and in the student's future life.

An example of applying the *criterion of least dangerous assumption* to general education curriculum and class access would be to assume that a student who is deafblind with additional developmental delays can develop basic literacy skills. Based on this assumption, we provide the student with grade-level adapted books that include repeated phrases paired with tactile objects or photos to support their conceptual development. We also target emerging literacy skills through consistent, systematic instruction in the use of a daily calendar system. Additionally, we partner the student with a same-age reading buddy in a general education class on a daily basis. The reading buddy provides the student with an opportunity to choose an adapted book. Next the student attends while the peer, using a microphone to amplify their voice, reads the story aloud, and pauses and waits at each repeated phrase for the student to use simple sign language or point to a photo or press a switch to read the phrase and participate in this shared reading activity.

Now, if despite our careful planning and instruction, the student does not develop the literacy skills we thought possible, no harm was done and we now have the opportunity to consider other options to interest and engage the student and provide further access. In other words, "*Go back to the drawing board.*" Alternatively, if our original assumption is the student cannot develop literacy skills and so we do not provide any opportunities to engage in literacy activities, we know for certain the student will not develop literacy skills and that would cause potential harm to a student who might have developed content knowledge and skills if provided the opportunity. We must presume competence and hold high expectations for all students potential to learn.

Connecting the IEP Goals and General Education Curriculum and Activities

Participation in general education class activities and curriculum offers opportunities for skill development beyond learning grade level curriculum content. This is true for all students, including students with complex support needs. Engagement with interesting content in the areas of literacy, numeracy, science, and social studies offers rich opportunities to practice and use developing communication skills with a wide range of partners for multiple purposes. Practicing communication skills in natural contexts throughout the day can increase a student's motivation to communicate and respond to others. Access to a variety of content also supports students to learn new concepts that they may not have learned incidentally like their peers. For

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instance, a 4th grade student might learn about the variety of various microclimates and regions in California—ocean, bays, deserts, redwood forests, valleys, mountains—beyond their home community. Finally, exposure to a wide scope of content can aid in the development of new interests and skills. A high school student may really enjoy a poetry unit in an English class or learning about different styles of visual art and explore those interests in other community venues. An elementary aged student might be introduced to the *Harry Potter* books through adapted books or audio books at school and enjoy interacting with *Harry Potter* media with their family or friends.

Inclusive activities and classes provide an opportunity to teach and practice IEP goals in interesting and motivating contexts. This can be especially important for secondary-aged students who need material adapted to a level of symbolic understanding that is very different than their same age peers. In 2012, McDonnell, Hunt, and Crockett described a method to enhance access to grade curriculum and develop meaningful goals for students with extensive support needs through the use of an ecological approach that aligns student goals to grade-level standards based on an individual student's learning profile. Educational teams use a person-centered planning process to identify several important quality-of-life goals, which might include communication, self-determination, and community living skills, as well as academic goals. The team then considers those valued goals when selecting specific core standards and modifies the standard, activities, and materials to match the student's level of symbolic understanding and their IEP goals. Using this method, a student has the opportunity to work on their IEP goals across the day in many motivating and relevant contexts.

When I was supporting students in inclusive classes, a very useful tool to illustrate how and when IEP goals could be taught and practiced was the *IEP Goals Matrix*. The matrix is developed by listing the daily class periods and/or curricular activities and routines horizontally across the top row of the table and then listing the student's IEP goals vertically down the first column of the table. The team then identifies during which learning activities a particular goal can be taught and practiced and indicates that with a checkmark in the corresponding box in the table. This tool highlights how a student's IEP goals can be implemented in multiple contexts throughout the school day. A sample IEP Goals Matrix can be found at the end of this article.

Adapting the content of a curricular lesson or unit

A commonly identified barrier is the need to modify the level and amount of curricular content based on a student's current levels of academic and communication skill. It can seem a daunting task to create these necessary modifications for every core content area. I find it unfortunate that for many students who need an individualized and accessible curriculum, the solution appears to be adoption of a standardized adapted core curriculum designed for students with developmental delays. These adapted curricula may provide more access than had been previously offered to students with extensive supports needs, but their standardized format does not meet the accessibility needs of many students who are deafblind, engage their interest, or address holes in their concept development. I have two recommendations to address this challenge.

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The first is to employ a universal design for learning framework when planning, leading instruction, and assessing a student's knowledge and skills. UDL emphasizes a "*Smart from the start*" approach to selecting flexible curriculum; planning lessons, activities, and projects with multiple options to engage all learners in the class with the content and materials; and providing accessible opportunities and ways that students can share what they know or like about the content. My favorite webcast on this topic is [Universal Design for Learning](#) by Dr. Elizabeth Hartmann, our former CDBS colleague. I encourage you to watch it and share your thoughts with other members of a student's educational team.

The other recommendation is to consider using a framework shared by Courtade, Jimenez, & Delano (2014) that encourages the use of five instructional supports found to be effective in teaching core content to learners with extensive support needs in inclusive settings. They include: adapted text (text is simplified and may include additional picture support), graphic organizer, key vocabulary, BIG ideas (or main concepts or facts from lesson or unit), and comprehension response (opportunities and ways for the student to indicate information learned or skills acquired). This framework can be applied to all core curricular areas. Once a team has used these instructional supports with a student and identified the level of text adaptation, amount of key vocabulary and big ideas, useful graphic organizers that the student can comprehend, and effective formats for the student to respond (e.g. selecting a choice from numerous options, completing a fill-in-the-blank response, dictating an answer, or completing an experiment or project), they can use similar materials or formats in future lessons and the only change needed is the content that is included.
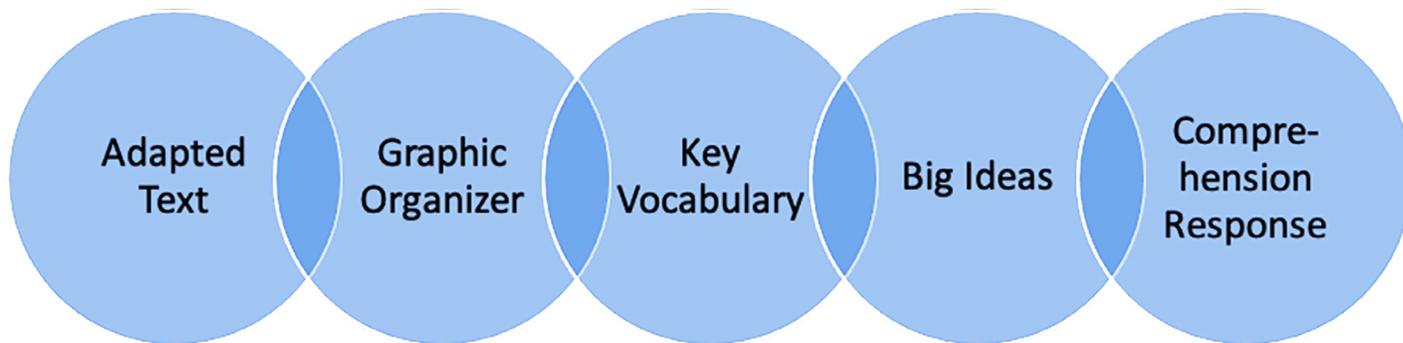
Five Instructional Supports to Teach Core Content in Inclusive Settings
(Courtade, Jimenez, & Delano, 2014)

Valued membership

Peers recognition of their classmate's capacity to learn new things and share what they've learned with others speaks volumes about the positive outcomes inclusive schools offer students of all abilities and backgrounds. When I think back to the students with deafblindness I taught in inclusive classrooms many years ago, one of my strongest memories is how apparent it was that their classmates viewed them as valued, competent members of their class communities. Through shared participation in the same class activities their classmates learned and quickly mastered so many important things about these two boys. They knew how to greet them and initiate and respond to interactions, include them in class projects and games during recess, and teach them a new concept or skill. They recognized when their classmate needed more time, a different choice,

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or a break and were keenly aware of which activities they enjoyed and what would make them laugh. They celebrated when these students showed interest, learned a new skill, or simply smiled at them while they read together. By spending time together these general education students learned quickly that everyone has potential, can learn new things, and contribute to their community. Some kids will need more time, use different tools or equipment or materials, or practice different skills, but they all were learning together.

I hope this article provided you with some points to consider about equity and inclusion. If you would like more information and resources related to inclusion of students who are emerging communicators in general education core curriculum and class activities, please contact anyone on our staff. We can share additional research, resources, and examples and help you brainstorm ways to provide these meaningful opportunities for your child or a student you teach.

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IEP Goals Matrix

Student: A.

Grade: 3rd

Goals	Morning Mtg	Journal	Language Arts	Shared Reading/ Writing	Math	Computer	Science	PE	Music	Library / Media	Recess & Lunch	Class Jobs
ID letters in name	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓
Write name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Identify congruent shapes	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓			
Identify and compare quantities by size and number (up to 10)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Follow directions with prepositional terms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Initiate or respond to interactions with peers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request assistance from a peer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use single words or signs & picture icon boards answer WH questions when read a short story	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓		
Independently complete familiar 3-4 step routines	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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