

Literacy Considerations for Students with Disabilities

The Office of Exceptional Student Education and Support services is dedicated to ensuring students with disabilities are provided with an enriched education that provides them with equitable services in their educational experiences. Effective classroom practices for literacy impact all students, including students with disabilities.

These practices include:

- Focus on the essentials by identifying important principles, key concepts, and big ideas, students are able to make connections within the content and across the curriculum. When possible, develop thematic instruction that will allow students to make connections to self, text and world.
- Graphic organizers provide visuals so students can see the connections clearly as well as help the teacher to monitor their learning. Coordinate lessons and assignments across the curriculum or various classes.
- Make linkages obvious and explicit by pointing out the key concepts and how they are connected or related to each other. This can be achieved by providing clear explanations and using visual aides.

Prime background knowledge by activating prior knowledge and then connecting it to new information, students are able to comprehend the skill, concept, or content. Teachers can easily do this by:

- asking questions
- making comparisons
- relating events to self, text or world
- providing critical background knowledge
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Provide temporary support for learning by scaffolding which allows the teacher to provide student support in learning new information. The scaffolds are temporary support. This means when the students are learning a new skill or concept, the teacher begins by modeling and then supporting their learning through ongoing practice before moving the responsibility to the students. As students become more independent, teachers gradually reduce the level of support until they have reached mastery.

Use conspicuous steps and strategies by giving students explicit steps or procedures in order to solve problems. At first you will need to model the process using Think Alouds. Think Alouds slow down the reading or problem solving process in order to allow your

students to take a peek inside your mind. By verbally expressing your thoughts, students learn what good readers do while reading. Posting the steps allows students to refer to them as needed, building independence.

Review for fluency and generalization by providing many opportunities for students to practice the new skill or concept. Feedback on their performance and increase of knowledge is necessary to ensure students are retaining their newly found knowledge. Continuous monitoring of students insures student achievement. An affective way to communicate with students is through student – teacher conferences allowing you to speak to the needs of the individual student. For more information about providing feedback, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has research based findings and steps to implement constructive feedback to our students.

We are committed to ensuring that every student in Broward County Public Schools has the right to a free and appropriate public education where students with disabilities can access grade level standards through accommodations and/or modifications as applicable to the students' Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The Florida Standards identify the knowledge and skills all students need in order to be successful in college and careers. Students with disabilities —students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) —must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers. Students with disabilities are a heterogeneous group with one common characteristic: the presence of disabling conditions that significantly hinder their abilities to benefit from general education (IDEA 34 CFR §300.39, 2004). How these high standards are taught and assessed is of the utmost importance in reaching this diverse group of students. In order for students with disabilities to meet high academic standards and to fully demonstrate their conceptual and procedural knowledge and skills in mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening (English language arts), their instruction must incorporate supports and accommodations, including:

- Supports and related services designed to meet the unique needs of these students and to enable their access to the general education curriculum (IDEA 34 CFR §300.34, 2004).
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) which includes annual goals aligned with and chosen to facilitate their attainment of grade-level academic standards.
- Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services.

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), which includes scientific, research-based interventions, may be used to identify children suspected of having a specific learning disability. With a multi-tiered instructional framework, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, including those who may have a specific learning disability, including dyslexia or dysgraphia; monitor their progress; provide evidence-based interventions; and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness. Children who do not, or minimally, respond to interventions must be referred for an evaluation to determine if they are eligible for special education and related services (34 CFR §300.309(c)(1)).

For more information on exceptional student education in Florida, visit: <http://www.fl DOE.org/academics/exceptional-student-edu> and in Broward County, visit <http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/student support/ese/>

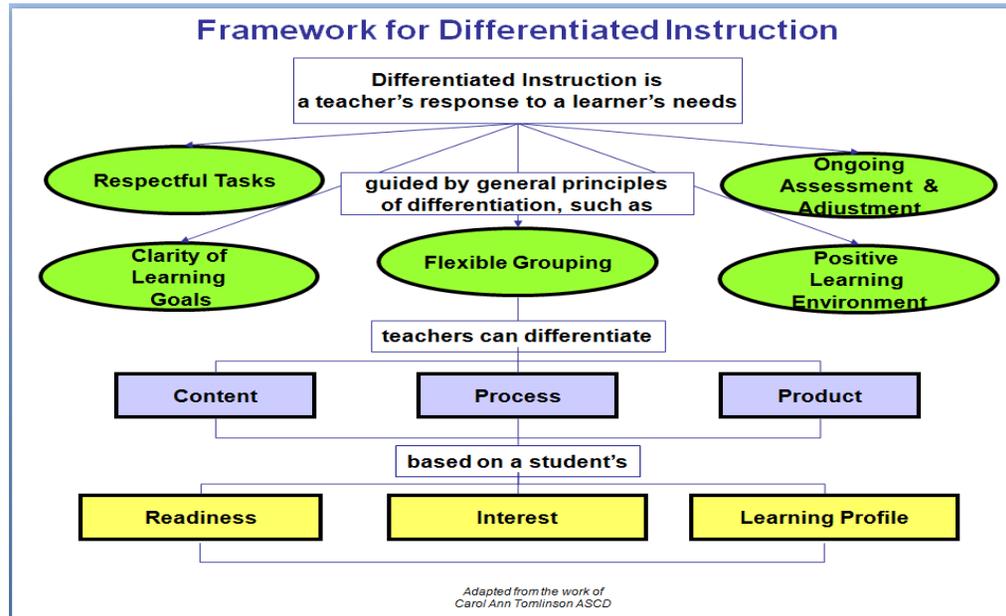
In order to participate with success in the general curriculum, students with disabilities, as appropriate, may be provided additional supports and services, such as:

Specialty Designed Instruction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) defines special education as “specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including (A) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (B) instruction in physical education.” (20 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 1409 (29))

		Core Instruction (Tier 1)	Supplemental Intervention (Tier 2)	Intensive Intervention (Tier)
Specially Designed Instruction			Applicable Across	All Tiers
Defining Characteristics	<p>Specially designed instruction as defined by IDEA regulations refers to adaptations to the content, methodology or delivery of instruction that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Address the unique needs of a child that result from the child’s disability * Ensure access to the general education curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §300.39(b)(3) * Are guaranteed by IDEA and implemented in accordance with the individual education plan (IEP) process 	<p>Instruction and support designed and differentiated for all students in all settings to ensure mastery of the State Standards and core instructional goals/expectations.</p>	<p>More focused, targeted instruction/intervention and supplemental support aligned with State Standards and core instructional goals/expectations.</p>	<p>The most intense *intervention based upon individual student need and aligned with core curriculum, instruction and supplemental supports.</p> <p><i>*Daily or near daily sessions; increased time per session for delivery, practice and feedback; narrowed focus; reduced group size; most explicit and systematic; most frequent progress monitoring.</i></p>

Differentiated Instruction



(FIN/FDLRS, 2009)

In a differentiated instruction classroom, all students receive high-quality, research-based instruction. In order to create an optimal learning environment for each student, learning goals/targets are clearly defined, barriers to learning are eliminated and instruction is proactively differentiated, based on assessment. If students do not make appropriate progress, the Problem Solving Process and Response to Instruction/Intervention (PS-RtI) Framework recommends increasing the intensity of instruction offering specific, research-based interventions matched to student needs.

For more information visit: differentiationcentral.com

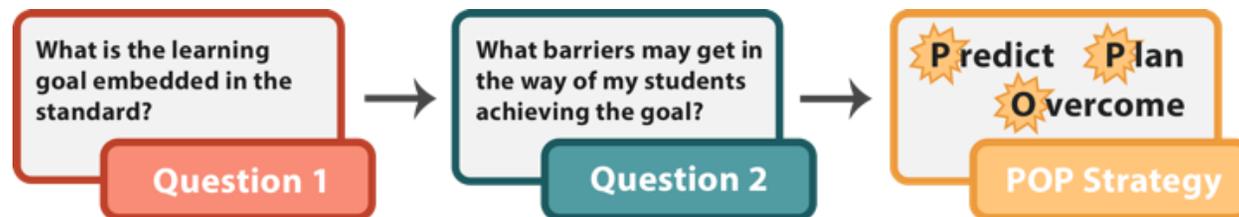
Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2015).

Instructional supports for learning— based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which foster student engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing for diverse avenues of action and expression. UDL is defined as “a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that (a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and (b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students.

The purpose of UDL curricula is not simply to help students master a specific body of knowledge or a specific set of skills, but to help them master learning itself - in short to become expert learners. Expert learners have developed three broad characteristics (1) strategic, skillful and goal directed (2) knowledgeable and (3) purposeful and motivated to learn more. Designing curricula using UDL allows teachers to remove potential barriers that could prevent learner from meeting this important goal.

This graphic provides a visual to the process of linking learning goals, barriers and plan for meaning instruction:



Example: A fourth grade teacher is addressing LAFS.4.RL.1.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text with her 4th grade students. By predicting barriers posed by printed text the teacher can plan for her students. Some students may have difficulty actually seeing the printed text, some struggle to determine complex vocabulary, others have difficulty decoding multisyllabic words and one student with physical limitations may have trouble turning the pages of the book. UDL tools or solutions offer ways to overcome these barriers related to print text, i.e. digital version of text available for student to enlarge the text, use an audio version of the text, teacher or another student records text, use technology to customize background colors and highlight text. To support and scaffold student vocabulary comprehension, the teacher provides a pre-teach of certain vocabulary terms to post in the room, use Read&Write for Google (<http://rw.texthelp.com/drive/Support/Home>) to see the meaning of words explained with text and picture dictionaries; use Quizlet (<http://quizlet.com/>) to create flashcards for student to access during the reading assignment and to study later for any related assessment. (Universal Design for Learning K-12 Lesson Plans Module, FL DOE & FCIM)

Principles of UDL-Minimizing Barriers

Description	Classroom Application
<p>Provide Multiple Means of Representation (the “what” of learning)</p> <p>Ensure that facilities, activities, materials, and equipment are physically accessible to and usable by all students, and that all potential student characteristics are addressed in safety considerations</p>	<p>Utilize multiple methods of teaching content using multi-sensory approaches</p> <p>Ensure accessibility in all classes and material (e.g. accessible websites, captioned videos, audio and e- textbooks)</p> <p>Provide notes and graphic organizers</p> <p>Use various methods to present content for each lesson: PowerPoint, videos and podcasts</p> <p>Emphasize important points</p> <p>Have chapter outlines, study questions, and practice exercises.</p>

Description	Classroom Application
<p data-bbox="235 272 699 386">Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression (the “how” of learning)</p> <p data-bbox="205 428 722 846">Minimize nonessential physical objects and provide options for operation of equipment, handles, locks, cabinets, and drawers from different heights, with different physical abilities, or by using a single right or left hand. Use large print to clearly label controls on lab equipment and other educational aids, using symbols as well as words. Provide straightforward, simple oral and printed directions for operation and use</p>	<p data-bbox="768 272 1858 345">Allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of subject matter through a variety of means (portfolios, oral presentation, written report etc.).</p> <p data-bbox="768 389 1764 462">Encourage the use of assistive, adaptive or other technologies to ensure that students can accurately express what they know.</p> <p data-bbox="768 506 1417 540">Provide clear guidelines and/or evaluation rubrics.</p> <p data-bbox="768 584 1837 695">Make expectations verbal and in printed format for discussions, presentations, and small groups. (Note: Require that small groups communicate in ways that are accessible to and inclusive of all group members.)</p>

Description	Classroom Application
<p data-bbox="296 279 655 375">Provide Multiple Means of Engagement (the “why” of learning)</p> <p data-bbox="186 446 714 711">Arrange seating to encourage participation, giving each student a clear line of sight to the instructor and visual aids and allowing room for wheelchairs, personal assistants, sign language interpreters and assistive technology. Minimize distractions (e.g., put small groups in quiet work areas)</p>	<p data-bbox="787 279 1787 386">Offer varied instructional methods to involve students in the learning process throughout the class (lecture, small group work, online assignments, class discussion, etc.)</p> <p data-bbox="787 435 1892 500">Encourage natural support systems (study buddy, partner work, study groups, etc.) in and outside of class.</p> <p data-bbox="787 509 1850 574">Provide alternatives for students on how they can participate or complete all major assignments or activities.</p> <p data-bbox="787 630 1881 727">Incorporate multiple examples and perspectives to make specific concepts relevant to individuals with diverse characteristics such as age, ability, gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, and interests.</p> <p data-bbox="787 782 1871 922">Encourage different ways for students to interact with each other (e.g., in-class discussion, group work, and Internet-based communications). Providing peer supports and opportunities for flexible group benefits students with disabilities in the general education classroom.</p>

(Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), 2015;

For more information visit www.cast.org or <https://goalbookapp.com/toolkit/strategies>

To support learning goals/targets, teachers might find it beneficial to develop a table containing UDL solutions that parallel with instructional activities.

Example: A student has difficulty comprehending vocabulary:

Multiple Means of Presentation	Multiple Means of Action and Expression	Multiple Means of Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary Preview • Pre-teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Mapping (Semantic Web/Story Web) • Frayer Model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary Journal • Realia (Real-life representations in learning environment.)

IDEA requires school districts to place students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). School districts must educate students with disabilities in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports, referred to as "supplementary aids and services," along with their nondisabled peers. This type of setting may also be considered as an inclusive classroom. A general education teacher provides instruction to both students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities receive accommodations, based on their educational needs, per the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) for support. To learn more on inclusion, visit: <http://www.inclusiveschools.org/>

Accommodations

Instructional accommodations are provided aligned to the student's specific area of disability. Students are assessed on the state standards and national assessments with allowable accommodations as appropriate. The team selects the specific accommodations the student needs to access instruction and assessment activities. For example, if the student needs extended time in the classroom to complete assignments and tests, then it is appropriate to provide extended time for the state or district assessment program. Generally, the student needs the same type of accommodations for instruction and assessment. Using an accommodation only on the state test does not allow the student to take advantage of the accommodation as effectively as possible (FLDOE, 2010).

Accommodations are organized into four categories:



Presentation—how the student will access information

Response—how the student will demonstrate competence

Setting—where the student will be instructed and assessed

Scheduling—when the student will be instructed and assessed

Assistive Technology may be used to support a student in any of these areas

For more information on Accommodations visit:

<http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/urlt/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>

Putting it in Practice - A Classroom Scenario:

Timothy has difficulty organizing his work and staying on task for the span of whole group instruction for 20 minutes. Timothy is a fifth grade student with a specific learning disability who struggles with decoding multi-syllabic words and deciphering the meaning of words in informational texts.

Specially Designed Instruction in ELA: Timothy is provided with small group instruction and interventions in vocabulary skills and decoding multi-syllabic words.

Available for ALL Students		Provide to Specific Students with Disabilities	
DI	UDL	Accommodations	FSA Testing
<p>Teacher is addressing learner needs through ongoing assessment and adjustment to learner needs.</p> <p>Teacher uses flexible grouping with peer support to assist with on-task behavior</p> <p>Teacher provides clear classroom expectations to all students</p>	<p>Teacher has provided the whole class with a color coding system to organize materials.</p> <p>*Timothy’s needs are being addressed through the teacher’s organization of the class environment for all students.</p>	<p>Stated on IEP:</p> <p>1.(Scheduling) Timer and verbal/visual prompts to assist Timothy to stay on task.</p> <p>2. (Presentation) Checklist of rules for decoding multi-syllabic words to use during literacy activities.</p> <p>3. (Scheduling) Additional time & frequent breaks provided during longer literacy tasks</p>	<p>Extended time as per IEP Frequent breaks during the testing session as indicated on the IEP</p>

For more information contact the Exceptional Student Education Department at 754-321-3400.