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QUARTERLY  
SPECIAL  
EDUCATION  
NEWSLETTER

# Special Education

Issue 4 August 2011

## GaDOE Special Education Resources

### Implementation Manual

Provides practical ideas and best practice information on the implementation of the Georgia Special Education State Rules.

### Webinars

Schedules for Elluminate Trainings future and past are posted.

### GaDOE Special Education Staff Contact List



### In Upcoming Issues...

- ✓ **What's Special About Special Education (Continued)**
- ✓ **Dyslexia**
- ✓ **Collaboration**

## Welcome Back



Our purpose is to share Tips, Information, and Updates from the State Department with our teachers.

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## What's Special about Special Education?

Have you ever heard the phrase that a teacher is the single greatest ingredient in the recipe of success for a child? Well, this cliché is absolutely true; and the role of a teacher is even more paramount for a child with a disability! Based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children with disabilities must receive specially designed instruction to address their unique needs that result from the disability and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum so that the child can meet educational standards that apply to all children. What is specially designed instruction? How do you determine the “unique needs” of the child? What does it mean to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum?

In order for a child to be identified as having a disability, data must document that the disability has an adverse educational impact. The disability must impact the child in such a way that individualized needs and deficits have to be addressed to ensure access to the curriculum. Specially designed instruction is an adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction and must be tailored to meet the child's needs. The most salient point some people tend to forget is that identifying a child with a disability is not an automatic waiver of the grade level expectations of what a child must know and be able to do. More importantly, federal regulations provide protection to make certain that students with disabilities can access the general curriculum with the appropriate supports. Think about the students with disabilities for whom you provide instruction and consider the following questions. How do I specially design their instruction? Do I know the unique needs of each child as outlined in the present levels of performance in the Individualized Education Program? Am I providing supports to enable each child to work toward educational standards for age appropriate peers, or am I providing supports to work exclusively on deficits and needs? These rhetorical questions are a great foundation to start critical conversations about what is really “special” in special education. A plethora of root causes may result in students with disabilities not performing well in a particular school or district. However, if the “special” part of “special education” is missing, then this a great place to start!

# Intervention Highlights

## Behavior Bits

### Special Connections



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**Connecting teachers to strategies that help students with special needs successfully access the general education curriculum**

*Behavior Plans* is a part of the **Special Connections** website that focuses on research-based practices related to student behavior. Four components of this area address teacher tools, research, case studies, and online collaboration. This site can provide tools to improve your practices when assisting students with disabilities in the general education

## LINCS Vocabulary Strategy

Learning vocabulary is a difficult task for many students; however, it is an important task that must be mastered to ensure academic success. One research-based intervention that can address vocabulary comes from the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. The *LINCS Vocabulary Strategy* provides a specific methodology for instructing students in a vocabulary process that they are taught to generalize to various settings. Data collection to monitor progress is built into the strategy.

The *LINCS Vocabulary Strategy*, developed by Edwin Ellis, Ph.D., helps students learn the meaning of new vocabulary words using powerful memory-enhancement techniques. Strategy steps cue students to focus on critical elements of the concept, to use visual imagery, to make associations with prior knowledge, and to create key-word mnemonic devices for study cards that enhance comprehension and recall of the concept.

Research results show that in a social studies class in which the LINCS Vocabulary Strategy was taught, the students with LD performed at a mean of 53 percent in the pretest and at a mean of 77 percent correct answers after learning the strategy. In the control class in which students did not learn the strategy, the mean percentage of correct answers decreased from the pretest to the posttest. <http://kucrl.org/sim/strategies/lincs.shtml> (Used with permission from KUCRL).

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Instructional materials for Strategic Instruction Model are available only through professional development sessions conducted by certified SIM instructors.

To locate the name of a SIM Professional Developer in your area, contact the CRL (785-864-0622). Specify the name of the product (or series) you're interested in, plus the city and state you live in, and you will be given the names of professional development specialists near you, go to [www.kucrl.org](http://www.kucrl.org)

## Teacher Resources

**What Works Clearinghouse** – A very informative site that provides reviews of research on the most current topics in education. You can research interventions by topic areas with a summary of evidence of effectiveness. Practice guides containing practical, evidenced-based, recommendations for educators are also provided. Check out this practice guide, **Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**.

**Doing What Works** – A website developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences dedicated to helping educators implement effective researched based educational practices. This site provides many resources, including videos, slideshows, and tools for using proven teaching practices. Take a **Guided Tour of the Site**.

# Classroom Assessments



## Assistive Technology Tip

### Family Center on Technology and Disability (FCTD)

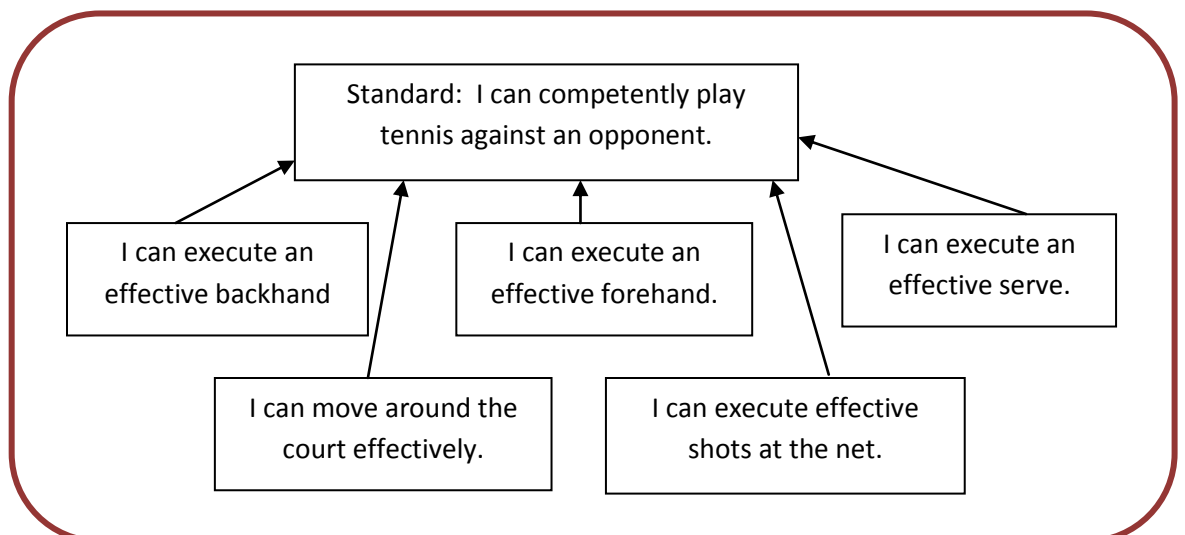
This website provides numerous resources on assistive, as well as, instructional technology. One resource available is the [Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology & Transition Planning](#). This free downloadable book seeks to provide families with a guide to effectively prepare for and participate in the transitions in their children's lives. Over a 1000 resources in a variety of formats are searchable by topic, material type, or disability. With so many resources, it is suggested that you plan to spend 30 minutes a day reviewing an FCTD resource, rather than trying to see every resource at once.

## What Does Formative Assessment Look Like?

Formative assessment occurs during the learning process. While it may be informally scored to determine progress, *formative assessment should never be graded or used as part of the evaluation of student mastery*. This is a huge shift, not only in mindset for teachers, students, parents, and administrators; but also in entrenched processes and procedures of schools. What should this actually look like in the classroom?

First of all, students must be able to articulate their specific learning target(s). It's not enough for the teacher to know what the student is supposed to learn—the student needs to know and be able to express what s/he is expected to accomplish and what that will look like. While learning targets are always derived from standards, standards may be broken down into a number of learning targets, each of which needs to be hit before the standard can be mastered.

Say, for example, a hypothetical standard states, “The student will demonstrate competent execution of the components of tennis (i.e., backhand, forehand, serve, footwork, net play) on the court against an opponent.” Here, the student will be *evaluated* (summative assessment) at the end of the learning, when s/he plays an actual game against an opponent, by how well s/he plays the complete game. But before this *evaluation*, the student needs to learn and be *formatively assessed* on the individual components of the game. Each of these components, then, will provide the learning target for a specific lesson or series of lessons that build the knowledge and skills necessary to master the actual standard.



**“By learning you will teach; by teaching you will learn.”**

– Latin Proverb

## Classroom Assessments (continued)

### Resource Board Highlights

#### New Access Course Flexibility for High School Students with Significant Disabilities

A new change in State Rule IDA(3) List of Courses gives more flexibility for high schools to determine appropriate Access Courses for high school students with significant disabilities. While there is still a list of approved Access courses, any approved state funded course can now be designated by the local school system as an Access course by changing course number, i.e., by making the 4th digit to the right of the decimal a 5. For example, Course 26.06100 Ecology, can become 26.06150 Access to Ecology. The students can access the course standards as they would for other Access courses through adaptation of the curriculum, materials, and activities. As you adapt materials and activities to give access to these courses, please remember to share with your peer teachers statewide by submitting them for posting on the Resource Board for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities!

During the learning process, the student will tackle each learning target separately. For example, when the learning target is “I can execute an effective serve,” the coach will model the steps of an effective serve; the student will practice these steps with immediate feedback and guidance from the coach; and then the student will practice the steps independently. After this independent practice, the student will demonstrate the serve for the coach and continue to receive feedback and guidance until the learning target is achieved. Throughout this process, the coach and the student are *formatively assessing progress toward the learning target in a safe environment* before the student actually takes the court to compete against an opponent.

The basics of formative assessment whether in sports or in the classroom are the same. Formative assessment

- occurs during the learning and assesses *progress toward* the learning targets,
- involves students in the assessment process,
- is used to make or modify instructional decisions during a lesson or unit,
- includes immediate feedback that allows students to adjust their learning processes,
- does not include points or a letter or numeric grade that will count in the summative evaluation.

The majority of all classroom assessment should be formative. While this shift in mindset, processes, and procedures is not easy, research has shown unequivocally that making the shift to formative classroom assessment results in significant gains in student achievement.

Effective feedback must answer three major questions asked by a teacher and/or by a student: Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I going? (What progress is being made toward the goal?), and where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?).

Hattie, J. & Timperley, H. (March, 2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research* 77(1), 86. Retrieved from [http://growthmindseteaz.org/files/Power\\_of\\_Feedback\\_JHattie.pdf](http://growthmindseteaz.org/files/Power_of_Feedback_JHattie.pdf).

## Transition Tip

Remember **all** students with a disability must participate in **all** aspects of the Bridge Bill. An important part of this bill includes the development of an individual graduation plan (IGP) before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade. The Transition Plan should support the attainment of postsecondary goals outlined by the IGP, just as the IEP supports the achievement of the Georgia Performance Standards. The IEP Team will identify the skills and supports needed to reach each transition goal that will be linked to the IGP and will also identify the specially designed services and supports necessary for the achievement of the IGP.

[Bridge Workshop Powerpoint](#)

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Georgia Department of  
Education

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# Explicit Instruction

## Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Teaching vocabulary is not only for reading classes; it is applicable to all content areas. All teachers, regardless of their specialty, should provide explicit vocabulary instruction. Explicit instruction in content specialized vocabulary is an important way to contribute to success for all students.

Research conducted on the effectiveness of explicit vocabulary instruction suggests that for students to master a new term or phrase they need multiple exposures to the word or phrase and a variety of contexts in which to practice its use. Most experts recommend that as many as 15-20 exposures to a new word are required for students to learn and retain meaning. Learning new vocabulary is most effective if these exposures occur over an extended period of time rather than in the same lesson or passage.

So, which words need to be part of explicit instruction? Because we cannot teach each new word, some researchers suggest that vocabulary be sorted into 3 tiers. **Tier 1** words are common words that students hear in everyday conversations. **Tier 2** words are those words that appear more frequently in a variety of texts and are important for learning in a particular discipline; these are the words to focus on. **Tier 3** words are rarely occurring words specific to a particular discipline.

The IES Practice Guide, [Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices](#), recommends these 4 components of explicit vocabulary instruction:

1. Dedicate a portion of the regular classroom lesson to explicit vocabulary instruction.
2. Use repeated exposure to new words in multiple oral and written contexts and allow sufficient practice sessions.
3. Give sufficient opportunities to use new vocabulary in a variety of contexts through activities such as discussion, writing, and extended reading.
4. Provide students with strategies to make them independent vocabulary learners.

[www.parentmentors.org](http://www.parentmentors.org)



GaDOE

**An Insider's Guide to  
Raising, Educating & Supporting  
Students Receiving Special Education Services**

**Community resources, school ideas, family stories,  
education updates, leadership opportunities & much  
more hosted by Georgia's PARENT MENTORS!**