Grade Aligned Access to the General Curriculum: Why and How

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General Curriculum Access

Really Academic
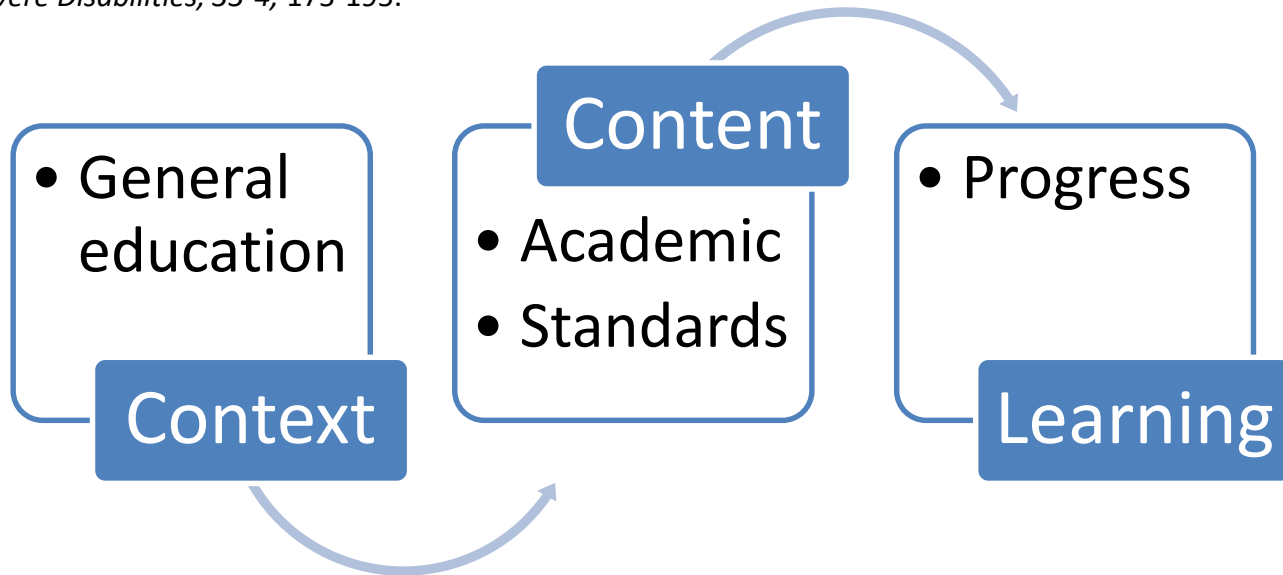
- Teaching to state standards

Matching to Content

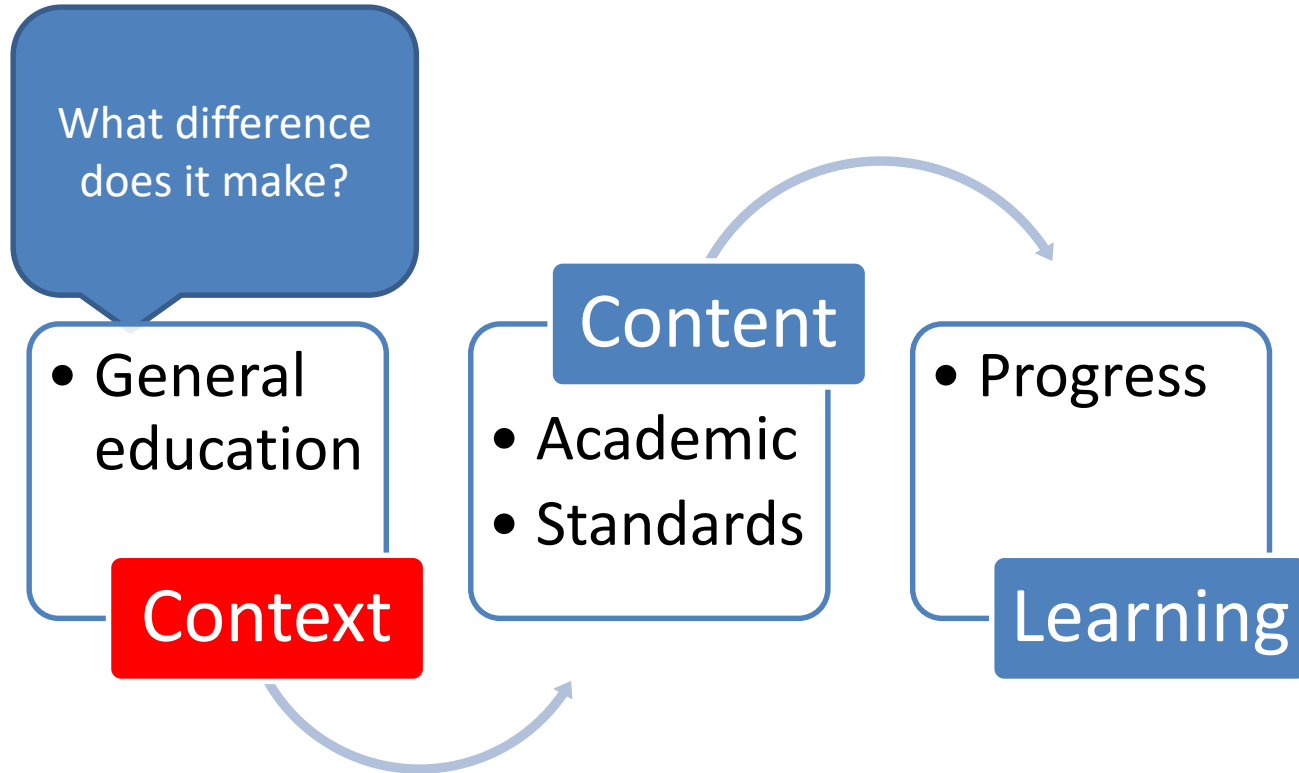- Science density lesson

Alternate Achievement

- For example, accessing literature through listening comprehension & use of pictures

The 3 Components of General Curriculum Access

Jackson, L.B., Ryndak, D.L., & Wehmeyer, M.L. (2008-2009). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 33-4,* 175-195.

Let's talk about…context

What difference does it make?

- General education

Context

Content

- Academic
- Standards

- Progress

Learning

That's the "What"….But "Why"

"Least dangerous assumption"

The Least Dangerous Assumption

- In 1984, Anne Donnellan, a special education researcher, wrote the criterion of least dangerous assumption (see Jorgensen, 2005)

"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 function independently as adults."

The Least Dangerous Assumption

- In order to make good educational decisions that lead to positive outcomes for students with disabilities, we must combine <u>high expectations</u> based on the least dangerous assumption.

- That means, using evidence-based practices, we teach reading, math, science, social studies, and writing and always give students a way to "show what they know".

The Least Dangerous Assumption

"If a student does not learn, the quality of the instruction should be questioned

before the student's ability to learn."

Cheryl Jorgensen

What We Used to Think

- Expectations for students with moderate and severe disabilities has evolved across decades

Prior to FAPE:
Expect Humanitarian Care

- Institutions for individuals with "mental retardation"
  - Humanitarian reasons
    - Alternative to neglect and abuse

But at its worse….

- Separation
  - "Going to the place for children who cannot learn"

1972: [Willowbrook: The Last Great Disgrace](#), an expose documentary by Geraldo Rivera

1974: Christmas in Purgatory, a photographic essay on mental retardation by Blatt & Kaplan

Today's Context

- Free, appropriate public education

- Least restrictive environment

Access through Context

- Goal: Students with severe disabilities learn general curriculum content with typical peers in general education class using any needed supports

- Reality: Most special education teachers of students with severe disabilities provide services in self-contained classrooms. Teachers can-
  - Develop strategies for inclusive instruction
  - Build capacity to provide academic content instruction in whatever setting student is served

Discuss

- Can you have general curriculum access if a student is not in general education class?

- Is being physically in a general education class enough for a student to have access to general curriculum?

Let's talk about…content

- General education

Context

Content
- Academic
- Standards

- Progress

Learning

SPED 4274 Browder
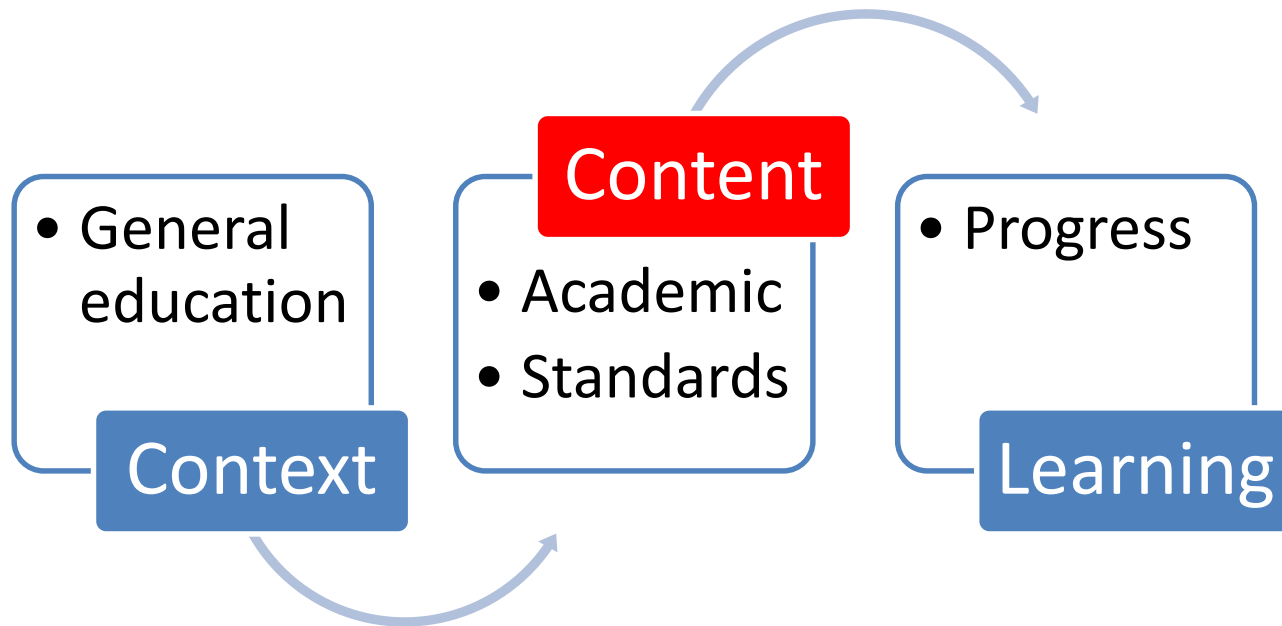
1970s: Expect Development

- Understanding child based on developmental levels
  - Enhancing that development
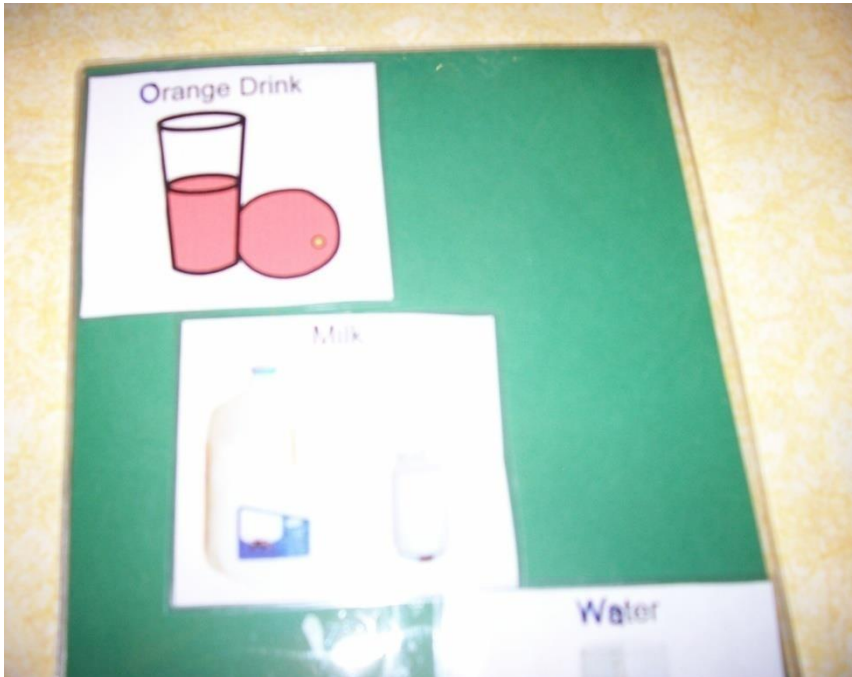
But at its worse….

- Not age appropriate
- "Stuck" in early childhood for life

1980s: Expect Life Skills

- Teach for increased independence in skills of daily living

But what was missing?

- Literacy
  - Limited to sight words
- Full educational opportunity

1990s: Expect Belonging through Social Inclusion

- Promoting full membership in schools and community
  - Offering choice/ promoting self determination

What was missing?

- Where's the content?

2000's – Academic standards

- Development of alternate achievement standards

- Students expected to make yearly progress

- Difficulty balancing priorities and lack of training/research

2010's – [Focus on Grade-aligned Academic Standards](#)

- Instruction on alternate achievement standards

- Standards-based IEPs

- Increasing knowledge and use of evidence-based practices

What could be lost…

- Critical skills of daily living
  - Unless we continue to think about …
    - How students will attain functional skills
    - How to prepare students to transition to adult life
    - How to make academic content personally relevant

Discussion Point

- If we think about changes in curricula like moving to a new home….
  - What do you still value and want to carry into the new home of general curriculum?
  - What "new furnishings" are needed (ideas not tried in the past)?

5 Reasons for Promoting Learning in General Curriculum for Sts with MSD

1. Create full educational opportunity.

2. Promote current and future options.

3. Complement daily living skills.

4. Enhance inclusion.

5. Promote student abilities.

1. Create full educational opportunity.

We do not know what students can achieve until they have the opportunity to learn.

2. Promote current and future options in the community.

- (Use of computer)

- Picture of student in a job showing need for academics (e.g., reading manual)

Academic learning can enhance use of technology for daily life.

Skills like reading and math increase employment options.

## 3. Complement acquisition of daily living skills.

- (picture of student doing some DLS like cooking)

There is no evidence that a person must master all or most daily living skills before being able to learn academics.
In fact that expectation is a double standard only applied to students with more severe disabilities.

4. Enhance school inclusion.

Academic learning enhances school inclusion
as students focus on the same/similar content.

5. Promote student abilities.
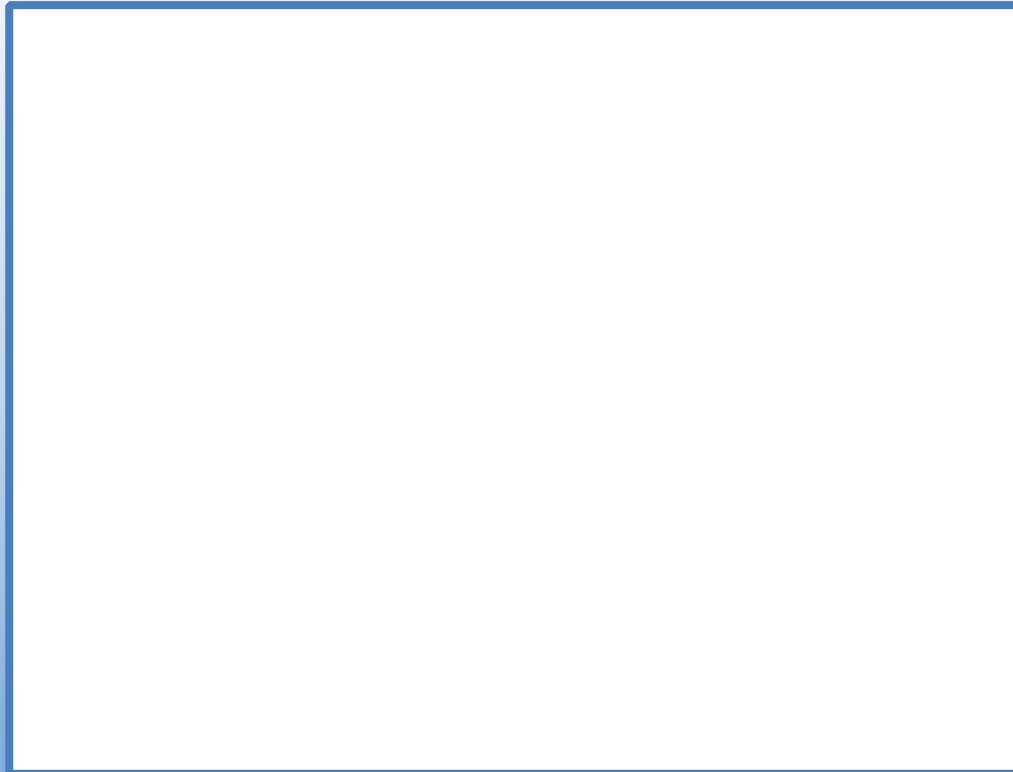
Academic learning can be augmented with technological supports and may actually be more feasible and appealing for some Ss with SCD than motoric demands of daily living routines.

Solely focusing on access to the general curriculum can be limiting, too . . .

Functional skills, inclusion, self-determination should also be promoted in planning for individual students

# Your Challenge is to Balance Priorities

Academic Content Standards

Other Priorities: Functional life skills, therapy, social skills

Current Realities: What Evidence?

- Evidence-based Practice
  - Evaluating the quality of individual studies on a topic
  - Synthesizing studies that meet acceptable quality indicators to determine if a practice is evidence-based

- Examples of Models for EBP
  - CEC (in development)
  - What Works Clearinghouse
  - National Center on Autism
  - Individual applications of CEC-Division of Research Criteria (special issue of EC)

Literature Review Categories for Reading
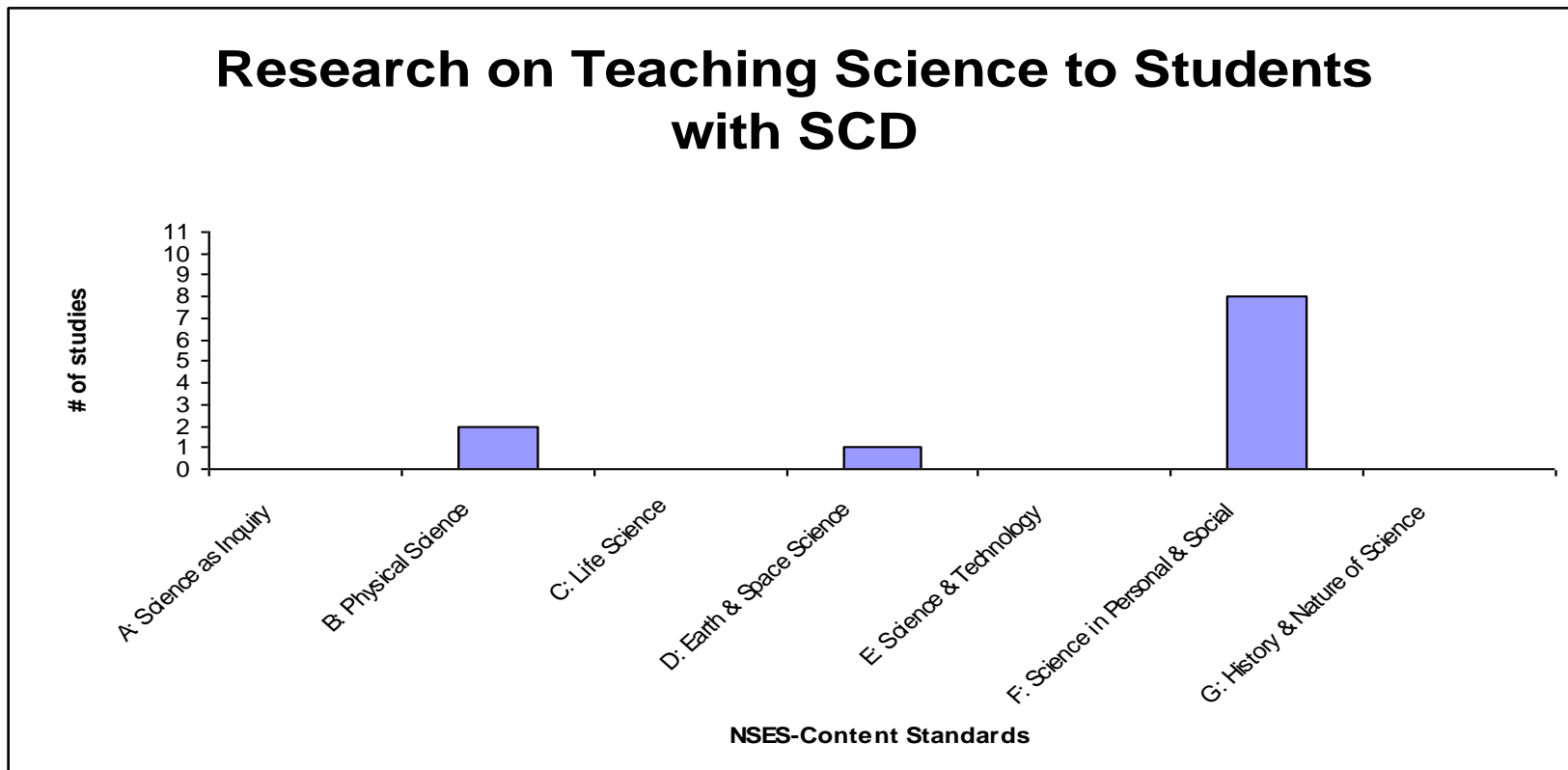## 128 experiments (119 articles)
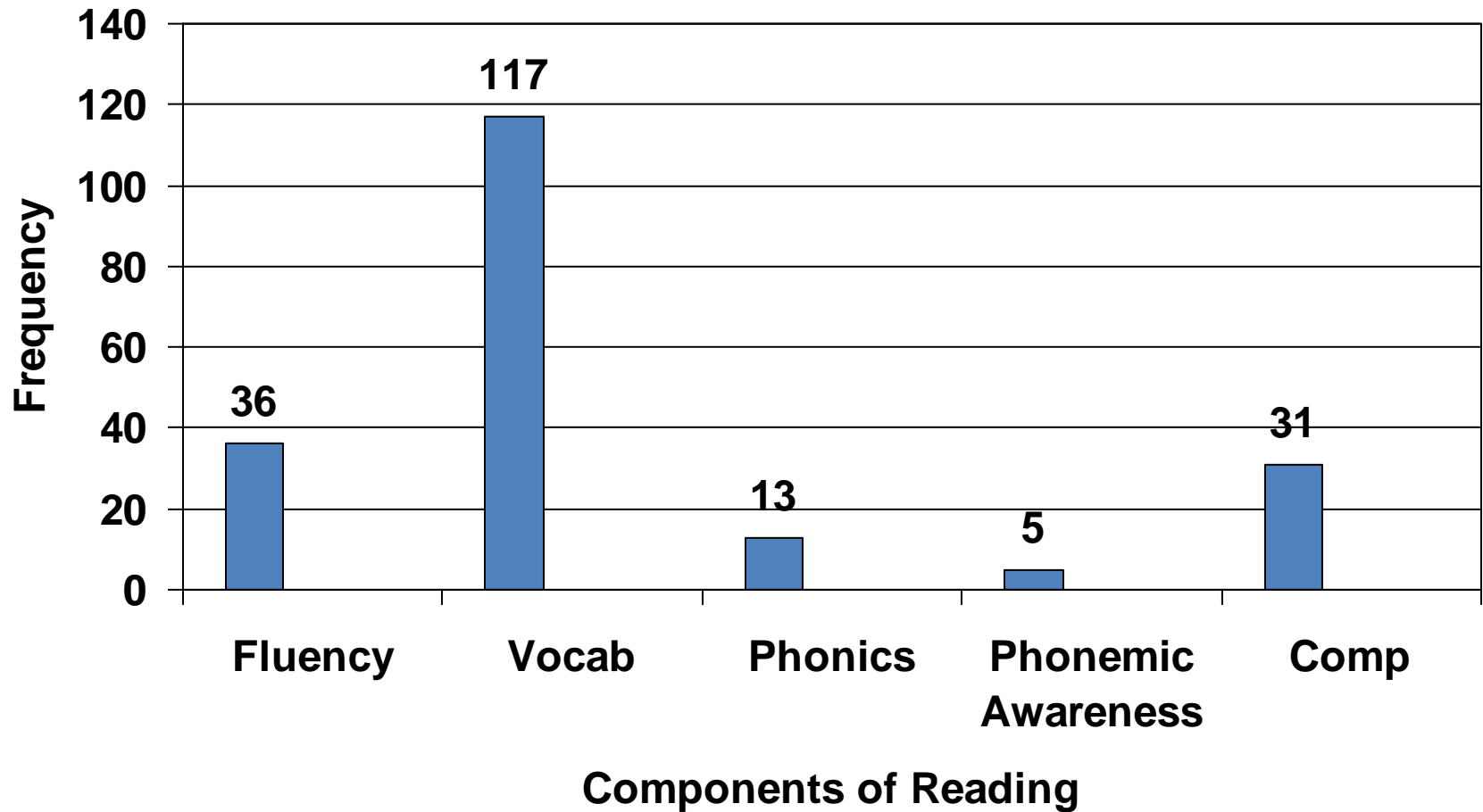
* Categories are not mutually exclusive

Mathematics Components Addressed in Studies Completed with Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities
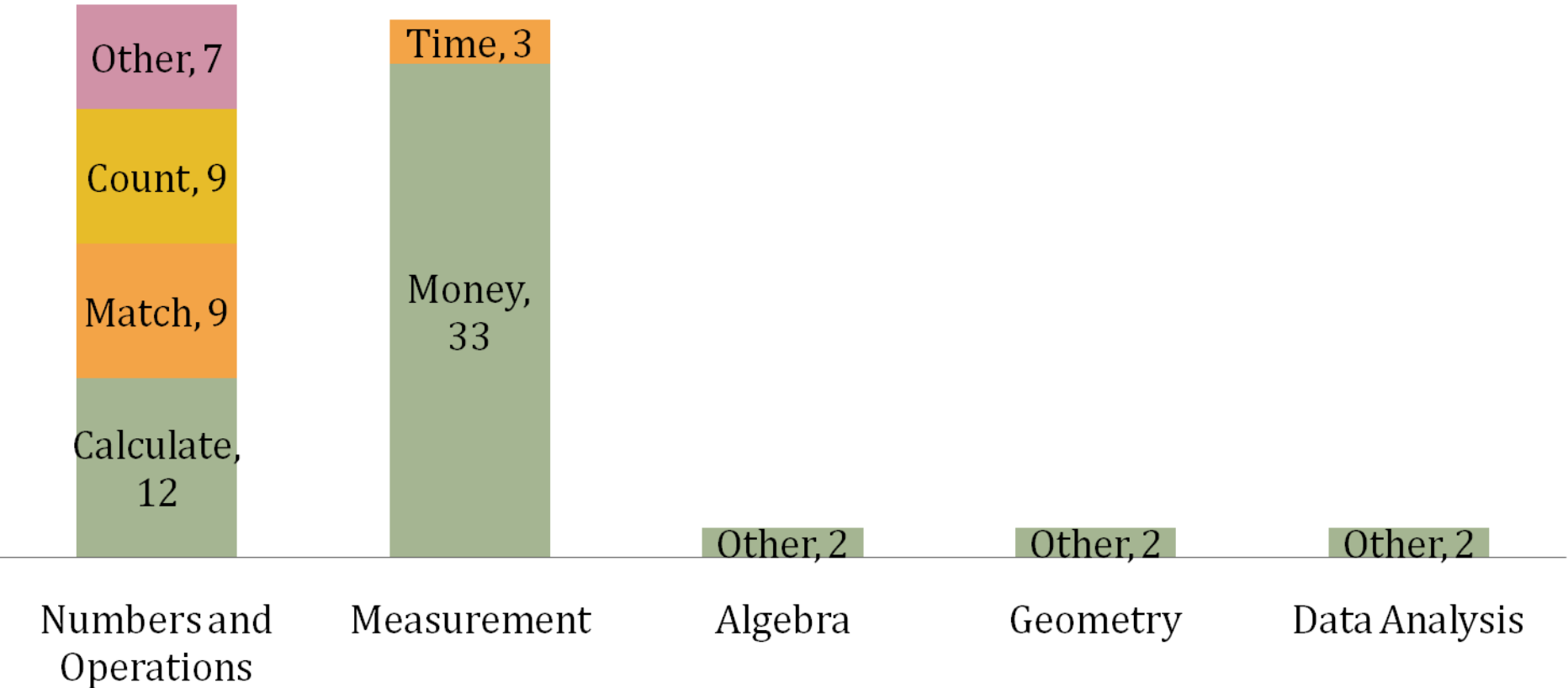
Browder, D., Spooner, F., Ahlgrim-Delzell, L., Harris, A., & Wakeman, S. (2008). A comprehensive review of research to teach math to students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 74*, 407-432.

Science Research

Research on Teaching Science to Students with SCD

# of studies vs NSES-Content Standards:
- A: Science as Inquiry — 0
- B: Physical Science — 2
- C: Life Science — 0
- D: Earth & Space Science — 1
- E: Science & Technology — 0
- F: Science in Personal & Social — 0
- G: History & Nature of Science — 8

- Courtade, G., Spooner, F., & Browder, D. (2007). Review of Studies with Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Which Link to Science Standards. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 32,* 43-49

From Research on Curriculum…

- Promises of Academic Learning
- Student Learning Constrained by What We Have Taught

Evidence-based Practices

- Systematic Instruction
  - Fading
  - Shaping
  - Prompting
  - Time delay
  - Task analysis
- Technology-assisted instruction
- Embedded Instruction
- Story-based lessons
- Graphic organizers
- Manipulatives
- Universal Design for Learning

Organization	URL	Especially look for…
1. **National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) wiki** --- info about the Standards and the Common Core Connectors	https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Main_Page	Use the SCHEMA at the bottom of the home page and click on: • Learning progressions • Common Core Connectors • Element Cards • UDL Lessons

2. **The CEEDAR Center** --- info about Evidence-based practices we should be using (by law) to teach the Standards (and additional skills)	http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/	• Resources/Tools
		   1. Innovation Configurations (ICs)
		   2. Course Enhancement Modules (CEMs)
		 • Webinars

3. **Vimeo** --- video examples of teachers using evidence-based strategies	https://vimeo.com/ceedarcenter/videos/page:3/sort:date https://highleveragepractices.org/videos/	• Create a free account • Follow the CEEDAR channel (over 46 videos available) • For example, check out the High Leverage Practices video series by Kennedy et al.

Handouts

4. **The IRIS Center** --- resources (modules) about evidence-based practices	http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/about/who-we-are/	• Resources
		  1. IRIS Resource Locator
		    - videos (e.g., UDL: Math)
		    - modules (e.g., EBPs P1)
		  2. Evidence-Based Practice Summaries

5. **Autism Internet Modules** --- modules about evidence-based practices for individuals with autism AND **National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorder (NPDC on ASD)** --- updated materials on all 27 identified EBPs	http://www.autisminternetmodules.org/user_mod.php http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/national-professional-development-center-autism-spectrum-disorder	• For the AIMs site, first create a free account. Then explore the modules, including those under "Autism in the Classroom" • For the NPDC on ASD site, select "Evidence-Based Practices" and select a module. There are steps for implementing and data sheets in each module. AFIRM modules are coming soon, with videos.
6. **MAST Modules** --- Modules Addressing Special Education and Teacher Education	http://mast.ecu.edu/	• Includes broad range of topics across disabilities • Includes specific information for mod/severe (e.g., "Students with

Check for Understanding

- Raggedy Andy will sit in a general education science lesson and select answers with hand over hand assistance.

    – How can we make this a "real boy" objective vs. passive (Raggedy Andy)?

Access to General Curriculum…

- Fosters universal design of general curriculum for ALL
- Links to state standards
- Embeds academics
- Creates opportunities in general classes and opportunities to use academic materials
- Uses real life indicators so academic skills have meaning

- Does NOT abandon the priority of functional, life skills instruction
- Does NOT ignore students' individual needs
- Does NOT expect students with moderate and severe disabilities to master grade level material before being promoted
- Does NOT "pretend" access through passive participation

What About Students like Michael?

Michael has many challenges

- Quadriplegic with only slight strength/movement in one forearm

- Legally blind

- No current symbolic communication system

- Does not show consistent responses

Where to begin

- Find a response mode

- Use AT for symbols but also nonsymbolic communication

- Use all students abilities (e.g., for Michael-sense of smell, hearing, feeling)

- Begin with animated read-alouds with sensory input and surprises

Why Students Like Michael?

Teaching Academic Content

- Least dangerous assumption; we do not know what Michael perceives because he cannot yet tell or show us

- Enriching Michael's world with new experiences and knowledge

Discussion Point

- What methods have you found effective in teaching general curriculum content?

What Holds Promise for the Future

- Grade linked content and skill progressions
- Applying tried and true instruction to more complex academic content
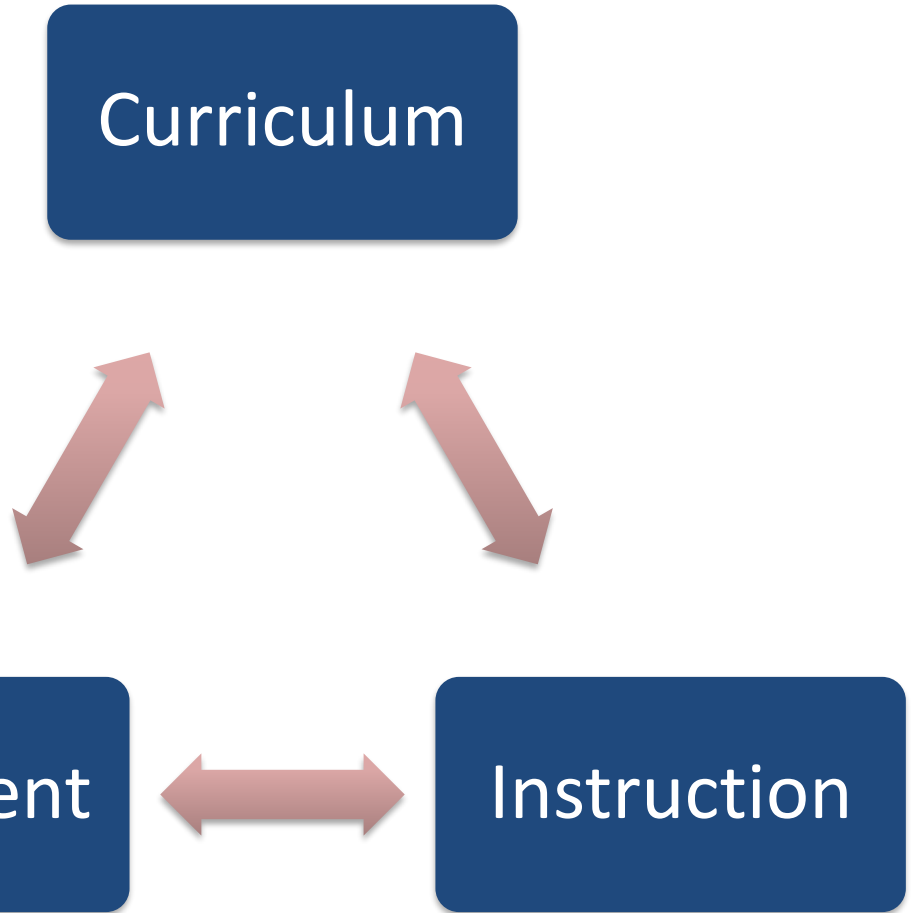- Universal design for learning: begin at the beginning

ONE WAY TO GET THERE

Alignment

- A match between the written, taught, and tested curriculum

Considerations in planning aligned instruction

- Criteria for determining Alignment of AA-AAS to the General Curriculum

  - Browder, D.M., Wakeman, S.Y., Flowers, C., Rickelman, R.J., Pugalee, D., & Karvonen, M. (2007). Creating access to the general curriculum with links to grade level content for students with significant cognitive disabilities. *Journal of Special Education, 41,* 2-16.

  - Flowers, C., Wakeman, S., Browder, D. & Karvonen, M. (2007). *Links for academic learning: An alignment protocol for alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards*. Charlotte, North Carolina: University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Criterion 1: The Content is Academic

Self check

✓ I am familiar with my state standards

✓ I know the major strands of math, science, language arts/ reading

✓ I collaborate with general education teachers

• Challenge your thinking related to functional skills: Is washing hands academic? Is there a way to embed academic skills within the steps of teaching a child to wash their hands?

Criterion 2: Content is referenced to the student's grade level

- Middle School-Grades (6-8)
- Literature of Focus: The *Cay by Theodore Taylor*
  - Students read chapters of book on grade level
    - make diagram (e.g., fishbone) of story events describing cause and effect with evidence.
    - identify facts and opinions related to the characters
    - write a narrative comparing Phillip's quality of life before and after the boat accident using evidence from the text.
- Some overlapping content with different performance expectations by grade band (e.g., Grade 3= student will match details to main ideas by / Grade 5= student will identify the main idea and supporting details)

Criterion 3: Fidelity to grade level content and performance

- State Standard:
  - Identify and analyze forces that cause change in landforms over time
- Content
  - Forces that shape landforms
- Performance
  - Identify and analyze

- *Camilla will activate switch to listen to a science story about landforms.*
  - Content?
  - Performance?
- *Camilla will use pictures to identify forces (wind, water, ice)*
  - Content?
  - Performance?
- *Camilla will select force and match with landform change (picture, model)*
  - Content?
  - Performance?

Criterion 4: The Content Differs in Range, Balance, and DOK

- Not all expectations for DOK are at lower levels (awareness, memorize, recall vs. evaluate, compare/contrast, apply)
  - Bloom's Taxonomy
- Academic skills for students cross the range of content standards (students are provided instruction and assessed on multiple standards)

4 (con't): The Expected Achievement Level Differs from Grade Level

- Examples of Alternate Achievement for *The Cay*
  - Students hear chapter summaries read and participate using pictures, repeated story lines, and controlled vocabulary.
  - Students select pictures for fishbone diagram (cause/effect) after hearing story.
  - Students use pictures to answer simple questions about characters in the story (e.g., Was Phillip on a boat or airplane ?)
  - Students compare events from their own life to events in Phillip's life in the story using a yes/no chart, and a Venn diagram.

Criterion 5: Differentiation in Content across Grade Levels/Bands

- Review standards and instruction for:
  - <u>Broader</u> application
  - <u>Deeper</u> application
  - <u>Prerequisite</u> skills (expected in building block content areas such as some math strands)
  - <u>New</u> skills
  - <u>Identical</u> (only a few)
- Curriculum Mapping

For example

- Elementary
  - Children's picture books provide support for comprehension
  - Stories have simpler themes and story lines
  - Answers can more often be found on the page (matching)

- Middle School
  - Chapter books; student follows along in own book
  - Books may have picture symbol supports; objects may still be used to support comprehension
  - Themes are more mature
  - More content from which to glean answer

Criterion 6: Expected Student Achievement is Academic Content

- Student achievement
  - Select picture for main idea
    - Full credit- eye gaze, point
  - Find main idea across stories
  - More credit for more complex text

- "Something Else"
  - Select picture with model prompt- point where I point
  - Student works with peer who selects the picture
  - Student did not select picture, but could check "not my best work"

Criterion 7: Barriers to Performance are Minimized

- ## The potential barriers to students demonstrating what they can do are <u>minimized</u>
- Can students with various sensory, physical, communication challenges show what they know?
  - What supports do students need to interact with content?
  - How will students who use nonsymbolic communication or who have limited intentional communication meaningfully participate?
  - How will students with low vision/no vision and/or hearing impairments participate?

Criterion 8: Promoting Learning in the General Curriculum

- Best practice instruction to promote learning in the general curriculum
  - Systematic instruction
  - Self determination
  - Inclusion
  - Collaboration with gen ed teachers
  - Assistive technology
  - Application of content knowledge in functional activities

Considerations in Planning Aligned Instruction

- The Content is Academic
- Instructional Alignment
- Student's Grade level/Band is where we start
- Barriers to Participating
- Content & Performance (when possible) match with Standard
- Student Achieve. vs "Something Else"
- Differ. in Content Across Grade Level/Bands
- Expected Achievement Level Differs from Grade Level

Your turn!

- Let's try an alignment "quiz"

1. To target a standard on "speaking and listening" within the State Standards, the teacher developed a plan to teach Alice to use her voice output device to greet her peers.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

2. When planning instruction for Thelma who is in the 7th grade, her teachers use the 1st grade mathematics State Standards to teach from, because she has not mastered these early numeracy skills yet.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

3. To teach to the math standard "represent and interpret data," the teacher decided to have Logan identify his favorite food and put his name on the bar graph above the picture of the food item.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

4. The students in Mrs. Wilson's 5th grade class were expected to read multiple articles on the same event then compare and contrast authors' points of view. Luis was only expected to listen to an audio version of one of the articles.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

5. Jamie has been taught to identify key details from text (i.e., setting, main idea, main characters) since the 2nd grade. He is now in the 8th grade and continues to identify the same key details with grade appropriate novels.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

6. The inclusion specialist working with Luis in Mrs. Wilson's class set up a slide show on the computer that automatically placed picture representations into a graphic organizer that compared and contrasted two articles. When Luis clicked on the adapted mouse, pictures were revealed in the graphic organizer.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

7. While instructing Jones to identify the main character in the novel Holes, his teacher asks him to point to his response from three options. When Jones is assessed summatively at the end of the unit, he is asked to produce answers verbally. Jones is scored not proficient on his summative assessment of this skill.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

8. With the introduction of the State Standards, a district within a state has required that all IEP objectives for all students must be connected to a specific grade level standard. Teachers were told that previous objectives addressing self-determination, daily living, and social skills were no longer appropriate to meet the requirements of standards-based IEPs.

- Does this create alignment? Why or why not?

Questions?

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