A Common Sense Approach To Curriculum, Common Core Standards, 21st Century College/Career Readiness Skills and the IEP

Using an Effective Blueprint to write an appropriate IEP

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First, we must understand our legal responsibilities…

NCLB and IDEA 2004 tied in the assessments of students with disabilities to state accountability systems (Ahren, 2006):

- Participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessment programs
- Documentation on the IEP of any individual accommodations in state or district achievement tests
- Documentation in IEP of a justification for exclusion from a test and indication of how the student will be assessed with an alternate method
- Report about participation & performance of students with disabilities
- Students must have goals/benchmarks that are aligned to state achievement standards that will show progress in learning

All Students (100%) are included in accountability systems

What Does This Mean for IEPs in Relation to State Standards and Assessment?

SPP Indicator 3: participation and performance of children with disabilities on state-wide assessments requires the following data:

- Percent of districts meeting State AYP objectives for disability subgroup
- Participation rate for children with IEPs in statewide assessments (with and without accommodations) and alternate assessments
- Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level expectations (assessment frameworks) and alternate achievement standards
Bridging The Gap Between...

- **Achievement** (below grade level skills)
- **And...**
- **Making Adequate Yearly Progress**
  (While using grade appropriate materials, evidence-based practices and CCSS)

For Special Educators, It Means...

- Moving away from compliant only IEPs
- Mandated IEP components
- Goals based solely on level of student’s performance and moving to next developmental stage
- Following just textbook information/supplemental materials
- Write IEP and then try to match with some type of standard(s)

Bar-Lee & Van Haren (2013)

- To results driven accountability
- To IEPs that produce results
- Consideration of grade level expectations with accommodations and/or modifications
- Using UDL and evidence-based practices
- Study/understand CCSS/21st Century skills/know your students’ strengths/needs (personal learning profile) before you begin the IEP process

For Special Educators, It Also Means...

- Students must learn the essential skills for success in today’s world: Critical Thinking, Communication (includes Problem-solving), Collaboration and Creativity (the 4 C’s)
- Students must also understand the importance of Flexibility/Adaptability, Initiative/Self-direction, Social/Cross-cultural skills, Productivity/Accountability and Leadership/Responsibility in finding/keeping a job (Life/Career Skills)
- Teachers must find a way to integrate these skills into the teaching of the core academic subjects

www.P21.org
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

What Is Universal Design for Learning? (3 Most Important Principles)

• Flexibility in the curriculum
• Reduces barriers to achieving goals, participating in assessment, and creation of appropriate materials
• Allows for multiple means of representation of material
• Allows for multiple means and diverse avenues of action and expression
• Allows for multiple means of engagement

• The “What” of Learning
• The “How” of Learning
• The “Why” of Learning

www.udlcenter.org

Team Preparation for the IEP Meeting

• Everyone involved in the meeting brings a “piece of the puzzle” (Include parental concerns).
• Everyone involved will need to discuss grade level expectations/standards—the skills that are needed to achieve grade level material/assessments/standards.
• Everyone will need to discuss the college/career readiness skills needed for success in today’s world.
• Everyone involved will need to discuss how the disability impacts those grade level expectations.
• Everyone will be prepared to talk about student’s strengths and limitations; prioritize student’s needs.
• Everyone should provide input in writing the goals/benchmarks.

Continuing with the IEP Process

• Consider the student’s Present Levels of Academic Performance
  – Skills (academic and career readiness)
  – Areas of limitation
  – Barriers to learning
  – Standards for student’s grade level
  – Supports that may be needed
• Consider the student’s individual needs which are the priority, but also keep in mind that we don’t want “lower and slower” materials; they need to be grade level. Never forget the “I” in IEP!
• Be realistic
• Look for the most important standard (or part of a standard) that can help the student the most

*Note: IEPs are NOT intended to define EVERY educational goal for a student, NOR should they eliminate functional training that the students may need.
How Will Common Core Be Integrated into the IEP?

- According to Davis (2012), there are 5 things EVERY teacher should be doing to meet the CCSS in the classroom

- First, reflect on how the standards will change your approach to teaching? Think about how these standards have changed the definition of what it means to be an effective teacher in the 21st century

- Next, think about how YOU can:
  - Lead high-level, text-based discussions
  - Focus on the process, not just content
  - Create real assignments for real audiences for real purposes
  - Teach argument, not persuasion
  - Increase Text Complexity

- Now, what will this mean for developing and implementing IEP goals? What strategies might we need to consider when determining the goals?

Six Tips to Remember as we Integrate the CCSS into our Inspired Instruction...

To inspire our students as we use new innovative strategies, we should

1. Capture their interest
2. Explain the strategy’s purpose and the student’s role in the strategy
3. Teach the thinking embedded in the strategy
4. Use discussion/questioning techniques to extend student thinking
5. Ask students to synthesize and transfer their learning
6. Leave time for reflection


“Unwrapping The Standards” May Help You...

- Look over the CCSS (ILS)/CCEE at grade level for the student and write it out.
- Underline the nouns and circle the verbs.
- Separate the nouns/verbs into 2 columns.
- The identified verbs become the skills students should know at the end of the lesson.
- The identified nouns become the concepts that students must understand to show mastery of that standard.
- This method will then allow you to plan a series of lessons that build students’ abilities to discuss the concepts embedded within the standards as well as academic skills that need to be displayed during assessment of student mastery.
An Example: Common Core State Standard for English Language Arts, Reading Standards for Literature K–5

- RSL.5.9: Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compare</td>
<td>Genre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>Mysteries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adventure stories</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Need to understand both story genres and authors’ use of different genres to discuss specific themes/topics.
- Compare/contrast skills are needed.

(Morgan et al., 2013)

Unwrapping The Standards...

- K–5 and 6–12 have Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, and Language Standards.
- K–5 only have Foundational Skills: 6–12 Across Content Areas.
- Anchors go across all grades (broad).
- Example: RI.4.3 stands for Reading, Informational Text, Grade 4, standard 3.
- Example: W.5.1a stands for Writing, Grade 5, standard 1a.

***Remember, the standard is referenced on the IEP but it **SHOULD NOT** be the goal.
*** Align the CCSS with the student’s current grade level, regardless of his/her performance/instructional level.
*** Many of us will also be (SHOULD BE) including some Social–Emotional Standards to address behaviors, social skills, and/or Executive Functioning (EF).

An Example: An IEP Goal/Benchmark

- Goal: The student will increase reading comprehension skills from writing facts/details about a given story (stories) with prompts/other supports from the teacher/paraprofessionals including independent reading level materials to independently writing a paragraph that includes details about character development and interactions, events in the stories and how alike/different, and main ideas of the story(stories).
- Possible benchmark: After being read 2 short, grade appropriate fiction passages, the student will orally state 2 ways stories are similar/different, main characters in each story, and the theme of each story with 3/3 components correct using pictures as visual prompts in 2/3 trials.
• Some students may not be able to master skills/concepts due to deficits in foundational skills.
• You may need to use task analysis, analyze the results and construct lessons laid out in a staircase style (each skill connects to the next skill) to teach the missing foundational skills needed to master concepts.
• Finally, educators will need to build formative assessment techniques to track/determine mastery of the standard.

Another Plan May Be Necessary…
http://math.arizona.edu/~ime/progressions
http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/illinois

What Is A Dynamic Learning Map?

Kinds of Skills Included in Learning Maps:

Tested Subject-Specific Skills—These skills include things like knowing a vocabulary word or being able to solve a multiplication problem.
Related Precursor Academic Skills—These are the underlying skills necessary to master the tested skill. For example, to solve a multiplication problem, a student first needs to understand what numbers are, be able to order numbers, etc. For each grade-level skill that is tested, there are numerous precursor skills.
Communication Skills—These are skills that allow students to communicate their answers. Communication skills are not limited to speech, but include a variety of things like pointing or nodding.
Attention Skills—Before a student can show knowledge of a particular subject, the student must first be able to focus on the task or item presented.

By mapping these and other types of skills, learning maps allow students to show what they do know rather than simply cataloging what they don’t know.

(iodynamiclearningmaps.org)
What Are the Common Core Essential Elements? (dynamiclearningmaps.org)

- These K-12 alternate achievement standards are aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and application, and are internationally benchmarked. For all students to be career and college ready, including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, educators should include both the content and the reading and writing skills that students need to demonstrate learning in the other disciplinary areas. All students, including students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, deserve and have a right to a quality educational experience. This right includes, to the maximum extent possible, the opportunity to be involved in and meet the same challenging expectations that have been established for all students. These alternate achievement standards are called the Illinois Common Core Essential Elements (CCEEs) in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The CCEEs satisfy the requirement of the U.S. Department of Education that Illinois have alternate achievement standards for its students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that are clearly linked to grade-level academic content standards, promote access to the general curriculum and reflect professional judgment of the highest expectation possible.

**Ninth-Tenth Grade English Language Arts Standards:**

**Reading (Informational Text)**

**CCSS Grade-Level Standards & DLM Essential Elements: What they look like in comparison...**

- **RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **EE.RL.9-10.1** Determine which citations demonstrate what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details, provide an objective summary of the text.
- **EE.RL.9-10.2** Recount events related to the theme or central idea, including details about character and setting.
- **RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **EE.RL.9-10.3** Determine how characters change or develop over the course of a text.

**Dynamic Learning Maps**

(to provide access to challenging grade-level content for students with more significant cognitive disabilities)

- The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) project is guided by the core belief that all students should have access to challenging grade-level content. The new DLM alternate assessment system will let students with significant cognitive disabilities show what they know in ways that traditional multiple-choice tests cannot.
- The DLM system is designed to map a student’s learning throughout the year. The system will use items and tasks that are embedded in day-to-day instruction that are aligned to the common core standards. In this way, testing happens as part of instruction, which both informs teaching and benefits students. An end of the year assessment will be created for states that want to include a summative test in addition to the instructionally embedded system.
- Think of a learning map like a common road map. Although students may share the same destination, they all begin their journeys from different starting points on the map. For parents and educators who hope to guide students to their destination, that road map provides a wealth of information. First, it shows where a student is starting. It also shows the main route, which is the shortest, most direct way to get there. However, a good road map does more than show a single route. It also shows several alternate routes in case the main route can’t be traveled. Finally, the map shows all the places students must travel through to get to their destination.
Depths of Knowledge Used in Developing Instructional Objectives to Build the Foundational Skills

- **Recall** (remember simple facts or ideas about a concept)
- **Skill or concept** level (students make connections between ideas)
- **Strategic Thinking** (students plan, construct arguments, justify a position)
- **Extended thinking** level (complex cognitive thinking)

Remember...

- Grade level standards are building blocks; we need a vision and an outcome in mind.
- We must use backward planning; look at the big picture and work backwards to determine how to complete the goals successfully.
- **Standards are not curriculum**! They define what students should know, not how we teach it.
- Standards refer to the quality of work and the degree of rigor that must be assessed and achieved.

Steps for Us, as Educators, to Take...

1. Become informed about the CCSS (ILS)/CCEE.
2. Participate in professional development.
3. Adopt successful approaches; focus on evidence-based, successful practices.
4. Provide access to the general curriculum.
5. Monitor student progress and adjust—continuously check on how students are doing and the progress they are making.
The Time is Right to Design Our Blueprint for Success

• Time to “get on board” with CCSS/CCEE so that our students with disabilities can realize the potential promise of the standards.
• We want our students to leave the school system with the knowledge/skills to be successful in the next phase of life whether it is a job or post-secondary education.
• Set a goal for yourself—start small. Do some reading. Experiment with new strategies.
• Be sure to collect data!
• Continually assess student progress and modify/change your practices as needed.

Tools for Understanding Common Core

• Mastery Connect app - now IL version (free)
  - http://www.masteryconnect.com/learn-more/goodies.html
• Core Talk app (free)
• Apps for Common Core (free trial)
• Mentoring Minds Flip Chart
• Teachers Pay Teachers Annotated Common core by grade (Free) - ELA only

Final thoughts or questions?
Resources

- http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/cc/
- http://www.corestandards.org/
- http://dynamicslearningmaps.org/
- http://www.masteryconnect.com/learn-more/goodies.html (Mastery Connect app-free)
- http://www.parconline.org/CommonCoreImplementationWorkbook
- http://www.parconline.org/computer-based-samples (Sample ELA tasks/questions)
- http://learnzillion.com/lessons
- http://www.udlcenter.org/
- http://www.ido.net/social-emotional-standards.htm
- http://www.ido.net/assessment/dlm.htm

References

Bar-Lev, N. and Van Haren, B. (2013). Connecting common core standards and IEPs: Toto, we’re not in Kansas anymore. Publishing the Jewels of Executive Conference, Omaha, NE.


Morgan, J. et al. (2014) Unwrapping academic standards. Increase the achievement of students With disabilities. Intervention In School and Clinic, 49(4), 131–141.
