

Research Highlights

Topic: Access to the General Curriculum

Wehmeyer, M.L., Lance, G.D., & Bashinski, S. (2002). Promoting access to the general curriculum for students with mental retardation: A multi-level model. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 37, 223-234.

BOTTOM LINE

The unique needs of learners must be addressed in order to promote access to and progress in the general curriculum for all students. This article presents a decision-making process and other suggestions for support access for students with mental retardation or intellectual disabilities.

TIPS

- Standards-based curriculum can be planned and implemented using principles of universal design that ensures all students progress.
- An entire school can use universally designed curricular materials along with strong instructional methods and strategies to encourage all students.

KEY FINDINGS

- Five action steps are suggested to assist in gaining access to the general curriculum for students with mental retardation or intellectual disabilities: Standard Setting and Curriculum Design, Individualized Educational Planning, School-wide Materials and Instruction, Partial School and Group Instruction, and Individualized Interventions.
- When constructing an individualized education plan, elements from both the general curriculum and unique students needs need to be considered.

KEY FINDINGS

cont.

- School-wide materials and instruction can use principles of universal design. Qualities of universal design include providing many different ways of presenting the material, different options for expressing ideas, reacting, and controlling feelings, and different opportunities for engagement in activities and material and the motivation for participating.
- A multi-level model is presented in this article to include adaptation, augmentation, and alteration of instruction and curriculum to support the variety of student needs across individuals.
- Principles of universal design (equitable use, flexible use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, and low physical and cognitive effort) can be applied to educational materials.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Horner, R.H., Albin, R.W., Sprague, J.R., & Todd, A.W. (2000). Positive behavior support. In M.E. Snell & F. Brown (Eds.), *Instruction of students with severe disabilities*. (5th ed., pp. 207-244). Upper Saddle River, NJ. Merrill Publishing.
- Janney, R., & Snell, M.E. (2000). *Teachers' guides to inclusive practices: Modifying schoolwork*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
- Stainback, W., Stainback, S., Stefanich, G., & Alper, S. (1996). Learning in inclusive classrooms: What about the curriculum? In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), *Inclusion: A guide for educators* (pp.209-219). Baltimore: Brookes.
- Wehmeyer, M.L., & Sands, D.J., Knowlton, H.E., & Kozleski, E.B. (2002). Teaching students with mental retardation: Accessing the general curriculum. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

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