



## Core Standards for All Students:

Providing Access for Students with Disabilities



Diane Haager, Ph.D.  
California State University Los Angeles

- “One never knows what the future holds, but this country is now committed to high standards. It’s one issue on which Democrats and Republicans, parents and teachers, and employers and higher education leaders can all agree. The fact is that today 25 percent of our kids don’t even graduate from high school. About half of all students who go to community college need remedial education. And over 90 million adults in America have limited literacy skills. Our families, our communities, and our country deserve better. And we won’t change those numbers without high standards and high expectations.”

US Secretary of Education Arne Duncan

August 22, 2012



## + Goals for Today

- Special education in the context of Core Standards
- Core standards in the context of current educational climate
- Implications for students, general education teachers, special education teachers and administrators
- Recommendations for moving forward with rigorous standards and high expectations for students with disabilities and their teachers

## + Core Standards... in Utah and the Nation

- “The Utah Core Standards are aligned to scientifically based content standards. They drive high quality instruction through statewide comprehensive expectations for all students. The standards outline essential knowledge, concepts, and skills to be mastered at each grade level or within a critical content area. The standards provide a foundation for ensuring learning within the classroom.”

Utah Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and  
Technical Subjects

## + Core Standards... in Utah and the Nation

- “As a natural outgrowth of meeting the charge to define college and career readiness, the Standards also lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century. Indeed, the skills and understandings students are expected to demonstrate have wide applicability outside the classroom or workplace. Students who meet the Standards readily undertake the close, attentive reading that is at the heart of understanding and enjoying complex works of literature. They habitually perform the critical reading necessary to pick carefully through the staggering amount of information available today in print and digitally. They actively seek the wide, deep, and thoughtful engagement with high-quality literary and informational texts that builds knowledge, enlarges experience, and broadens worldviews. They reflexively demonstrate the cogent reasoning and use of evidence that is essential to both private deliberation and responsible citizenship in a democratic republic. In short, students who meet the Standards develop the skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language.”

■ Common Core Standards for ELA

## + What does this mean for students with disabilities?

- Clearly, the core standards initiative is not “business as usual” in today’s classrooms. Important questions arise regarding Special Education.
  - How will general and special education teachers teach differently? What are their responsibilities?
  - Does this change the expectations for students with disabilities at each grade level?
  - Does this change the IEP process?
  - What does this mean for graduation requirements?

## + Tension between IDEA and NCLB

- The accountability provisions of NCLB require that students participate in high stakes, grade-level assessments. Assessments are being developed to align with the core standards.
- IDEA 2004, aligned with NCLB, specifies that students with disabilities should have access to the general education curriculum, which now means rigorous core standards.
- Yet, the cornerstone of special education is the provision of **specialized** instruction, based on individual needs.

## + The Challenge

- “The term ‘special education’ means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability”

IDEA, Public Law 108-466, Part A, Sec 602

- How, then, do we provide optimal access, prepare students for challenging standards, *and* maintain specially designed instruction? What changes need to take place in our schools to meet this challenge?

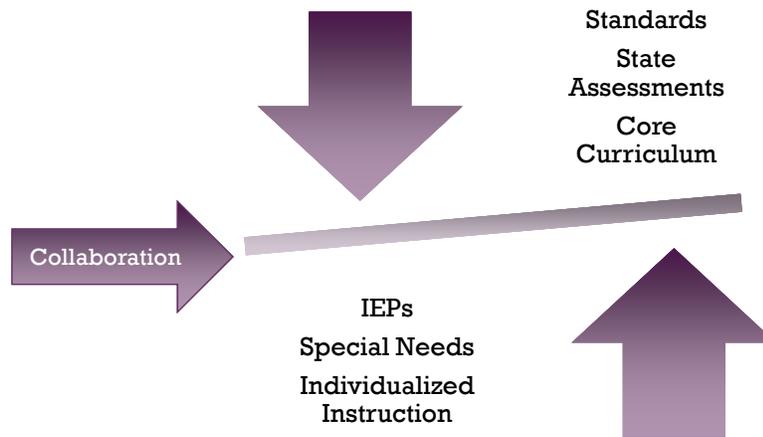
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“One’s initial impulse with such mandates is to rearrange existing pieces while attaching the ‘vocabulary of the moment’ to potential models, thereby avoiding the need to make genuine large-scale change.”

- Jo Ann Isken,  
School Principal

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## Special Education/ General Education Balancing Act



## + The context:

### Changes occurring in today's schools

#### General Ed

- RTI models provide early intervention and identification of students at risk
- Core Standards focus on literacy across content areas, integrating cross-disciplinary skill sets and higher order thinking.
- Assessments yield consequences for schools, teachers and students.
- Today's classrooms are increasingly diverse and many students fail to meet competency standards

#### Special Ed

- Increase in inclusive/ collaborative models of special education lead to increased need for knowledge of GenEd teachers and collaboration skills
- SpEd teachers more often have responsibility for intervention in Gen Ed
- No longer required to use discrepancy model for identification; allowable to use RTI responsiveness data (LD/BD)

## + The changing landscape of Special Education

- Special education has evolved over 35+ years.
- Changes in ideology, terminology, and pedagogy have shaped current practices.
- From 1975 to 2012, four major changes have occurred.
  - Inclusion, evidence-based practices, disproportionate representation, *standards and accountability*

## + The changing landscape: Inclusion

- The lines between special and general education are blurring
- IDEA has consistently strengthened the wording regarding inclusive practices. *To the extent possible, students with disabilities are to be educated in the general education curriculum and be part of the general education environment.*
- Originally a civil rights issue, inclusion quickly became an educational issue as we focused on how to ensure students received an *appropriate* education in the Least Restrictive Environment.
- This has changed our thinking about accommodating diverse students in general, not just students with disabilities.

## + Successful inclusion is challenging

- Mild to moderate disabilities (LD, BD) are not readily visible. The manifestations may appear as undesirable behaviors (i.e., inattention, laziness) and many non-disabled students have similar difficulties, making inclusion challenging for teachers.
- Successful inclusion requires sensitivity, awareness, and skill on the part of GE & SE teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators and peers.
- Successful inclusion requires a proactive plan and extensive general education/special education collaboration.

## + Inclusion: Ensuring participation and learning



- Despite the challenges, it is the right thing to do
  - IDEA mandates inclusion
  - Students benefit academically and socially (Rea, et al., 2002; Vaughn, et al., 2001)
  - Students access challenging curriculum and gain important knowledge (ref. Stanovich, "Matthew effect," 1986)
  - Students learn to accommodate diversity
  - **Therefore, we must ensure that students have meaningful engagement in the general education curriculum and environment for reading/language arts and be accountable for their learning of core concepts**

## + The changing landscape: Evidence-based practices



- Over 35 years of research in special education has led to a significant research base for building academic and social competence.
  - Years of systematic intervention research have honed effective practices.
  - Meta-analyses (e.g., Kavale, Forness, Swanson, Vaughn, others) have solidified our knowledge base.
- We know that students with very significant academic challenges can learn to read and access grade level standards
- We need to fully utilize this knowledge base as we move forward with core standards and assessments

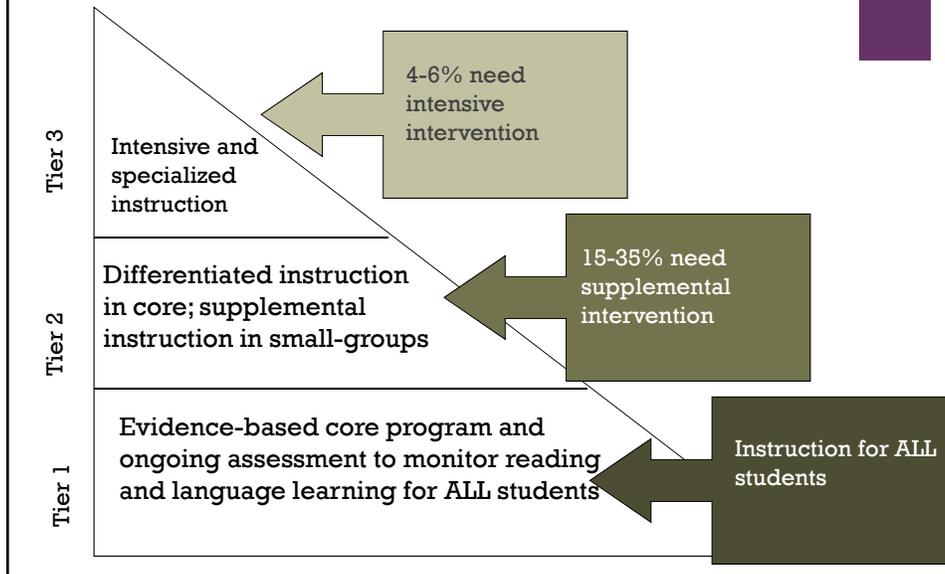
## + The changing landscape: Disproportionate representation

A persistent problem in special education is the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education, particularly for select groups (African American and Latino) and in the mild to moderate disability categories (Klingner & Barrera, 2006; Rueda, Klingner, Sager & Velasco, 2008).

## + Contributing factors in disproportionate representation

- Inappropriate assessment practices and tools
- Lack of teacher expertise in effective methods for teaching ELLs
- Inappropriate or inefficient pre-referral and referral practices
- Lack of early intervening services
- “The RTI model holds promise as a way to improve outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse students and reduce their disproportionate representation in special education.”
  - ~ Klingner, Sorrells & Barrera (2007)

## + Three Tiers of Reading Instruction



## + The Changing Landscape: The Era of Accountability

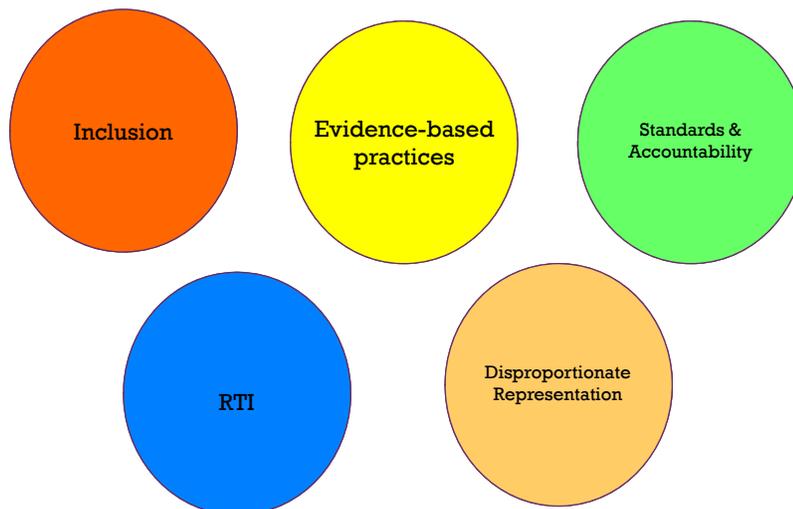
- NCLB, about to be reauthorized in some form, requires states to hold all students to rigorous grade-level standards and participate in state testing.
- Schools must meet annual performance goals and often face consequences when their students do not make progress toward the goal of 100% competency by 2014.
- These provisions have created a laser-sharp focus on teacher quality and the content of the curriculum, prompting large-scale professional development, curriculum adoption efforts (e.g., Reading First), and other reform initiatives, including *value-added models* of evaluating teachers.

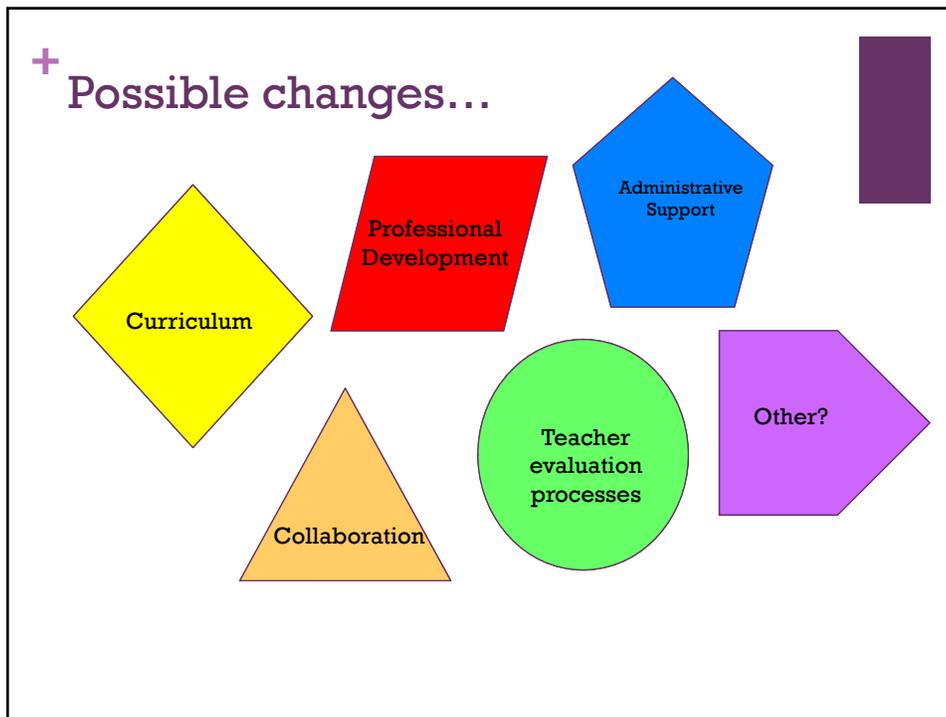
## + The Changing Landscape: The Era of Accountability

- All but 4 states have adopted the Common Core Standards, developed by consortium led by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association
- States have joined two assessment consortia, SMARTER Balanced and PARCC, to develop cross-state assessments of competency in core standards. Both groups have federal funding to develop testing models:
  - Both tests “are designed to be “performance-based” to fulfill Common Core’s goal of preparing students for college and a career. That means they’ll require students to demonstrate higher-order thinking, through problem-solving, essay-writing and research projects, as opposed to the multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank tests of the past.”

## + Stop and Think:

What changes need to take place in special education as we move into core standards?





+ Changing practices means changing the culture

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- Special education teachers have operated within a culture of independence, separateness and 'specialization'
- Myths dominate the culture
  - Modality/Learning Styles Myth
  - Alternative Method Myth
    - whole word instruction versus phonics
    - brain-based learning
    - colored lenses, other gimmicks
  - "They'll Never Get It" or "Don't Hurt Their Self-Esteem" Myth
  - Research matters less than my "tried and true" practices

## + We need highly skilled experts in our teaching ranks

- *“Expert teachers will have the knowledge, strategies, and materials to judge what to do with particular children, not on the basis of ideology, but on the basis of observation, logic, knowledge of child development, knowledge of content, and evidence for what works.”*

-Louisa Moats

As we move forward with core standards, how does teacher expertise need to be reshaped?

## + Unpacking the Core Standards

- Focus on college and career readiness
- Literacy across subject areas– listening, speaking, reading, writing to learn challenging subject matter and apply it to real-world disciplines of practice and study
- Emphasis on higher-order thinking, evaluation, and problem-solving; use of technology and media; reading informative text and conducting research/inquiry; understanding perspectives and cultures
- Cross-disciplinary applications

## + ELA Standards

- Anchor Standards for College and Career Readiness- designed to promote integrated literacy skills
  - Reading: Text complexity and the growth of comprehension
  - Writing: Text types, responding to reading, and research
  - Speaking and Listening: Flexible communication and collaboration
  - Language: Conventions, effective use, and vocabulary
- Reading Standards for Content Learning (Gr 6-12)
  - History/ Social Studies
  - Science/ Technical Subjects
  - Specific 6-12 standards for writing in content areas

## + Possible Advantages for Students with Disabilities

- Focus on college and career readiness may make learning relevant, meaningful, purposeful and engaging
- Increased emphasis on hands-on, applied learning and multiple approaches to solving real-world problems may be more effective for some students
- Integrating listening, speaking, reading and writing- and an increased use of technology in the classroom- may provide alternative modes of access and response for students relative to challenging content

## + Likely Challenges

- Increasing expectations does not assure that students will meet them.
- Developers of new curricula may not take accommodations for students with disabilities into account. Publishers generally assume students have mastered prior content as skills and competency build throughout the grades.
- Students with disabilities will still have *unique learning needs* and are likely to need instruction in foundational skills long after the grade-level standards have left them behind.

## + A two-pronged approach

### Special Education

- Maintain focus on students' individual learning needs as specified by IEP and individualized assessments
  - Basic reading/writing skills
  - Math at developmental level
- Use evidence-based instruction and assessment, validated with special populations, e.g.,
  - Explicit instruction, systematic review
  - Curriculum-based assessment



### General Education

- Provide purposeful and well-designed access to general education curriculum
  - With knowledge of individual students' capabilities to engage
  - With appropriate support from well-trained teachers
  - With clear expectations for *individual performance*
  - With increased focus on *individual college/career goals and transition planning*

## + Activity

Using the activity packet provided, work with a small group to unpack a standard, describe possible classroom activities, general and special education teacher responsibilities, and possible supports needed by students.



## + Applying what we know about effective practices for general and special education teachers



“A one-size-fits-all approach, in which all students receive the same instruction, regardless of their skills, does not accomplish the goal of ensuring learning for all students...Differentiating instruction means ensuring that all students have optimal learning opportunities within the core academic curriculum.

To accomplish this, teachers must orchestrate the curriculum, instruction and activities so that all students have a high level of participation and learn according to their individual needs.”

~ Haager & Klingner (2005)

## + What is special about special education?

“In response to the query, ‘*What is special about special education?*’ we can say with some certainty that the model is not what makes special education ‘special’ or effective. **Effective teaching strategies** and an **individualized approach** are the more critical ingredients in a *special* education, and neither of those are associated solely with one particular model of service delivery.”

~ Naomi Zigmond (2003)

## + Essential special education expertise



- Essential features of high quality, explicit special education instruction
- Importance of diagnostic and formative assessment

## + Focus on Essential Skills



- Typical reading needs for students with reading-related disabilities
  - Very specific needs in phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency, math skills, etc.
  - More general needs in vocabulary, comprehension and concept development
- One-size-fits-all does not optimize learning for all; generally, it optimizes learning for none
- Diagnostic assessment and data analysis are critical!

## + Pacing of Instruction



- Three Bears approach:
  - Not too fast
  - Not too slow
  - Just right!
- Teaching with a sense of urgency.

## + Setting High Expectations: Ambitious but Realistic Goals



“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

*Michelangelo*

- Effective teachers use data to:
- Set appropriate goals that challenge students
- Describe students’ academic competence at a single point in time
- Quantify the rate at which students grow, predict outcomes and modify goals

## + Ensuring Access



- IDEA states that students with disabilities, to the extent possible, should have access to the general education curriculum, work toward grade level standards, and be educated alongside their nondisabled peers.
- Sitting in the room is not access. Students with disabilities must be meaningfully engaged, with support from both GE and SE teachers.
- Teachers' attitudes, demeanor, and words influence students dramatically and can make-or-break successful access.

## + Intensifying instruction



- Managing group size
- For intensive, individualized instruction keep groups at 3-5 students, 20-30 minutes per day
  - Instruction focused on individual needs
  - Appropriate individualized feedback
  - Teacher apprised of incremental growth
- -Elbaum et al., 1999

## + How much intensive instruction is enough?



- Students with significant reading/math difficulties need:
  - More time, not less, in high quality intensive instruction
  - Sufficient opportunities for practice
  - Minimum of 60 minutes suggested for access to core (for most students)
  - Minimum of 60 minutes per day of intensive, specialized instruction (for most students)
  - Research shows: 100 sessions of 50-60 minutes for significant gain in reading
- (Vaughn, et al.)

## + Other critical elements...



- Role of paraprofessionals
- Effective behavior management
- Effective general ed/ special ed collaboration

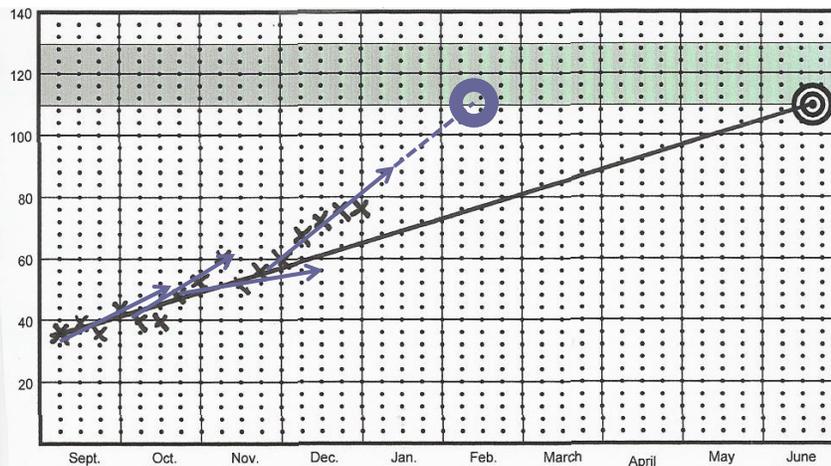
## + Assessment: Frequent data on student progress



- Progress monitoring and charting produce accurate, meaningful information about students' academic levels and their rates of improvement.
- Progress monitoring assessment is sensitive to student improvement.
- When teachers use progress monitoring to inform their instructional decisions, students show accelerated growth.

## + Sam's DIBELS Progress Monitoring Graph

Monitor at Goal Level of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade



## + Essential general education teacher expertise



- Primary Role: ensuring access to content
- How?
  - Shared responsibility for learning
  - Collaboration
  - Differentiating instruction for multiple types of learners
  - Setting ambitious but realistic expectations

## + Teaching with Universal Design Principles



- Universal Design for Learning– the architecture of instruction that opens access to content for varying student needs
  - See CAST for guidelines:  
<http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>

## + UDL Framework: It's good for everyone!



Provide multiple means of presentation	Provide multiple means of action and expression	Provide multiple means of engagement
Perception	Physical action	Recruiting interest
Language, expressions and symbols	Expression and communication	Sustaining effort and persistence
Comprehension	Executive function	Self-regulation

## + Expertise in accommodations and supports



- Examining the content, expectations and tasks to consider needed accommodations involves planning ahead to adjust...
  - How tests or tasks are presented
  - How students are expected to respond or demonstrate a skill
  - Priorities for concepts learned
  - The reading materials or graphic organizers
  - The format of presentation of content
  - The timing or pacing of instruction
  - Type of amount of support provided
  - Grouping procedures

## + Evaluating the effectiveness of our efforts



- How will you know if your planning and implementation are effective?
- How will you know what supports are needed by teachers, administrators and staff?

## + Leadership for effective teaching and learning

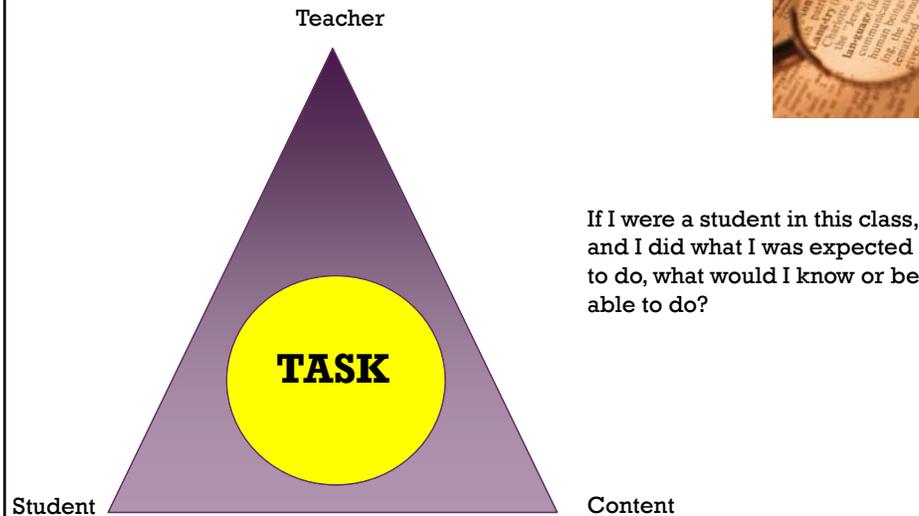
A process of observing instruction in collaborative teams, to address a specified problem of practice

### INSTRUCTIONAL ROUNDS *in* EDUCATION



Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore,  
Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel  
With a foreword by Andrew Leachman

## +The Instructional Core



## + Examine the Task

- If I was a student in this class, and I did what I was expected to do, what would I know or be able to do?
  - Does the task focus on the standard?
  - Will the task maximize engaged time?
  - Will the task connect reading/writing/listening/speaking in meaningful ways?
  - Will the task challenge particular students, and if so, is there something that would help all students to be engaged?



## + National Policy Brief on Teacher Quality in Special Education



### Challenges in Evaluating Special Education Teachers and English Language Learner Specialists

<http://www.tqsource.org/publications/july2010Brief.pdf>

Holdheide, Goe, Croft & Reschly, 2010



## + Challenges in evaluating SpEd teachers

- How does value-added assessment work in settings with co-teaching or multiple teachers?
- How is measuring student growth in special education is different from general education?
- How do we measure teachers' contribution to growth when alternative standards or assessments are used?
- Are there unique features of high quality special education instruction that need to be accounted for?
- School principals typically have responsibility of observing/evaluating SpEd teachers, but often do not have SpEd expertise.

## + A few recommendations from TQ report

- Include SpEd and ELL administrators and teachers when revamping or developing evaluation frameworks.
- Identify a common framework that defines effective teaching for all teachers. Where appropriate, identify differentiated criteria/expectations for SpEd or ELL.
- Integrate evidence-based practices for SpEd and ELLs into evaluation systems.
- Establish a culture of collaboration, trust, and empowerment in which clear expectations of performance are explicitly stated and expected
- In addition to—or, in some situations, in the absence of—appropriate standardized assessment data, incorporate other concrete evidence of teachers' contributions to student learning into the teacher evaluation system

## + Wrapping up...

- Back to the future:
  - Close your eyes and imagine your district's special education program working in congruence with implementation of the core standards. What does it look like to have all your students engaged in learning the core content?
  - Now envision the structures, actions and supports it will take to get there.
    - Write down three steps you can personally take this year.
    - Write down the additional actions or supports that will need to be in place to realize your vision.



## + Questions/ Discussion



- Thank you for caring about our students with special needs!

- Contact information:

Diane Haager, Ph.D.

[diane@ecsllearning.com](mailto:diane@ecsllearning.com)

California State University Los Angeles

Office: (323) 343-6158