



General curriculum planning

Citation:

Council for Exceptional Children. (2001). Access to the general curriculum: Questions and answers. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 34, 84-85.

Abstract:

Presented an introductory overview of the need for access to the general curriculum and the principle of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Topics covered are as follows: a) the general curriculum and UDL, b) the role of the special educator, c) the relationship between UDL and assistive technology, and d) the guidelines for promoting access.

Key Points:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principle and curriculum
 - Accessibility is considered *during* the development of the curriculum (instruction, materials, assessment) rather than *after* the creation of the curriculum
 - Curriculum designed using the principle of UDL minimizes the need to address adaptation issues after the fact.
 - The use of digital media (e.g., electronic versions of the textbook that can be read through text-to-speech function of the computer) promotes access to the general education curriculum.
- Collaboration between the general and special educators is critical.
- Assistive technology and UDL
 - Assistive technology “places the burden of adaptations on the learner, not the curriculum” (Council for Exceptional Children, p. 84).
 - Development of UDL curriculum materials is based on an assumption that there are “diverse learner goals, learner profiles...flexibility as keystone”
- Guidelines for access
 - It is critical to consider multiples modes of presenting the materials (e.g., graphic representation) and expressing student learning (e.g., typing and/or using speech-to-text word processing).
 - The National Center to Improve the Tools of Educators NCITE has presented the recommendations regarding the need to understand prerequisite background knowledge, focus on the main ideas of the lesson, and use explicit strategies in order to provide the appropriate level of support to students with a range of cognitive challenges.