

Transition and Access to the General Education Curriculum

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Chapter 1 discussed the need to align the principles of transition and transition services with the standards-based reform movement and examined underlying principles in standards-based reform efforts. The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included requirements that took the first steps in aligning the special education system with the standards-based reform movement through what are referred to as the “access to the general curriculum” mandates. Fundamentally, if the field of transition is to continue to impact the lives of young people with disabilities, it will need to realign transition services within the context of the general curriculum. This chapter identifies what is meant by the general curriculum and by gaining access to that curriculum, and then explores how to align transition services with the access mandates.

Access to the General Curriculum

Ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum was a key feature of the 1997 amendments to IDEA. On June 20, 1995, in testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, former Secretary of Education Richard Riley made the following comments with regard to the Department of Education’s then draft proposal for the reauthorization of IDEA:

Our second principle is to improve results for students with disabilities through higher expectations and access to the general curriculum. We know that most children work harder and do better when more is expected of them—whether it be in the classroom, doing their homework, or doing the dishes. Disabled students are no different. When we have high expectations for students with disabilities, most can achieve to challenging standards—and all can achieve more than society has historically expected. However, not all schools presently have high expectations for these students, and not

all schools take responsibility for the academic progress of disabled students.

Our proposal would create an improved IEP process focused on educational results. The new IEP would include meaningful annual objectives for the student. Unless the IEP indicates otherwise, it would focus on access to the general curriculum, in which children with disabilities would have the opportunity to meet the same challenging standards as other students.

Secretary Riley's comments show that the purpose of the "access to the general curriculum" language was to ensure that students with disabilities are included in emerging standards-based reform and accountability systems as a means to raise expectations and ensure access to a challenging curriculum. The 1997 amendments to IDEA, as they were eventually passed by Congress, included statutory and regulatory language pertaining to providing such access. Section 300.347(a)(3) in the IDEA requires that the IEP include:

A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child

- (i) to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
- (ii) to be involved and progress in the general curriculum;
- (iii) to be educated and participate with disabled and non-disabled children.

These regulations lead to three questions: What is the *general curriculum*? What constitutes *access* to that curriculum? How do we *achieve* access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities?

What Is the General Curriculum?

The answer to the question "What is the general curriculum?" is both simple and complex. It is complex in that defining *curriculum* is a complex and sometimes difficult process. Sands, Kozleski, and French (1999) summarized the literature in curriculum as referring to the following possible meanings:

- A plan for classes offered by a school;
- Materials used to present information to students;
- The subject matter taught to the students;
- The courses offered in a school;
- The planned experiences of the learners under the guidance of the school. (p. 8)

This is not just an intellectual exercise, however, since how we define curriculum impacts how we interpret the IDEA mandates pertaining to access to the general curriculum. For example, the curriculum can be viewed as only the planned, for-

mal aspect of a student's school experience or, more broadly, as the totality of the student's school experiences, both formal and informal components. Doll (1996) illustrated this distinction, noting that:

Every school has a planned, formal, acknowledged curriculum, and also an unplanned, informal, or hidden one. The planned curriculum embraces content usually categorized within subjects and subject fields. The unplanned curriculum includes such varied experiences or engagements as advancing oneself inconsiderately in the cafeteria line, learning to like history, protecting one's front teeth from being pushed down hard on drinking fountains, finding new ways to beat the system, and resisting pressure to smoke marijuana. (pp. 14-15)

Does the IDEA requirement for access to the general curriculum refer to both the formal and informal aspects of the curriculum? Might schools meet these requirements by focusing strictly on the informal components of the curriculum? The term *access* means different things to different people. Educators working with students with severe, multiple cognitive and developmental disabilities may think of the term *access* in relation to the inclusion movement and interpret access to the general curriculum as referring to serving students with disabilities in the general classroom. Educators who work with young people with sensory disabilities may think of access more in terms of modifying materials so that students who are blind or have hearing impairments can "access" them (e.g., via braille or closed captioning). The IDEA regulations don't provide adequate detail to help answer such questions about access as one might prefer. These regulations simply define the term *general curriculum* as "the same curriculum as for nondisabled children" (Final Federal Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1999, p. 12592). By defining the "general curriculum" as "the same curriculum as for nondisabled children," Congress kept its definition quite broad, clearly intending for the general curriculum to be locally determined.

Formal or Informal Curriculum? There are several reasons to suggest that the language in the IDEA pertaining to access to the general curriculum refers principally to a student's formal curriculum, but that the Department of Education (supported by IDEA) believes that both formal and informal components are important to achieve excellence in education for students with disabilities. First, in addition to emphasizing access to the general curriculum as a means of encouraging *high expectations* for all students with disabilities, the IDEA 1997 amendments and former Secretary Riley also emphasized measures of *accountability* by aligning the IDEA with state and local education improvement efforts—primarily the standards-based reform movement—and by including students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. State and local standards and assessments derived from such standards typically focus on the formal curriculum presented to students, not the informal aspects of the curriculum.

Second, the IDEA clearly establishes the preference that students with disabilities receive their education in the typical classroom. A primary reason

for including students with disabilities in typical classrooms is that through such opportunities they can experience the benefits of the *informal* curriculum and the myriad experiences needed for social competence and community inclusion. Thus, the preference in the IDEA for including students with disabilities in the typical classroom has as one of its core assumptions the importance of gaining access to the informal curriculum. So, while the access to the general curriculum mandate might be more narrowly interpreted as referring to the formal curriculum, it is clear that in the context of the IDEA mandates for involvement in typical educational settings, *educators need to ensure access to both the formal and informal curriculum.*

While not minimizing the importance of *where* a student receives his or her education, the access to the general curriculum mandates refer principally to the *what* of the student's educational program. One cannot interpret the access mandates, therefore, within the narrow definition of providing students access to the place where the general curriculum is used, but instead must include providing access to the curriculum itself. This is supported by the language in the law itself. Although former Secretary Riley and the IDEA regulations use the term "access to the general curriculum," the statutory language in the IDEA does not. Instead, the law states that educational services, supports, modifications, and goals *should ensure that students progress in the general curriculum.* Just as research has shown, over the years, that a student's presence in the classroom does not guarantee that he or she will be meaningfully included (e.g., part of the social network), the field should also note that simply having access to the general curriculum, where access refers to the equal right to receive educational services through the general curriculum, is likely to be insufficient. Individualized education program (IEP) teams are charged with ensuring *progress* in the general curriculum, not just documenting the presence of the curriculum in a student's educational program. It should be evident that the place in which a student with a disability is most likely to gain access to the general curriculum is, in fact, the general classroom.

Finally, it should be noted that the formal general education curriculum in most school districts is determined by state or local standards linked to the standards-based reform movement. As discussed in Chapter 1, a critical step in standards-based school reform efforts is to align curriculum with standards and benchmarks that are challenging. The access to the general curriculum mandates are clearly intended to ensure that students with disabilities are not left out of standards-based reform efforts. The challenge before us is to ensure that the standards that are written and the curriculum that is aligned with those standards allow all students to show progress and gain benefit to the greatest degree possible. A later section of this chapter returns to this issue.

What Is Meant by Access?

Given that the general curriculum refers to the formal curriculum presented to all students in a given district, what does it mean to provide access to such a curriculum? It would seem apparent to any educator who has examined state or local content or performance standards and assessments driven by such standards, or who is familiar with the general curriculum, that there are standards that some students with disabilities simply will not attain, independent

of high or low expectations. Although they vary widely from state to state, such standards often involve learning complex constructs and applying higher-order cognitive skills to difficult content. In some cases, the complexity of the skills required and the difficulty of the content may preclude some students with disabilities from making progress on a particular performance standard. Is it the intent of the federal law that the educational program of a student with disabilities is to be determined in a top-down manner, starting and ending *only* with the general curriculum? For a variety of reasons, the obvious answer to this must be no. First, imposing an externally mandated curriculum on students with disabilities is inconsistent with IDEA requirements for an individualized education program for students with disabilities. Individualization is a hallmark of disability policy in the United States in general (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000), and a focus on educational supports and services to meet each student's unique educational needs is at the core of IDEA and special education practice.

A student's educational program, then, is intended by federal law to be individually determined based on unique learning needs *as well as* being driven by the locally determined general curriculum. The IDEA regulations address this by noting that IDEA

requires a description of how a child's involvement in the general curriculum is a statutory requirement and cannot be deleted. The requirement is important because it provides the basis for determining what accommodations the child needs in order to participate in the general curriculum *to the maximum extent appropriate* [emphasis added]. The individualization of the IEP process, together with the new requirements related to the general curriculum should ensure that such involvement and progress is "to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child." (Final Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1999, p. 12592)

It is clear that the IDEA intends that an appropriate educational program for students with disabilities will involve the design of an IEP that is derived from the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate. What is determined as "appropriate" is, basically, an IEP team decision. Emphasis should be placed as much on the word *maximum* as *appropriate*. The clear mandate is to maximize the student's interaction with the general curriculum.

Gaining Access to the General Curriculum for All Students with Disabilities

What needs to be accomplished to enable school districts and educators to achieve the intent of the IDEA mandates to raise expectations by ensuring that students with disabilities progress in a challenging general curriculum? Wehmeyer, Sands, Knowlton, and Kozleski (2002) identified key components to ensure that students with mental retardation progress in the general cur-

TABLE 2.1
Steps to Gaining Access to the General Curriculum

| <i>Action Step</i> | <i>Description</i> |
|--|--|
| Standard Setting and Curriculum Design | Standards are written as open-ended and the curriculum is planned and designed using principles of universal design that ensure that all students can show progress. |
| Individualized Educational Planning | The individualized planning process ensures that a student's educational program is designed based on the general curriculum, taking into account unique student learning needs. |
| School-Wide Materials and Instruction | There is school-wide use of universally designed curricular materials and high-quality instructional methods and strategies that challenge all students. |
| Partial School and Group Instruction | Groups of students who need more intensive instruction are targeted, and building and classroom instructional decision-making activities focus at the lesson, unit, and classroom levels to ensure that students can progress in the curriculum. |
| Individualized Interventions | Additional curricular content and instructional strategies are designed and implemented to ensure progress for students with learning needs not met by school-wide efforts or partial school efforts. |

riculum, and these components, summarized in Table 2.1, can be generalized to ensure that all students progress.

Figure 2.1 summarizes the key elements of this approach, which involves three levels of action (i.e., planning, curriculum, instruction), three levels of the scope of instruction (i.e., whole school, partial school, individualized), and three levels of curriculum modifications (i.e., adaptation, augmentation, alteration). A brief description of each of the five steps to access follows.

Curriculum Planning and Design

The standards-based reform movement emphasizes the establishment of high standards and the alignment of curriculum and assessment with those standards. Thus, ensuring access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities must begin with the curriculum planning and design process and the development of state and local standards. If students with widely varying skills, backgrounds, knowledge, and customs are to progress in the general curriculum, the standards upon which the curriculum is based, as well as the curriculum itself, must embody the principles of universal design (discussed later) and be written to be open-ended and inclusive, not close-ended. The terms *open-* and *close-ended* refer to "the amount of specificity and direction provided by curriculum standards, benchmarks, goals or objectives at both the building and classroom levels" (Wehmeyer et al., 2002). Close-ended standards are specific and require narrowly defined outcomes or performance indicators, such as "writing a five-page paper on the history of the United States," so that students

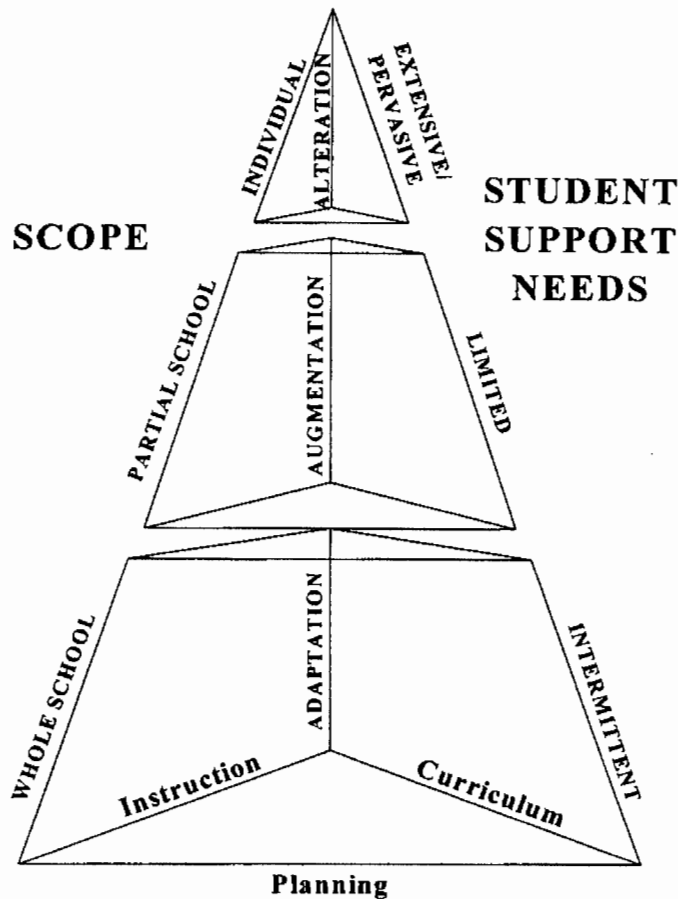


FIGURE 2.1
Multilevel Focus for Gaining Access to the General Curriculum

Note. From Wehmeyer, M. L., Sands, D. J., Knowlton, H. E., & Kozleski, E. B. (2002). *Teaching Students with Mental Retardation: Access to the General Curriculum*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Reprinted by permission.

who cannot write will be unable to meet the requirement even if they could show evidence of the knowledge about U.S. history being assessed. If, on the other hand, the standard were written so that students could demonstrate knowledge of the history of the United States using other means of expression, it would be an open-ended curriculum target. Open-ended standards do not restrict the ways in which students exhibit knowledge or skills; they focus more on the expectations that students will interact with the content, ask questions, manipulate materials, make observations, and then communicate their knowledge in a variety of ways (e.g., orally, through videotape, through writing and directing a play). Research suggests that open-ended designs allow for greater flexibility as to what topics will be addressed in the classroom and when and how those topics will be addressed (Stainback, Stainback, Stefanich, & Alper, 1996). They are more consistent with universally designed curriculum, ensur-

ing that more students, including students with disabilities, can show progress in the curriculum (Wehmeyer et al., 2002).

Universal Design in Education. One way to ensure progress is to design curricular materials with principles of universal design in mind, as defined by researchers at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST, 1998–1999):

The basic premise of universal design for learning is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and applicable to students, teachers, and parents with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The “universal” in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone, but rather it underscores the need for inherently flexible, customizable content, assignments, and activities.

Orkwis and McLane (1998) defined *universal design for learning* as “the design of instructional materials and activities that allows the learning goals to be achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember” (p. 9). The onus is on curriculum planners and designers to employ principles of universal design to ensure that students with a wide range of capacities can access, advance, and succeed in the curriculum.

The principle of universal design emerged initially from architecture and was introduced to ensure that members of certain groups, such as people with disabilities or people who are elderly, have access to the environment. As applied to the built environment, the principle of universal design suggests, quite simply, that all buildings and environments should be accessible to all people (Moon, Hart, Komissar, & Friedlander, 1995). Thus, buildings are designed with adequate ramps, wide enough doors, or accessible restrooms, and products are designed with simple controls and clearly understandable uses. Such application has the side benefit of making the environment or product more accessible to a wide array of people and, in some cases, just plain easier to use. This principle was subsequently applied to the design and development of consumer products and assistive devices with the intent that such products and devices should be accessible to all people.

Given the emphasis of universal design principles on gaining access to environments and products, it seems logical that the same principle be applied to assist in understanding how to gain access to curriculum. Researchers at CAST suggested three essential qualities of universal design for learning: The curriculum is designed to provide (1) multiple representations of content, (2) multiple options for expression and control, and (3) multiple options for engagement and motivation.

1. *Curriculum provides multiple means of representation.* Researchers at CAST (1998–1999) suggested that “universally designed materials accommodate this diversity through alternative representations of key information. Students with different preferences and needs can either select the representational medium most suitable for them, or gather information from a

variety of representational media simultaneously." World Wide Web pages designed to be accessible present an example of using multiple means of representation. One of the benefits of the WWW over traditional mediums is the capacity to use graphic images in a variety of ways, from icons to hyperlinked pictures to streamed video. However, for a person who is blind or visually impaired who is using a text reader to access the site, graphic depictions may make the site and the information contained therein inaccessible. As an alternative, accessible Web sites include text descriptions of images and pictures. Similarly, the design of curricular materials should include multiple representations of important topics, features, or points. Such multiple representations include a variety of methods of presentation of the material based on learner needs and characteristics. Students with mental retardation, for example, need print-based information presented with graphic depictions, free from unnecessary clutter and with key information repeated or highlighted.

2. *Curriculum provides multiple means of expression.* CAST researchers noted that the dominant means of expression used in schools has been written expression. However, there are a variety of student responses that could indicate progress, including "artwork, photography, drama, music, animation, and video" (CAST, 1998–1999), that would enable students to express their ideas and their knowledge. Once again, technology promises to provide avenues for expression that have heretofore been unavailable.
3. *Curriculum provides multiple means of engagement.* Student engagement in learning has long been an indicator of motivation in the classroom. By the utilization of multiple representation and presentation modes—particularly those that involve digital representation of knowledge that are graphically based and incorporate video, audio, and other multimedia components—student engagement, and therefore student motivation, can be enhanced. Universally designed curriculum takes into account individual student interests and preferences and individualizes representation, presentation, and response aspects of the curriculum delivery accordingly. Current technologies allow that level of individualization and thus provide greater flexibility in the ways students can engage in learning (CAST, 1998–1999).

Based on Bowe's (2000) examination of the principles of universal design as applied to education, Lance and Wehmeyer (2001) developed a list of principles for use in evaluating the degree to which instructional materials incorporate principles of universal design (see Table 2.2).

Individualized Educational Planning

The education of students with disabilities has always emphasized the importance of individualized planning, a value that should not be abandoned when focusing on the general curriculum. Figure 2.2 (Wehmeyer, Lattin, & Agran, 2001) presents a decision-making model to ensure that IEP teams begin educational planning with knowledge of the general curriculum (i.e., standards and curriculum) for students who are the same age and grade level as the student

TABLE 2.2
Principles of Universal Design Applied to Education

| <i>Principle</i> | <i>Explanation</i> |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Equitable Use | Materials can be used by students who speak various languages, address a variety of levels in cognitive taxonomies, provide alternatives that appear equivalent and, thus, do not stigmatize students. |
| Flexible Use | Materials provide multiple means of representation, presentation and student expression. |
| Simple and Intuitive Use | Materials are easy to use and avoid unnecessary complexity, directions clear and concise, examples provided. |
| Perceptible Information | Materials communicate needed information to user independent of ambient conditions or users sensory abilities, essential information highlighted and redundancy included. |
| Tolerance for Error | Students have ample time to respond, are provided feedback, can undue previous responses, can monitor progress, and are provided adequate practice time. |
| Low Physical and Cognitive Effort | Materials present information in chunks that can be completed in a reasonable time frame. |

Note. From Lance, D., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2001). *Universal Design Checklist: Pilot Version*. Lawrence: University of Kansas. Reprinted by permission.

for whom the IEP is being designed, as well as information about unique student learning needs (based on input from multiple stakeholders and assessment sources). It may be that some students can progress in portions of the general curriculum without accommodations or curriculum modifications, and therefore that portion of the general curriculum will be the "most appropriate" formal curriculum. It is likely, however, that most students with disabilities will need some accommodations or modifications. To achieve that, the IEP team is first encouraged to consider how assistive technology can accommodate for student limitations and can enable the student to progress without curriculum modifications.

Once assistive technology has been considered, teams consider three levels of curriculum modifications. The first is *curriculum adaptation*, which refers to efforts to adapt the curriculum's presentation and representation or the student's engagement with the curriculum (as discussed previously). A second level of modification is *curriculum augmentation*, whereby additional content is added to the curriculum to enable students to progress. Such efforts typically include teaching students additional learning-to-learn or self-regulation strategies that, in turn, enable them to progress more effectively in the curriculum. Neither of these levels of curriculum modification changes the general curriculum *content*. The third level, *curriculum alteration*, does change the general curriculum to add content specific to students' needs, which might include traditional functional skills or other skills not included in the general curriculum. For many students with disabilities, the third level of curriculum modification is where planning begins, but if students are to benefit from and

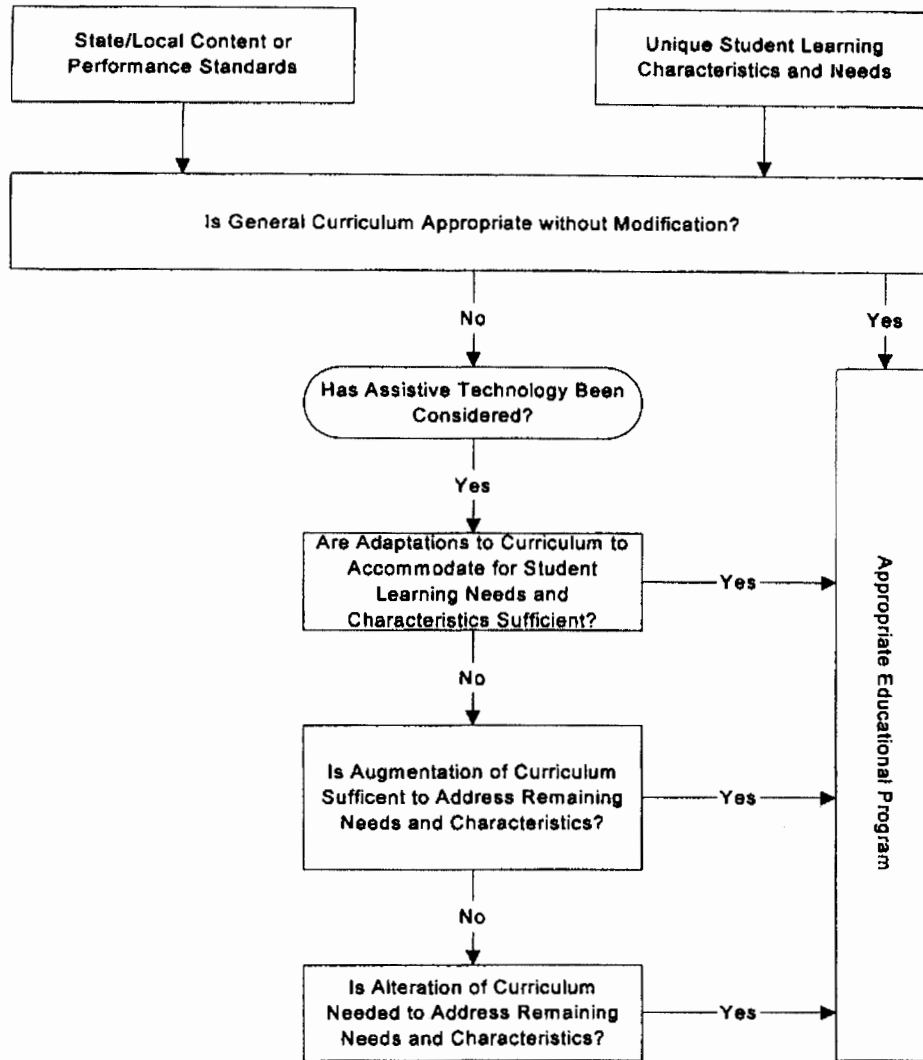


FIGURE 2.2
An Individualized Education Planning Process Incorporating Both the General Curriculum and Unique Student Needs

Note. From Wehmeyer, M. L., Lattin, D. L., & Agran, M. 2001. Access to the General Education Curriculum for Students with Mental Retardation. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 36(4). Reprinted by permission.

progress maximally in the general curriculum, IEP teams need to consider accommodations and curriculum adaptations and augmentations before considering alternative curricula. If the general curriculum is broad enough to cover functional areas, that will limit the need to move to an alternative curriculum.

School-Wide Materials and Instruction. The 1997 amendments to the IDEA emphasized school-wide interventions to provide greater access for all stu-

dents. School-wide interventions are those that are implemented throughout the school campus. Such interventions, when implemented, have the effect of minimizing the need for more individualized interventions. For example, if all students in a school receive instruction using materials designed with principles of universal design in mind, there will not be a need to make individualized adaptations for students with disabilities and all students will benefit from using the materials. The same is true for implementing empirically validated, high-quality instructional strategies. When this happens, all students benefit.

Partial School or Group Instruction. Even when school-wide efforts are in place, there will be students who do not progress without additional supports. The next level of intervention is at the group level, where more targeted interventions are designed and implemented for smaller groups of students. This includes classroom-level instructional decisions that focus on lesson and unit design, as well as specific learning experiences for groups of students, so that all students in the class will progress. To adhere to school behavior rules, for example, ninth-grade students who recently transitioned to high school might need specific opportunities to learn what is expected of them when going from class to class.

Individualized Interventions. For a small group of students, there will be a need to design highly individualized and intensive interventions to enable them to succeed. This is also the group that is likely to need alternative curriculum options. However, these students should also be involved in school-wide interventions and engaged in learning activities driven by the general curriculum.

Transition and Access to the General Curriculum

The previous discussion was not focused exclusively on transition issues because if we are to align transition services with standards-based reform, we must begin with the general curriculum, not just with transition services. To do so, we need to ensure that the skills and abilities emphasized in transition services are, in fact, incorporated into the general curriculum. As such, state and local standards must include transition-related activities that are applicable for all students and not just students with disabilities. Currently, there is considerable variability in the degree to which transition is emphasized in state standards and, perhaps more important, in testing that is aligned with those standards. For example, Figure 2.3 provides a standard from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Educational Agency, 2002) related to high school career orientation. It is clear that the "general curriculum" in this instance includes transition-related standards and, as such, transition-related activities can be accomplished easily within the context of the general curriculum.

In addition, there are a number of school reform models that emphasize transition-related components for all students. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's New American High Schools initiative identifies high schools that have undergone reform efforts that ensured student access to

§127.11. Implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Orientation, High School

- (a) General requirements for students in Grades 9–10.
- (b) Introduction. Achieving proficiency in decision making and problem solving is an essential skill for career planning and lifelong learning. Students use self-knowledge, educational, and career information to set and achieve realistic career and educational goals.
- (c) Knowledge and skills.
 - (1) The student analyzes the effect of personal interest and aptitudes upon educational and career planning. The student is expected to:
 - (A) complete a formal career interest and aptitude assessment;
 - (B) match interests and aptitudes to career opportunities; and
 - (C) begin a personal career portfolio by conducting an in-depth study of the varied aspects of occupations related to the student's interest areas.
 - (2) The student knows how to locate, analyze, and apply career information. The student is expected to:
 - (A) access career information using print and on-line resources to complete an educational and/or training plan for a career pathway;
 - (B) access career information using interviews with business and industry representatives to create a career resource file;
 - (C) complete career critiques gained through a variety of experiences (for example, shadowing, career study tours, guest speakers, career fairs, videos, CD-ROM, Internet, and simulated work activities); and
 - (D) use career information to apply entrepreneurial skills by developing a small business plan.
 - (3) The student knows that many skills are common to a variety of careers and that these skills can be transferred from one career opportunity to another. The student is expected to:
 - (A) compile a list of transferable skills with a corresponding list of possible career options matching the student's interests and aptitudes to be placed in the personal career portfolio; and
 - (B) create a presentation portraying transferable skills within the student's interest area.
 - (4) The student knows the process used to locate and secure employment. The student is expected to:
 - (A) prepare a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting employment opportunities of our free enterprise system and the economic systems of the international job market;
 - (B) develop a chart classifying employment opportunities based on educational and training requirements of careers in the student's interest area;
 - (C) complete a job application form for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area;
 - (D) develop a resume for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area; and
 - (E) role-play appropriate interviewing techniques for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area.

*continues***FIGURE 2.3****Career Orientation Standards from Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills**

Note. From Texas Educational Agency. (2002). Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Orientation. *Tex. Admin. Code*, Tit. 19, p. II, Chap. 127 (West 2002). Reprinted by permission.

- (5) The student recognizes the impact of career choice on personal lifestyle. The student is expected to:
 - (A) prepare a personal budget reflecting lifestyle desires;
 - (B) use print or on-line information to determine salaries of at least three career choices in the student's interest area with varying education requirements (for example, no high school diploma, high school diploma, and postsecondary training); and
 - (C) select the career most closely matching the student's personal lifestyle budget.
- (6) The student knows the process of career planning. The student is expected to:
 - (A) list and explain the steps in the decision-making process;
 - (B) prepare an oral or written plan describing the specific factors considered in the decision-making process used to solve a simulated career problem;
 - (C) identify high school courses related to specific career choices in the student's interest area;
 - (D) select high school courses and experiences to develop a graduation plan that leads to a specific career choice in the student's interest area;
 - (E) list and explain educational and/or training alternatives after high school for a career choice within the student's interest area; and
 - (F) prepare an educational and career plan for an occupation within the student's interest area that begins with entry into high school and continues through a postsecondary educational and/or training program and place this information in the personal career portfolio.
- (7) The student knows the importance of productive work habits and attitudes. The student is expected to:
 - (A) conduct interviews with a minimum of two employers to determine the importance of work ethics such as dependability, promptness, getting along with others, and honesty;
 - (B) list characteristics of an effective team member;
 - (C) work on a team to accomplish an assigned task and complete an "effective team member" profile to place in the personal career portfolio; and
 - (D) write job scenarios demonstrating positive and negative employee/customer relations.

FIGURE 2.3 - Continued

challenging standards and curriculum while also preparing students for career and adulthood by ensuring that they have opportunities to

- Achieve high levels of academic and technical skills.
- Prepare for college and careers.
- Learn in the context of a career major or other career interest.
- Learn by doing—in classrooms, workplaces, or community service.
- Work with teachers in small schools-within-schools.
- Receive extra support from adult mentors.
- Access a wide range of information on careers and postsecondary education and training.
- Use technology to enhance learning.

- Benefit from strong links between high schools and postsecondary institutions.

When transition is an objective for all students in school reform, students with disabilities are better able to access and progress in the general curriculum.

Next Steps in Transition and Access

There are several barriers to addressing transition through the general curriculum that will need to be removed. Perhaps the most significant barrier is the narrowing of the general curriculum that may result from the linkage of high-stakes testing to the curriculum. This topic is discussed elsewhere in this book, but it is worth noting that because most tests reference core academic content areas only, there is the danger that transition and other topics that are represented in the general curriculum, but not on the test, will be ignored. In addition, although many states have standards that address transition-related outcomes, such as the standard identified in Texas, there are other states for which standards are only narrowly defined, again primarily in core academic content areas. It is always the case that students with disabilities can receive transition-related services and instruction via an alternative curriculum that is outside the general curriculum. However, it would be better for students with disabilities if all students had a transition focus in their educational program. It is important that transition specialists and special educators become active in ensuring that standards are open-ended and written so that all students can show progress, and that these standards and the general curriculum derived from them include transition-related activities for all students.

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