



Specially Designed Instruction

Resource Bank



Specially Designed
INSTRUCTION
The Heart of Special Education

June 2025



**West Virginia Board of Education
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What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) legislation, “Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction - [\(i\)](#) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and [\(ii\)](#) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.” {IDEA Sec. 300.39 (b) (3) (i) and IDEA Sec. 300.39 (b) (3) (ii)}

*In summary, **SDI is special education** and is based solely upon the unique learning needs of the student as documented in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) through measurable annual goals, accommodations, services, and supports.*

In this guide you will find professional learning resources developed by experts from vetted, national organizations, and the West Virginia Department of Education team, that define best practices in special education. Explore a range of free, open source supports that include visuals, brochures, reusable templates, modules, and webinars, as well as synchronous and/or asynchronous courses with certificate and/or credit options that may be purchased. Review the information in this guide to find the resources your team needs to build capacity in understanding and effectively implementing SDI.



TOPIC #1

Accommodations

Accommodations are strategies used during instruction and assessment for students with diverse learning needs. Accommodations do not change grade-level standards or learning expectations, rather, they provide equal access by reducing the impact of a learning barrier. Resources in this section will provide educators and leaders with concrete examples of accommodations, address common misconceptions, and explore strategies to implement accommodations in the classroom.

West Virginia Department of Education Office of Special Education, Accommodations and Modifications PDF

This free resource is a one-page PDF document developed by the West Virginia Department of Education Office of Special Education (WVDE OSE) that addresses common misunderstandings about accommodations and modifications. It describes the differences between accommodations and modifications in a clear and concise manner. This document is helpful for educators, school and local education agency (LEA) leaders, and families when defining what accommodations are, how they are different from modifications, and how both are important to instructions for students with diverse learning needs.

Hyperlink: [*Accommodations and Modifications: What's the Difference?*](#)

IRIS Modules - Accommodations: Instructional and Testing Supports for Students with Disabilities

This module supports the understanding of instructional and testing accommodations for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs. Critical for the delivery of SDI, accommodations differ from other kinds of instructional adaptations, and this module provides concrete, easy-to-understand examples to build educator capacity. The resource explores the four categories of accommodations and describes how to implement accommodations and evaluate their effectiveness for individual students. This module is designed for any school administrator, special educator, or general educator. Estimated time of completion is 2 hours, and a professional certificate of completion is available.

Hyperlink: [*IRIS | Accommodations: Instructional and Testing Supports for Students with Disabilities*](#)

IRIS Modules - Accommodations vs Modifications Activity

This PDF activity is open-source, and available using the hyperlink below. Designed for special and general educators, this activity requires educators to read short vignettes and determine if the adaptation described for each student is an accommodation or a modification. Estimated time of completion is 30 minutes.

Hyperlink: [*IA Accommodations versus Modifications.pdf*](#)

National Center of Educational Outcomes Brief: The Basics of Accommodations and Modifications

This free, 6-page resource is available online and clarifies what accommodations and modifications are for both instruction and assessment for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs. Common misconceptions regarding “alternate or modified curriculum” are addressed. Recommendations to help guide IEP teams are provided.

Hyperlink: [*NCEO Brief 33 The Basics of Accommodations and Modifications*](#)



TOPIC #2

Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is an instructional practice where a general educator and special educator collaborate to design, deliver, and assess grade-level instruction to all students in the general education classroom. Students with disabilities and diverse learning needs have the support of both educators to ensure effective Tier 1 instruction of grade-level curriculum along with the delivery of SDI as documented in student IEPs.

West Virginia Canvas Course, Introduction to Co-Teaching Training

This training provides participants with the foundational knowledge of co-teaching. Educators and leaders watch an 18-minute overview video that describes the Four Absolutes of co-teaching and reviews the six co-teaching models. Helpful graphic organizers are available for notetaking while engaging with the video content. An Overview Quiz is available, and participants that obtain a score of 100% will receive a Verification of Training certificate. This is a self-enrolling course and is accessible to educators and leaders in West Virginia through the Canvas platform.

Hyperlink: [Introduction to Co-teaching Training](#)

West Virginia Canvas Course, PLS Co-Teaching

This course takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Participants have access to an overview video, as well as a scaffolded, step-by-step implementation guide to co-teaching. Useful resources such as an educator self-reflection guide and an administrator observation checklist, are available for participants to download and use in daily practice. This is a self-enrolling course and is accessible to educators and leaders in West Virginia through the Canvas platform.

Hyperlink: [PLS Coteaching](#)

West Virginia Co-Teaching Fact Sheet

This PDF fact sheet provides educators and leaders with essential information about co-teaching. The fact sheet outlines the benefits of co-teaching, flexible student grouping, enhanced teacher collaboration, and increased student engagement. It emphasizes four essential components for successful co-teaching: establishing professional working relationships, effective co-planning, ongoing monitoring, and strategic scheduling. Additionally, the document describes various co-teaching models, such as lead and support, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching, providing educators with diverse strategies to implement in their classrooms.

Hyperlink: [20805-Co-teaching-Fact-Sheet_v3.pdf](#)

The 5-15-45 Tool

Time is always a factor that impacts planning. The TIES Center's 5-15-45 Tool facilitates collaborative conversations between special and general educators to co-plan effective instruction for students with disabilities. Whether the teachers have 5, 15, or 45 minutes together, these downloadable planning tools guide teachers to "consider the content, instructional strategies, and barriers to learning for all students in the general education classroom, including students with significant cognitive disabilities." The tool is designed for special and general educators, or any providers seeking support with co-planning.

Hyperlink: [The 5-15-45 Tool | TIES Center](#)



TOPIC #3

High-Leverage Practices

The term “high-leverage practice” was coined a decade ago and used primarily in general education. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) worked in collaboration with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) to develop and publish a set of high-leverage practices (HLPs) for special educators. The HLPs were developed to support special education professionals by focusing on the most essential practices for instruction in academics and behavior. All educators can use HLPs to support all students.

Council for Exception Children, High-Leverage Practices Landing Page

The CEC partnered with CEEDAR to develop and publish a set of HLPs for special educators. The HLPs are organized into four domains: Collaboration, Data-Driven Planning, Instruction in Behavior and Academics, and Intensify and Intervene as Needed. The HLPs are designed for all educators to support the delivery of specially designed instruction. HLPs are available for free on the CEC’s website. In addition, the CEC provides implementation resources.

Hyperlink: [*High-Leverage Practices | High-Leverage Practices*](#)

PROGRESS Center, Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

According to the PROGRESS Center’s website, “this collection of resources includes briefs, modules, and webinars focused on six evidence-based, HLPs that research has shown support implementation of high-quality instructional programming for students with and at risk for disabilities regardless of their identified disability category or grade span.” Resources were developed by the PROGRESS Center, NCII, and the TIES Center. All resources align with the CEC’s HLPs for students with disabilities. These resources were designed primarily for special and general educators, as well as local school leaders.

Hyperlink: [*Evidence-Based Instructional Practices | PROGRESS center*](#)



TOPIC #4

Inclusive Practices

Inclusive practices are grounded in the belief that all students can learn, are welcome, and belong. The resources in this section provide educators and leaders with specific tools, resources, and processes to cultivate inclusive practices.

Inclusive Practices Resource 1 - Inclusive Education Roadmap

The Inclusive Education Roadmap (IER) was created to support systemic change across a state, LEA, and/or school. As defined by the TIES website, “this resource includes a series of tools, guidance, and processes” to support teams intentionally and strategically to create an educational community that supports all learners. The IER is organized into five steps to support the change process. Each step is further defined through specific actions, guiding any implementation teams step-by-step through the process:

- Step 1: Getting Started
- Step 2: Reflect on Inclusive Practices (The RISE)
- Step 3: Conduct Initiative Inventory
- Step 4: Action Plan for Inclusive Education
- Step 5: Implement and Sustain the Inclusive System

The IER is free for anyone to access; embedded resources include, but are not limited to meeting agendas, facilitating tips, guiding questions/reflection activities, initiative inventories, and teacher co-planning tools). This resource is ideal for state, LEA, or school leaders seeking to facilitate systems change and implement inclusive practices.

Hyperlink: [*TIES Inclusive Education Roadmap | Inclusive Education Roadmap \(IER\) | Institute on Community Integration Publications*](#)

Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Tier 1 Video Series

This series of short videos demonstrate the elements of school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and share strategies for making each element accessible to all learners, including students with significant cognitive disabilities. Two videos show a general education teacher and special education teacher sharing their experiences including all students in PBIS. This series of seven videos can be watched in order, or one at a time in any order. This resource is designed to support state, LEA, and/or school leaders, teachers, instructional support staff, and any other school personnel who may be interested in learning how to effectively implement PBIS (Tier 1) for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Hyperlink: [*Including Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities in PBIS Tier 1 Video Series | TIES Center*](#)

Instructional Practices Video Collection

The TIES Center’s “Instructional Practices Videos” webpage offers a collection of videos designed to illustrate effective inclusive instructional strategies for all students, including those with extensive support needs. The resources include the “Inclusive Leader Series,” featuring topics such as co-planning, grading, instructional strategies, and creating an inclusive school culture. Additionally, the “Inclusive Science Lessons” series provides practical examples of inclusive teaching in subjects like food webs and Newton’s laws for sixth grade. Each video is also available with audio descriptions to enhance accessibility. The TIES Center, part of the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration, publishes these resources to support educators in implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms.

Hyperlink: [Instructional Practices Video Collection - TIES Center](#)

Peer Engagement Implementation Guides

There are nine Peer Engagement Implementation Guides developed to promote meaningful engagement and build relationships between students with disabilities and their peers. Per the TIES Center website, the guides are practical, relevant, and all share the same structure which includes:

- an overview of the approach and its goals;
- how school teams can collaborate in all aspects of its delivery;
- the importance of careful planning;
- strategies for implementing each approach with students with disabilities and their peers;
- ways of evaluating outcomes for students with disabilities, peers, and others in the school;
- recommendations for expanding and sustaining a school’s efforts;
- considerations for adapting the approach based on the needs of diverse students;
- case examples to illustrate each approach in action, and
- additional resources for readers.

Free forms and resources are available to download and/or print. In addition, a Decision-making Guide is available and useful for determining which approach, or combination of approaches, to use. This resource is designed to support LEA and school leaders, or teachers who wish to improve authentic peer engagement in their organization.

Hyperlink: [TIES Peer Engagement Practice Guides | The Power of Peers: Introduction to the Peer Engagement Implementation Guides | Institute on Community Integration Publications](#)

PROGRESS Center, Stories from the Classroom

This video series highlights the voices of educators, leaders, family members, and young adults with disabilities as they share strategies and tips gained from real-world experience. Videos range in time from 10 to 15 minutes, and a facilitator's guide is available to promote meaningful discussion. This series was developed for School leaders, special and general educators, and family members of students with disabilities.

Hyperlink: [Stories from the Classroom | PROGRESS center](#)

Parent Resource Videos

The TIES Center partnered with the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) to create this video series: Supporting the *Learning of Children with Significant Cognitive Disabilities at Home*. This video series helps family members identify natural routines where they can embed opportunities for communicating thoughts and needs, learning and practicing math, reading, and writing skills, and increase independence in daily living skills. These resources were designed for family members who want to understand how to support their children at home and in their communities. The videos are free and last approximately 4 to 5 minutes.

Hyperlink: [Parent Resource Videos | TIES Center](#)

TOPIC #5

Specially Designed Instruction

As defined by the IDEA legislation, “Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction - (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.” {IDEA Sec. 300.39 (b) (3) (i) and IDEA Sec. 300.39 (b) (3) (ii)}

The resources in this section provide educators and leaders with a deep dive into informative processes, planning tools, and examples to support the design, implementation, and monitoring of effective SDI for students with disabilities and diverse learning needs.

Collection: Specially Designed Instruction

This collection of seven on-demand courses is designed for special educators to increase their knowledge and skills for SDI implementation. Once registered, participants can access the course content immediately and complete the seven courses at their own pace, within one year of registration. This resource is designed for any school administrator, related services provider, special educator, general educator, or family member who wishes to take a deep dive into SDI. Participants will earn 10 hours of continuing education credit and a certificate from CEC for completing the collection. Registration fee for CEC members is \$49 and \$99 for non-members.

Hyperlink: [CEC Learning Library: Collection | Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\)](#)

The PROGRESS Center, IEP Self-Paced Course Collection

The modules developed by the PROGRESS Center are free, self-paced and provide critical information about the entire IEP process, from the development of a high-quality IEP to the “what and why” of developing annual goals and determining service delivery. Courses range in duration from 30-60 minutes. Participants must create an account and log into the PROGRESS Center and National Center for Intensive Intervention (NCII) Learning Module Library. Course completion certificates are provided once the module has been completed. These modules were designed for Faculty and PD Providers, general educators, LEA and school leaders, and special educators.

Hyperlink: [IEP Self-Paced Course Collection | PROGRESS center](#)

High Quality IEP Tip Sheets

A series of tip sheets are embedded in the module series, as well as available as a stand-alone resource. Covering the key components of the IEP, these tip sheets summarize federal regulations, review the required elements of the IEP, as well as best practices for implementation. These tip sheets were designed primarily for special and general educators, as well as local school leaders. Spanish versions of the tip sheets are available, as well as specific tip sheets for families.

Hyperlink: [IEP Tip Sheets | PROGRESS center](#)



TOPIC #6

Behavior Support and Classroom Management

Educator knowledge and application of positive behavior supports and classroom management are essential for implementation of SDI. Also, SDI for some students involves direct instruction on positive social and replacement behaviors. These resources provide foundational knowledge and best practices to support classroom behavior management and individual student behavior acquisition from early childhood through high school. Additionally, resources to support the Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) process and Behavior Implementation Plan (BIP) development are available.

Early Childhood Behavior Management Module

This IRIS module provides recommended practices approved by the Division for Early Childhood (DEC). The DEC sets international professional standards for early childhood practices. This module includes information on how to create developmentally appropriate behavior rules for early childhood classrooms so that they align with a given school's behavior expectations. In addition, information regarding effective communication with families and guardians is included. This module is free of cost and takes approximately 1.5 - 2 hours to complete. A Professional Development Certificate from the IRIS Center is available upon completion. Participants must register and create an account to receive the certificate.

Hyperlink: [Early Childhood Behavior Management: Developing and Teaching Rules](#)

National Education Association Classroom Management Resources

The National Education Association (NEA) Classroom Management Resources include blended learning courses. The resources require the creation of a NEA username and password. NEA offers 6 micro-credentials focused on classroom management in the areas listed below:

- [Addressing Challenging Behaviors](#)
- [Aspects of an Engaged Classroom](#)
- [Classroom Expectations and Routines](#)
- [Creating A Classroom Community](#)
- [Organizing the Physical Layout of the Classroom](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Pedagogy](#)

Additionally, all micro-credentials are available in the [Classroom Management stack](#). The courses include links to supporting rationale and research, as well as additional resources.

Hyperlink: [Classroom Management | NEA](#)

Council for Exceptional Children High-Leverage Practices #9 - Teach Social Skills

Students with emotional/behavioral disorders, autism spectrum disorder, and other low-incidence disabilities have deficits in social skills that impact their ability to successfully participate fully in the school setting or in the community alongside their peers. Special educators must be able to identify any social skills that are lacking and develop a plan for explicitly teaching social skills. Per the CEC, social behaviors include communication with peers and adults, self-management, and following classroom expectations. This resource is a free 1-pager, created to support school leaders seeking to embed the HLPs in professional development, implementation, teacher observation and feedback efforts at their school site.

Hyperlink: [HLP 9 Admin Guide.pdf](#)

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Identifying the Reasons for Problem Behavior and Developing a Behavior Plan

This module explores the foundational principles of behavior and the importance of understanding the function (why) students engage in problem behavior. The steps to conducting a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior plan are also described. This module is free and requires participants to sign-in to the IRIS portal. A certificate of completion is available, the estimated completion time is 2 hours.

Hyperlink: [Functional Behavioral Assessment: Identifying the Reasons for Problem Behavior and Developing a Behavior Plan](#)

Behavior Resource 5 - Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Students with Disabilities

This comprehensive website provides information on how to use PBIS to support students with disabilities. Multiple free resources are available across all behavioral topics, as well as links to assessments, tools, publications, and videos.

Hyperlink: [Center on PBIS | Students with Disabilities](#)



Notes



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