Modules Addressing Special Education and Teacher Education (MAST)

Facilitator’s Guide

Standards-based IEPs
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Standards-based IEPs

This Facilitator’s Guide is designed to provide additional information and extension activities that may be helpful to people involved in course instruction or professional development related to the education of students receiving special education supports.

This guide is based on the accompanying module available at http://mast.ecu.edu. All or parts of the module can be used to supplement a course, workshop, or presentation. Information provided in this guide is designed to support you as the facilitator of a one-hour session. It stresses important points made in the module as well as provides questions/activities to extend thinking and application of the topics. Each facilitator’s guide includes:

- Preparation Suggestions and Materials
- Session Agenda
- Session Guide and Key Talking Points
- Focus and Reflection Questions
- Application and Extension Activities
- Self-Assessment
- Session Evaluation Form
- References and Resources
- Web Resources

**Preparation Suggestions and Materials**

- **Participant Handouts**
  - Power Point presentation slides
  - Session Evaluation

- **Supplies**
  - Power Point presentation slides

- **Technology**
  - Computer, LCD or overhead projector, screen
  - Microphone and speakers (depending on size of the group)
  - High speed internet access (URLs for specific content and activities are included in this guide)

- **Additional materials for optional suggested activities**
  - Copies of Standards-based IEP meeting agenda at end of this Guide
  - Copies of the case study of Luke at the end of this Guide
  - Individual or small group access to the internet for accessing resources for the suggested activities
Session Agenda

- Introduction (3 minutes)
- Session Goals and Objectives (2 minutes)
- Background (7 minutes)
- Benefits of Standards-based IEPs (2 minutes)
- Challenges/Concerns (3 minutes)
- Plan of the Day (2 minutes)
- Elements of Standards-based Educational Systems (6 minutes)
- Using Standards during the IEP meeting (8 minutes)
- Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (9 minutes)
- The Team Approach to Writing Standards-based IEP Goals (9 minutes)
- Addressing Services and Supports (4 minutes)
- Summary (2 minutes)
- Evaluation (3 minutes)

The suggested time allotments for the session’s agenda items are estimates of the minimal time required to present the content. Group discussion and the suggested activities will likely require additional time. Facilitators are encouraged to consider the needs of their particular audience as they plan the delivery and schedule for the lesson.

In addition to the agenda items, this Facilitator’s Guide includes optional Focus and Reflection Questions, Application and Extension Activities, as well as a link to an online Self-Assessment. As time allows, these additional resources may be incorporated into the session.

Session Guide and Key Talking Points

- Introduction (3 minutes)

  **Presentation Guide**

  Watch the slide show at [http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/media/slides01/SlideShow.html](http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/media/slides01/SlideShow.html). The transcript follows.
“In K-12 education, all students are on a journey to the same finish line, but their paths are not necessarily the same. Some students may take a slightly different path.”
and other paths may be significantly modified. Due to the diversity of learning among students,

some will achieve mastery of a standard before (or after) other students.

It is important that teachers assess students throughout the learning process.
using multiple sources in order to identify and address areas that students have deficits in order to meet the instructional needs of all students.

Standards-based instruction does not mean the students are only in the general education classroom.
Standards based instruction can be offered anywhere and translates to students working in the same curriculum as nondisabled peers with individualization to meet the student’s specific needs.

In a standards-based educational system, opportunity to learn is critical in order to get the students to the finish.
A finish line that was not always achievable with traditional IEPs, IEPs that only focused on isolated skills and were not aligned to grade level standards.”

In the MAST module, *Universal Design for Learning: Introduction*, we saw how diverse the classrooms of today have become; so imagine a fourth grade classroom where all the students are working on fractions. This is a concept covered under the fourth grade standards for the state, a concept that will be tested on the statewide assessment--this is the statewide assessment that measures the knowledge and skills of fourth grade students on the fourth grade state standards. The question is, how will this group of students with diverse needs, ability levels, and deficits be held accountable for their knowledge of fractions at grade level?

Because of the national attention placed on school accountability and student performance on assessments based on state standards, it is logical that there should be similar emphasis placed on the relationship between a student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the content standards at the grade level the student is enrolled (Cortiella, 2010).

**Session Goals and Objectives (2 minutes)**

**Presentation Guide**

This module will provide an overview of the philosophy and development of standards-based IEPs; including a discussion of the federal regulations, impact on instruction, and the process of writing a standards-based IEP.

**Objectives:**
The participant will be able to
1. Identify the federal requirements and philosophy of standards-based IEPs.
2. Identify specific strengths and needs related to grade level content and write standards-based IEPs.
3. Recognize the steps used to develop a standards-based IEP.

**Background (7 minutes)**

**Presentation Guide**

To appreciate the significance of the standards-based IEP movement, it is important to review how special education practices have evolved. Prior to 1975, students with disabilities were provided few opportunities in public education and in some cases were excluded from public school or institutionalized. The Education for All

*Standards-based IEPs*
Handicapped Children Act (EAHC) (1975) entitled all qualified students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Programs were developed in the public schools and students received basic skill instruction in separate or resource classrooms, which were generally thought to be “parallel systems”.

Over the course of the next several decades, educational models for students with disabilities emerged, were implemented, and then abandoned or melded as theories shifted and practices evolved. The chronology of models includes: in the early 70’s, a developmental model was utilized addressing activities for the age level at which the student was functioning; late 70’s through the 80’s educators focused on functional curriculum working on skills that would help students transition to community settings; in the 1990’s inclusive education took a stronger foothold and students were included with their age level peers but, in many cases, not receiving chronological age appropriate instruction. The most recent reauthorizations of the earlier law (EAHC, 1975) built on the inclusion of students with disabilities in age appropriate settings and challenged the instructional theories in practice.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorization of 1997 (IDEA, 1997) utilized research and experience over the course of 20 years to demonstrate that education is most effective when students with disabilities are held to high expectations and access to general education curriculum is maximized. Researchers and educators found that when students with disabilities were not provided access to the general education curriculum and were not actively engaged in the learning process, they missed opportunities to reach their full academic potential. If emphasis was not placed on high expectations for academic success, students did not achieve their postsecondary goals of employment or continued education. The reauthorization ensured that students with disabilities would be included in statewide assessments and schools and districts would be held to a high level of accountability (MacQuarrie, 2009).

In 2001 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), was reauthorized and is now also referred to as No Child Left Behind Act (2001). It required accountability for all students at grade level and disaggregated by subgroup, including a group for students with disabilities. The reauthorization included an alternate assessment on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The AA-AAS would also hold students to grade level expectations based on alternate achievement standards. IDEIA (2004) further strengthened the emphasis on access and progress in the general curriculum by aligning to ESEA.

Together the two laws hold schools accountable for learning and achievement of all students on statewide assessments by allowing flexibility for students with disabilities to participate with accommodations and using alternate assessments. In 2007 a final rule was adopted to allow the use of an alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards (AA-MAS). This assessment would allow additional
flexibility for the participation of students with disabilities on statewide assessment and in the accountability process. Standards-based IEPs were included as a requirement for participation in the AA-MAS.

Based on research and federal requirements, many state and local education agencies have begun the process to move away from the traditional IEPs that focused on isolated skill deficits that did not align to grade level expectations and progress towards a standards-based process that aligns the student’s IEP with the expectations of closing the gap between where the student is currently performing to what all students are expected to know and do at their grade level. This shift to standards-based IEPs is not evolving only for students eligible for the alternate assessment based on modified academic achievement standards, but is happening for many students on an IEP.

There are some students who have more significant cognitive disabilities and learning needs. The process for developing standards-based IEPs for this population is similar but will require the team to focus on the process of accessing the standards and can be investigated in further detail in work by the National Alternate Assessment Center and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Let’s listen in to a meeting where a standards-based IEP process is being introduced. Watch the video at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/media/slides02/SlideShow.html. The transcript follows.

Mrs. Paulson (Sped Teacher) – “Mrs. Davis, we are taking a little bit different approach to writing Luke’s IEP this year. The district has recently had training in standards-based IEPs. We are going to identify Luke’s strengths and needs as we have done previously but we are going to align those needs with the grade level standards. My role will be to make sure we address Luke’s specialized needs and his teacher Mrs. Johnson is going to help us make sure we are aligning his goals to the skills they are working on in 4th grade.”
Mrs. Davis (Parent) – “I am not sure I understand. We just went over Luke’s assessments at his reevaluation and he was performing at a second grade level in math. How is he supposed to work on math at 4th grade? Isn’t he in special education to have a plan to meet his needs?”

Mrs. Johnson (Gen Ed Teacher) – “I think I understand your concern. When we started discussing this I didn’t know how I would be able to teach the concepts we work on in 4th grade to all the students in my class when they don’t all have those skills yet. I will be assessing the students to find out what gaps are present to plan special instruction for groups of students who need special instruction on the concepts we are working on throughout the year. Some of the special instruction will already be planned for students like Luke on their IEP.”

Mrs. Davis (Parent) – “So you will still be working on Luke’s individual needs, but is he going to be in the regular class all day because I really feel like he enjoys working with Mrs. Paulson in the special ed classroom and he has been more confident in his math skills with the strategies he has learned.”

Mrs. Paulson (Sped Teacher) – “We will talk about where the best place for Luke to receive his instruction is, after we write his goals, but he could still come to the resource room or I may even be able to come into the general classroom to work on some of the special skills during math class. He has been making good progress on the specific math skills we have had on his IEP, but when we looked at his progress from year to year on the state assessments he is falling further behind in grade level expectations.”

Mrs. Davis (Parent) – “He was very frustrated after the state testing at the end of last year. He said the math was really hard and he didn’t understand what all the words in the questions meant. He also had trouble on the items he had to write out how he solved the problems, he wasn’t sure how to tell what he did.”

Mrs. Paulson (Sped Teacher) – “I think that is where we can all work together to not only work on the individual math skills as we have been in his IEP, but to also make sure we are addressing the things he needs to know and do at 4th grade.”

Mrs. Johnson (Gen Ed Teacher) – “This is going to be a little different for everyone, but I am excited about having all my students working on 4th grade skills. Before in math I might have been working on adding fractions but some students would have to work on adding single digits because that is all that was addressed on their IEP. Now Luke may need to work on adding single digits but as I am teaching the fraction lesson he could work on adding fractions with single digits in the numerator and denominator that don’t need to be reduced so he would be working on a skill he needs as well as a grade level skill.”
Mrs. Davis (Parent) – “I think I understand and I think that will make Luke feel more comfortable. He was starting to say he was embarrassed about having to do baby work when he was in class.”

Mrs. Paulson (Sped Teacher) – “We have already started talking about some of the skills Luke has as well as some of the areas he needs to work on. Let’s look at some of the data we have pulled together and get started on his IEP by documenting his present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.”

Benefits of Standards-based IEPs (2 minutes)

- Presentation Guide

  - All students are considered to be general education students. This helps to promote high expectations of all students as opposed to lower expectations for some populations of students.

  - There is one curriculum which promotes a single education system that is inclusive with common language and curriculum. This in turn promotes closer working relationships and collaboration between general and special education teachers ultimately benefiting all students.

  - Greater consistency provides direction for goals and interventions that are tied to IEPs focused on progress towards grade level content.

  - Focus is on high expectations for students with disabilities, a shift from focusing primarily on student deficits.

  - Teachers refine and evaluate their use of interventions, accommodations, and assessment data.

  - Instruction incorporating scientifically based research and practices moves the student toward grade level proficiency.

  - Language is clearer and more familiar in the IEP to parents and general education teachers resulting in a better understanding of what is expected at the student’s enrolled grade level and in comparison to their peers.
Challenges/Concerns (3 minutes)

Presentation Guide

- The time needed to develop and implement standards-based IEPs and corresponding instruction is a concern.

- Standards-based IEPs do not address the whole student including functional goals.

- Standardized content instruction is seen to be conflicting with individualized instruction. The impression is, that if all students are working on the same standards, the individualization of the IEP is lost. The IEP, however, is not the lesson plan or curriculum that all students are to participate in, but is the framework which outlines how the gap between the student’s current performance and the expectations at the grade level the student is enrolled will be addressed in order for the student to be actively engaged in the general curriculum. The IEP will identify strategies that are best suited to help the student achieve individual expected performance.

- A balance between instructional needs vs. limited instructional time is a challenge. It is no longer acceptable to lower the learning expectations and remove students with disabilities from the general curriculum instead of providing the intensive integrated services to help students progress with their peers in the general education curriculum. A common misconception is that working in the general curriculum means the student must be receiving instruction in the general education classroom, however the general curriculum simply means that the student is working on the same content as non-disabled peers not necessarily the setting where that learning occurs.

- It is necessary to provide an opportunity to learn - (not just exposing the student to content, but putting in place effective instruction and support system) in order to include students in the general curriculum and ultimately prepare them for success beyond high school.

Plan of the Day (2 minutes)

Presentation Guide

While it may be expected that there is a gap in the student’s strengths and needs identified in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance
Standards-based IEPs and the skills and knowledge the student is expected to demonstrate at grade level, this gap may even be significant for some students. The role of the IEP team is to effectively address the student’s needs, identify the relationship to grade level standards, and build the bridge using specialized instruction and supports that will effectively move the student toward grade level expectations.

The IEP is not intended to describe the instruction and it does not outline the student’s curriculum. The IEP is intended to point the way as the team sets the priorities for what the student will master and how he/she will access the broader content (Browder & Courtade-Little, 2005).

The rest of this module will provide an introduction to the process of writing a standards-based IEP. At this point, it is important to understand the pieces of our standards-based educational system in order to make sure we are using the same language. States differ in the manner that standards are organized, so it is important to understand the structure and terminology specific to your state. The terms referred to in this module reflect the generally accepted terminology for the nation.

**Elements of Standards-based Educational System (6 minutes)**

**Presentation Guide**

1. State content standards – Define in broad terms what students should know and be able to do at the grade level they are enrolled by the end of the year.

2. Indicators (also referred to as Benchmarks) – Break the standards into segmented pieces that can be measured throughout the year. Become the basis for developing the curriculum scope and sequence.

3. General education curriculum – Directs what, when, why, and how of teaching. The curriculum outlines the full range of courses, activities, lessons, and materials used in the general education classroom to address the state standards.

4. State accountability assessment – Used to measure student performance on state standards to hold schools and districts accountable for student proficiency on grade level standards (Access Center, 2008).

In moving forward with standards-based IEPs the team will be aligning the grade level expectations with the individual needs of the students that will be addressed on the IEP.
Every member of the team has a specific purpose which is why representation of administration, general education, special education, and the parent and student as appropriate are required members of the team. In a standards-based IEP the team will rely heavily on the general education teacher to understand and relay the expectation of the general curriculum at the grade which the student is enrolled.

“Alignment is a matching of two educational components which strengthens the purpose and goals of both. For example, instruction can be aligned with assessment; assessment can be aligned with state standards; and IEPs can be aligned with state standards to help align instruction with the general curriculum.” (Browder & Courtade-Little, 2005, p. 8).

The process of aligning IEPs to content standards involves:

- Comparing a student’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance to the expectations for peers without disabilities of the same age group;
- Identifying the skills needed for successful involvement and progress in the general education curriculum and;
- Ensuring that teachers teach the content that is measured on standards-based assessments (Walsh, 2001).

**Activity Suggestion**

Have small groups of participants review Lesson One of the CalSTAT IEP online training at [http://www.calstat.org/iep/1_reading.html](http://www.calstat.org/iep/1_reading.html). Ask them to briefly review the legislative foundation and then examine the structure of the standards in their state, as done in the Lesson for California. Ask them to identify the way in which their state’s standards are categorized: by subject area or domain, concepts, skills, strands, substrands, objectives, etc. How does this structure align with, or facilitate identification of indicators or benchmarks?

**Using Standards during the IEP meeting (8 minutes)**

**Presentation Guide**

When developing an academic standards-based IEP, the IEP team discusses the academic standards, local benchmarks or district learning expectations for all students, to determine what the student with a disability needs to learn and demonstrate in each academic area of concern. The IEP team focuses on the standards representing the prioritized needs of the student. The IEP will also include any instructional modifications or accommodations the student may need to access the general curriculum. Then the teachers working with the student use the IEP to align their instruction to include the prioritized skills for the student.
A seven step process has been outlined in a Project Forum article published by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). The seven major steps that educators can take to develop a standards-based IEP are:

1. Consider the grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled or would be enrolled based on age.
2. Examine classroom and student data to determine where the student is functioning in relation to the grade-level standards.
3. Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance.
4. Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standards.
5. Assess and report the student’s progress throughout the year.
6. Identify specially designed instruction including accommodations and/or modifications needed to access and progress in the general education curriculum.
7. Determine the most appropriate assessment option. (Holbrook, 2007).

These steps have been condensed in other standards-based IEP approaches, but the required content remains the same. For the purpose of this module we will focus on three major aspects:

1. Developing present levels of academic achievement and functional performance,
2. Prioritizing critical needs and writing aligned IEP goals,
3. Addressing services and supports.

The diagram below outlines the yearly process the team will utilize in writing a standards-based IEP.
A sample agenda is available at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/documents/Meeting%20Agenda.pdf to help facilitate a standards-based IEP meeting. A copy is available at the end of this Guide.

- **Activity Suggestion**

Direct participants to the sample IEP meeting agenda at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/documents/Meeting%20Agenda.pdf or at the end of this Guide. In small groups, ask participants to compare this agenda with the agenda often used in their settings.

- **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (9 minutes)**

- **Presentation Guide**

In the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, multiple data sources are collected and reviewed to determine the areas in which the student displays strengths and needs in relation to the vision for the student’s future. If the student has needs in many areas, the standards at the student’s grade level are reviewed to determine what concepts are most critical in order for the student to progress and bridge the gap from current to expected performance. It is critical that both the student’s strengths and needs in the areas of instructional level, functional level, and grade level are addressed in order to write an individualized plan that is appropriate for the student. If the student is of transition age transition goals also need to be addressed.
In traditional IEPs, the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance focused only on the instructional level of the student. In this IEP, the team may not adequately address the grade level expectations for the student. When teams initially consider a standards-based IEP, there may be a misunderstanding that the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance only focus on grade level expectations. If this is the case, the individualization of the IEP and the specific skill deficits will not be addressed. Following the intent of a standards-based IEP, it is critical to address instructional level and grade level skills in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. This information is used by the team to address the student’s gaps and write goals that will address specially designed instruction that will meet the student’s individual needs as well as progress the student towards grade level proficiency.

To write the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, the special education teacher, general education teacher, and the other professionals on the IEP team along with input from the parents, will need to have information on:

- The basic skills and/or prerequisite skills that underlie standards and grade level curriculum content using the district’s curriculum guides and course of study;
- Skills and knowledge the student currently has using information collected from:
  - State assessments,
  - Curriculum based classroom assessment,
  - Eligibility data (if current) and functional performance data from student work,
  - Previous IEP,
- Other pertinent information (grades, discipline, attendance…),
- The student’s rate of learning,
- The accommodations that have been used and the level of success of those accommodations,
- The most critical instructional needs for the student.

Below is an example of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance for a student named Luke. A copy of the case description can also be found at the end of this Guide. Let’s go through the basic components that comprise the present levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance- Luke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Luke</strong> is a fourth grade student who has good attendance. He enjoys school and is willing to try new strategies to learn things that are challenging for him. He has a good grasp on computation working with whole numbers. He is able to calculate some problems in his head. Luke prefers problems that involve money since it is concrete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics data from classroom progress monitoring indicate relative strengths in the area of numbers and operations. Currently math work samples and error analysis show that Luke can solve single step operation problems with single digit numbers. In the classroom he struggles with computation problems involving fractions and decimals. Luke can add and subtract decimals with 20% accuracy and fractions with like denominators with 35% accuracy while classmates average 82%. The IEP team agrees that this will impact Luke’s ability to apply math skills to everyday activities such as measurement and money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has difficulty describing the process needed to solve two step problems and ignoring extraneous information and facts. If the information is presented in a bulleted format or highlighted, he is able to identify the relevant information and can complete the appropriate computation, although he still has trouble explaining the process involved. Last year he averaged about 40% correct when solving problems independently, but at 70% when information was presented in a bulleted list or highlighted. His weakness to describe the process used or his thoughts on a topic is impacting his ability to respond to open response items in math as well as other subject areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke’s parents are concerned that he is falling further behind grade level, but have seen his confidence increase when he is completing homework. They would like him to continue to get specialized instruction but to be included more in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Luke is making progress towards grade level. The team feels that if some inclusion can be incorporated during math instruction that the strategies he is learning will be seamless and not isolated to the special education setting. He has shown success in the general education classroom with the accommodations and supports from the previous IEP.

Watch the slide show at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/media.slides03/SlideShow.html. The transcript follows.

„When developing a student’s present level of performance for a standards-based IEP we need to make sure that they are understandable to all parties and that we have the data to support our statements. We need data that has been gathered in multiple ways to paint a broad picture of student performance. Included in the present levels we need to make connections to the grade level the student is enrolled and how the student is making progress towards those standards. Using this information we will develop a clear present levels that outlines the student’s strengths and needs.}
The data sources we want to use include summative data such as we would get from the end of the year statewide assessment that provides information on the level of proficiency the student is at based on the grade level standards or expectations for a course. We will include formative data that is collected formally or informally throughout the year that is used to provide information to the teacher to inform instruction. We will collect diagnostic information that provides information on how a student is learning and what specific strengths and needs the student has related to a specific concept. Finally we include benchmark data that is gathered throughout the year to show the progress the student is making towards grade level proficiency.

Looking at Luke’s present levels we see evidence of data collected from multiple sources. There is formative data from classroom progress monitoring and work samples. There is diagnostic information from error analysis. We see data that
shows Luke’s progress compared to class performance from benchmark assessments. And finally we have evidence of summative information from the assessments at the end of the previous year.

The team has made connections to the standards in the discussion of how he is performing on fractions and decimals in the classroom and how that will impact other skills expected to be learned at that grade level.

In gathering data and writing the present levels the entire team should be included and provide input. Structured data will most likely come from the general and special education teachers. The parents and student will most likely share informal observations. All this information is important in documenting the strengths and needs for the student.
In Luke’s present levels, the team has documented strengths in numbers and operations particularly solving single digit and single step problems. He is struggling with fractions and decimals and has trouble describing the process he is taking to solve problems, particularly with ignoring information that is not relevant.

That information also includes information related to how Luke is performing at his instructional level and towards grade level standards based on the data and input from team members.
The end result is a detailed present levels that will guide the team through the rest of the IEP process and facilitate the writing of standards-based goals.”

**The Team Approach to Writing Standards-based IEP Goals (9 minutes)**

**Presentation Guide**

As we move toward writing the student’s goals it is important to reiterate that:

- Not every goal has to be aligned to the standards.

- Although our goal is for the student to be working on grade level, the team may need to begin working toward grade level with prerequisite skills at the student’s instructional level.

- The grade level standard may be broken down and only part of the standard may be addressed in the student’s goals.

- Goals are written based on the prioritized needs from the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, they are essential to the desired vision/outcome for the student.

- There should be a clear educational benefit – a goal shouldn’t be written just for the sake of writing a standards-based goal.
The team must address:

- What skills does the student need to learn to move towards grade level proficiency this year and building on future years?
- What access skills related to grade level standards must the student learn?
- What is reasonable growth that can be expected during the year and how will the rate of growth close the gap for the student? (Cortiella, 2008).

A word bank process has been presented by the Connecticut State Education Resource Center to assist teachers to learn the process of writing standards-based IEP goals and objectives by identifying key words from the standards. The entire training can be found at The State Education Resource Center website listed in the Resource list for this module. In our module we will look at selected elements from this training to help target the key ideas of the standards in order to develop goals. Using the entire process incorporated additional information to determine supports and settings necessary for the student to achieve individual goals.
To start the process, you will determine what the most critical standards are in order to prioritize the curriculum. One way to help determine which standards are most critical is to find common concepts that are shared within the subject and by looking across subject areas. Some states, districts, or schools may have done this work already, but if you are not sure, or if there is not a resource available, a quick way to start this process is to paste the standards into http://www.wordcounter.com and it will calculate the frequency of the most commonly repeated word.

In this section, we will be using examples from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Mathematics Framework at grade 4. Although National Common Core Standards are being created, currently the NAEP framework represents a common set of expectations (similar to state standards) for students across the nation. Using the word counter on the fourth grade NAEP we find the frequently used words in the table below.

Now that the most commonly used words have been identified, you can use the find feature to locate the standards where these words are located. This will help identify one standard or a combination of standards that may be a priority for goal writing. The special education teacher and general education teacher should work on this process together in order to identify the most critical standards at the grade level and for the individual student.
The example for present levels of academic achievement and functional performance that we used earlier documented that one of the skills the student had a weakness in was describing. Describing is also strongly related to reading, but we will just examine math at the moment. The following from the NAEP framework contain the word describe:

**Number properties and operations:**
- Describe the effect of operations on size (whole numbers).

**Ratios and Probability**
- Use simple ratios to describe problem situations.

**Geometry**
- Identify or describe (informally) real-world objects using simple plane figures (e.g., triangles, rectangles, squares, and circles) and simple solid figures (e.g., cubes, spheres, and cylinders).
- Describe attributes of two-and three-dimensional shapes.
- Analyze or describe patterns of geometric figures by increasing number of sides, changing size or orientation (e.g., polygons with more and more sides).
- Describe and compare properties of simple and compound figures composed of triangles, squares, and rectangles.
- Describe relative positions of points and lines using the geometric ideas of parallelism or perpendicularity.

Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability
- Given a set of data or a graph, describe the distribution of data.
- Use informal probabilistic thinking to describe chance events (i.e., likely and unlikely, certain and impossible).

Algebra:
- Recognize, describe, or extend numerical patterns.
- Recognize or describe a relationship in which quantities change proportionally

At this point, it is necessary to narrow our focus to critical and priority standards for the grade level and/or the student. A single standard when broken down could lead to multiple IEP goals alone. Remember, it is not the intent of a standards-based IEP to have a goal for every standard. The team is trying to identify critical concepts and skills that the student needs to work on to make progress in the general education curriculum, not define the student’s entire curriculum.

To continue the process, based on input from the team, the critical idea from the framework we will use is:

*Given a set of data or a graph, describe the distribution of data using median, range, or mode.*

It contains the word describe which we have found to be a highly used word, the graphing and data are very important concepts that will build on future data representation and analysis skills in upcoming grades. Describing has been identified as an area of need in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance which also can be carried over into other subject areas. Data and graphing also carry over into science and social studies. Writing a goal based on this standard will address a need identified for the student and have applications across subject areas and for future performance toward grade level proficiency.
Let’s examine our priority standard and begin developing a word bank. First, we want to identify the concepts and skills of the general education standard to determine the intent of the standard. The concepts are generally the nouns or noun phrases found in the standard, and they identify what the student needs to know. The skills are generally the verbs or verb phrases, and they identify what the student needs to be able to do. Using the nouns and verbs we will develop a word bank for each standard. The word bank will then be used to write a goal or multiple goals. These standards and word banks can then be used by the IEP team in order to make determinations as to what goals should be written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
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The next step is to use the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance to determine what skills the student is currently demonstrating and comparing that to the concepts and skills needed to meet the standard. The team needs to consider the depth of knowledge of the standards and what new skills and extensions are needed to meet the standard. During this process the team is identifying bridges and gaps.

A **bridge** means the student has the skills necessary and is ready to work towards the standard. The student has the prerequisite knowledge that would be necessary and can make connections to what has been learned previously. If a **gap** is identified, this indicates that other knowledge needs to be put in place to get the student the necessary skills to work towards the standard. In some cases the student may have part of the skill or concept and have a gap that needs to be addressed.

For example, in the table below we have entered check marks in the Bridge column for the concepts of Data and Graph because those are the areas were the
student has the necessary skills to address the concept when working towards the standard. For the concept of Distribution and the skill of Describe, the student has identified gaps that need to be addressed in order for the student to work towards the standard.

**General Education Curriculum Standard:**
Given a set of data or a graph, describe the distribution of data using median, range or mode.

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<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify greatest and least point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify approach taken</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Verbalize or write steps</td>
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Finally, we take all the pieces of information and develop the goal for the student. When writing a standards-based goal, the required components of a goal do not change, only the content. A goal will still include:

- **Condition**: Under what condition
- **Performance/Behavior**: Will do what
- **Criteria**: To what level or degree
- **Timeframe**: When is this expected to be accomplished?

Using the information from the present levels, team input, and the word bank, a goal for this student could be:

*Given visual displays of information, Luke will analyze the information to describe the distribution, focusing on the greatest and least data point, with 85% accuracy on benchmark evaluations in the fourth quarter.*
Let’s look at another example together:

Watch the slide show at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/lib/media/slides04/SlideShow.html. The transcript follows.

Slide 1: “Let’s go through the word bank process to complete another math goal for Luke.

Select Grade Level Standard

- Determine most critical standards
  - Common concepts
    - Shared within subject
    - Shared across subject
  - Use district resources
  - Use word counter
  - Use find tool in document
Slide 2: First we need to select a grade level standard to work from. We can narrow the standards down by looking at common concepts that are within the same subject area and even shared concepts across subjects such as graphing being used in math, science, and social studies. We can look in our district curriculum resources to see if this grouping has already been done otherwise we can use tools to help find common words or even use the word find tool in a word document. In this case because of the discussion we had while writing the present levels of performance, we know that we want Luke to do further work with fractions and decimals.

Slide 3: Fractions and decimals are a grade level concept and doing a search through the math standards we find several standards that relate to fractions and decimals. Through discussion with the general education teacher as to which standards would be most critical and using the information we gathered on Luke we select a standard to develop a word bank.
Slide 4: The team determines that we need to work on the standards relating to adding and subtracting fractions and decimals.

Slide 5: We insert the standard onto our word bank and break it down into concepts and skills. Remember that our concepts are nouns and noun phrases from the standard and skills are the verbs and verb phrases.

Slide 6: Now we need to determine what the bridges and gaps Luke has. A bridge is the area where he has the skills that will move him to the goal. A gap is where he will need additional instruction in order to reach the goal. Some skills he needs to have in place to work with fractions and decimals are to be able to make groups and sets, he needs to understand equal parts. He needs to know the numerator and denominator and their function. He also needs to understand place value so he will know the decimal place.
Slide 7: We know from the present levels that Luke can add and subtract and has been working well with whole numbers, so we mark those as bridges. He does not have a good understanding of numerator and denominators or place value so we mark those as gaps.

Slide 8: After we have completed that step we want to consider if he really needs a goal in this area or with supports and accommodations if he can complete this independently.
Slide 9: One accommodation we could provide him would be graph paper to help line up the fractions and decimals correctly. He will need some additional instruction on how to write a fraction from a group of objects, but that would not prevent him from working on adding and subtracting fractions. The team also does not feel he could do regrouping now even though at grade level the addition and subtraction are not limited to numbers without regrouping. If we only provided Luke with graph paper, he would not be successful in this work so we will proceed to writing a goal.

Slide 10: To write our goal we want to use the key words we identified on the word bank taking into consideration the skills and concepts and the bridges and gaps that Luke has. We are going to write the goal so it is something that can reasonably be accomplished in the year and so it will progress him towards grade level proficiency.
Slide 11: We need to make sure when writing the goal we include the condition that he will perform the task, the performance of behavior that we would expect him to perform. We need to include the criteria we expect him perform at in order to meet the goal and the timeframe in which we expect this to be done.

Slide 12: Using all of our resources we will construct a goal that when we give Luke 20 computation problems that include double digit fraction with like denominators and/or decimals to the hundredths place, he will increase his math computation skills in addition and subtraction using fraction and decimals to 80% in four consecutive trials.

For a student who has significant gaps between their current performance and the expectations for the student’s enrolled grade, it may be necessary to limit the number of critical concepts at grade level and reexamine the core content to reprioritize prerequisite skills that are critical to make progress towards the general curriculum. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, many states have in place extended content or downward progressions (terminology may vary by state) based on grade level standards that can be used by the team to help guide IEP development. These IEPs may target intensive instruction of fundamental skills.
Once the goals have been written, the team needs to determine what type and how services will be delivered and what supports need to be put into place. This will include the specially designed instruction the student needs, the setting the student will be in, and accommodations and modifications necessary to remove the barriers of the student’s disability enabling progress in the general curriculum.

Specially designed instruction is not the sole responsibility of the special education teacher. It is delivered throughout the day across teachers and subject areas. Specially designed instruction is simply implementing the needed interventions required by the student to progress in the curriculum. Specially designed instruction incorporates materials, techniques, assessments and other activities to meet the student’s needs. The techniques, practices and activities are not something that only benefits students with disabilities; they may be beneficial to all students. Specially designed instruction can target skill deficits and address learning strategies; it does not necessarily focus on singular subjects.

Supplementary aids and services, accommodations, modification and supports involve and enable the student to progress in the curriculum. Questions to ask when planning include:

- Which services will make the most impact in moving the student toward grade level proficiency?
• What direct instruction will be necessary to support learning and what will that instruction look like (where and by whom)?
• What accommodations will be needed to minimize the effects of the student’s disability? (Cortiella, 2008).

The team will determine which accommodations remove the barriers of the student’s disability but do not change the expectations of what all students are expected to know and do. Accommodations level the playing field for students. Most states have lists of accommodations that do not affect the validity and are allowable on statewide assessments. An example of an accommodation would be using a large print book for a student who has a vision loss. This does not affect what the student is expected to know and do, the large print merely gives the student access to the materials in order to participate in the lesson.

The team may also determine that it is necessary for the student to have a modification. A modification does change or lower the expectations of what the student is expected to know and do. It may be necessary to use a modification; however modifications should be used with caution as they may increase the gap between the student’s ability and the grade level expectations. Modifications are generally not allowed on statewide assessment. An example of a modification is only requiring a student to complete one step of multi-step problems, when the grade level standard requires students to solve three or four step problems.

The word bank chart can be used to complete this information related to the standards the student is working on.

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**Concepts**
- Data
- Graph

**Distribution**
- Identify greatest and least point
- Number sequencing
- Provide number chart
- Focus on greatest and least point, not range median, or mode

**Skills**
- Describe
- Identify approach taken
- Verbalize or write steps

To find out more about accommodations and modifications and what the requirements are for your state you can refer to the National Center on Educational Standards-based IEPs
Outcomes whose link can be found in the web resources, or look directly on your state department of education website.

▶ Summary (2 minutes)

♦ Presentation Guide

This module was designed to serve as an introduction to the process of writing standards-based IEPs. There are many resources included in the References and Resources that may be available through your state department of education. These resources will help you develop a greater understanding and prepare you to begin the process. Writing standards-based IEPs does not guarantee better results for the students, but it is a critical first step in moving students towards grade level proficiency.

“If educational research can tell us anything, it is that students are more likely to learn something at school if it is taught than if it is not.” (Parker, 1991, pg. VI).

▶ Evaluation (3 minutes)

♦ Presentation Guide

Ask participants to complete an evaluation that will help us refine this training to meet your needs. Thank you.

♦ Activity Suggestion

Provide the evaluation developed for this module (a copy is provided at end of this guide) or an alternative evaluation.
Focus and Reflection Questions

The following questions are suggestions a facilitator might use to help students/participants gain additional information and increase depth of understanding of this topic. As the facilitator or instructor, you will need to consider which of these would be most effective as a discussion topic, assignment or group activity.

Questions/Topics for Discussion

1. It is important to include benchmark assessment information in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. What assessments have you either observed or used? What were the results?

2. What experiences have you had with developing or utilizing an IEP team? What struggles or successes did you encounter?

Application and Extension activities

Projects or Products

1. Using the sample Standards-based IEP agenda, what would you modify to adapt it to use with your students? Create a document for your use.

2. Create a list of potential IEP team members for your students. You may be able to identify them by name or just by the role they will play. Add to the directory through the year as you become more familiar with services and availability of accommodations.

Self Assessment

A self-assessment with response feedback is available at http://mast.ecu.edu/modules/siep/quiz/.

Participants may take this assessment online to evaluate their learning about content presented in this module.

Session Evaluation Form

A suggested evaluation form is on the next page and may be reproduced as needed.
Session Evaluation  
Standards-based IEPs

Please assess your knowledge or skills to apply the goals listed below using the following rubric:
1 - Limited or no knowledge or skills
2 - Some knowledge or skills to apply in practice
3 - Sufficient knowledge or skills to apply in practice
4 - Sufficient knowledge or skills to apply in practice AND teach to others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior to this session, my knowledge and skills were:</th>
<th>Following this session, my knowledge and skills are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Session Objectives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify the federal requirements and philosophy of standards-based IEPs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify specific strengths and needs related to grade level content and write standards-based IEPs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognize the steps used to develop a standards-based IEP.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**References and Resources**


*Standards-based IEPs*
## Web Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Web Sources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Access Center: Helping Students Access the General Curriculum</td>
<td>This site sponsored by OSEP gives information, strategies, and lesson planning ideas for helping students with disabilities, K-8, access the general curriculum. See sections on direct instruction, graphic organizers, differentiated instruction, and content areas (e.g., language arts, math, and science). <a href="http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php">http://www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Services for Technical Assistance and Training (CalSTAT)</td>
<td>Online training module: Writing Measurable Annual Goals and Objectives <a href="http://www.calstat.org/iep/">http://www.calstat.org/iep/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI)</td>
<td>The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) developed Kindergarten-12 grade level Common Core State Standards on behalf of 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia. These English language arts and mathematics standards represent a set of expectations for student knowledge and skills that will result in high school graduates who are prepared for success in college and careers. <a href="http://www.corestandards.org">http://www.corestandards.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Alternate Assessment Center</td>
<td>Resources on working with students eligible for Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards, including guidance on aligning instruction to grade level content standards. <a href="http://www.naacpartners.org/Default.aspx">http://www.naacpartners.org/Default.aspx</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC Charlotte</td>
<td>Project Mastery: Math And Science Teaching that promotes clear Expectations and Real Learning across Years for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities. <a href="http://education.uncc.edu/access/ProjectMASTERY.htm">http://education.uncc.edu/access/ProjectMASTERY.htm</a></td>
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</table>
Standards-based IEP Meeting Agenda

- Identify strengths related to the student’s disability and parent concerns.
  - What are some areas where the student has shown success, including academic areas?
  - What are some grade-level skills the student has been able to demonstrate?

- Identify and prioritize needs related to the student’s disability.
  - How does the student’s disability affect participation and progress in the general curriculum?
  - What supports does the student need in order to learn the knowledge and attain the skills to progress in the general curriculum?

- Discuss what all students know and are able to do in the academic, behavioral, and functional areas of concern for the child with a disability.
  - Consider the grade-level academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. What is the intent of the chosen academic content standard?
  - What should all students know and be able to do, based on the academic standards?
  - Document these discussions using measurable baseline data as part of the present level of performance on the IEP form.

- Identify what the student needs to learn to achieve grade level or developmental expectations for all students.
  - What is the student’s instructional level?
  - Has the student been taught content aligned with grade-level academic standards?
  - Has the student been provided appropriate instructional scaffolding to attain grade-level expectations?
  - Were the lessons and teaching materials used to teach the student aligned with state grade-level standards?
  - What was the student’s response to the academic instruction (e.g., progress monitoring data)?
  - What programs, accommodations (e.g., instructional and assessment), modifications and/or interventions have been used successfully with the student?
  - Is there data and/or results from assessment that can provide further useful information?
  - Are there factors related to the student’s disability that affect how the student learns and demonstrates what he or she knows?
  - What accommodations are needed to enable the student to access the knowledge in the general curriculum?

- Develop measurable annual goals and methods of measuring progress toward meeting the goals.
  - What can the student reasonably be expected to accomplish in one school year?
  - How will the student demonstrate what he/she knows on classroom, district, and state assessments?

Standards-based IEPs

Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance - Luke

Luke is a fourth grade student who has good attendance. He enjoys school and is willing to try new strategies to learn things that are challenging for him. He has a good grasp on computation working with whole numbers. He is able to calculate some problems in his head. Luke prefers problems that involve money since it is concrete.

Mathematics data from classroom progress monitoring indicate relative strengths in the area of numbers and operations. Currently math work samples and error analysis show that Luke can solve single step operation problems with single digit numbers. In the classroom he struggles with computation problems involving fractions and decimals. Luke can add and subtract decimals with 20% accuracy and fractions with like denominators with 35% accuracy while classmates average 82%. The IEP team agrees that this will impact Luke’s ability to apply math skills to every day activities such as measurement and money.

He has difficulty describing the process needed to solve two step problems and ignoring extraneous information and facts. If the information is presented in a bulleted format or highlighted, he is able to identify the relevant information and can complete the appropriate computation, although he still has trouble explaining the process involved. Last year he averaged about 40% correct when solving problems independently, but at 70% when information was presented in a bulleted list or highlighted. His weakness to describe the process used or his thoughts on a topic is impacting his ability to respond to open response items in math as well as other subject areas.

Luke’s parents are concerned that he is falling further behind grade level, but have seen his confidence increase when he is completing homework. They would like him to continue to get specialized instruction but to be included more in the classroom.

Luke is making progress towards grade level. The team feels that if some inclusion can be incorporated during math instruction that the strategies he is learning will be seamless and not isolated to the special education setting. He has shown success in the general education classroom with the accommodations and supports from the previous IEP.