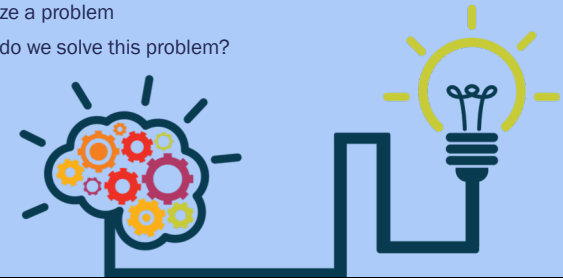


ADAPTING CURRICULUM IN GENERAL EDUCATION SETTINGS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH COMPLEX COMMUNICATION NEEDS: WHAT'S GOING WELL AND WHERE CAN WE IMPROVE?

Ciara L. Ousley
The Pennsylvania State University

Agenda

- My research interests
- Define and analyze a problem
- Brainstorm: how do we solve this problem?
- Discussion



About me

- Special Educator
- Doctoral Candidate at Penn State
 - Special Education
- Future: Establish a line of research
 - Become an “expert” problem solver (Glaser & Chi, 1988)
 - Develop literacy interventions
 - Population: Individuals with complex communication needs
 - Location: Inclusive/general education classrooms

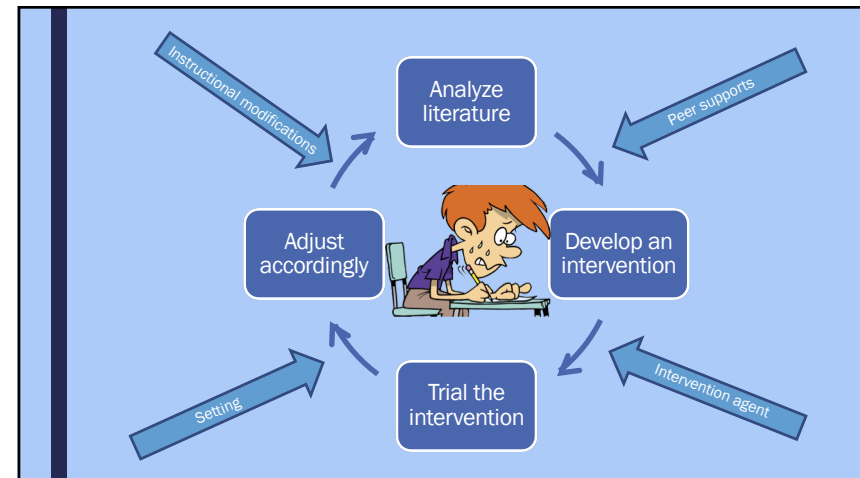


Intervention Ideas

- Literacy interventions
 - More difficult to teach than science
 - (General educators perspective; Kent-Walsh & Light, 2003)
- Adapting text for individuals with complex communication needs
 - Intervention agents: typical peers
 - (Carter, Sisco, Melekoglu, & Kurkowski, 2007; Ruppert, Dymond, & Gaffney, 2011)

Why not start now?

- Great idea!
- Complex issue
 - Many moving parts



EXPERT PROBLEM SOLVERS INVEST
EFFORT IN ANALYZING THE PROBLEM
AND APPLY KNOWLEDGE TO DEVELOP
SOLUTIONS.

Glaser & Chi (1988)

Defining and Analyzing a Problem

1. What is the problem?
2. Why is it important?
3. What is the essence or heart of the problem?
4. Why hasn't this problem been solved already?

Bereiter & Scardamalia (2016)



“What is the problem?”

“What is the problem?”

- Inclusion requires curriculum adaptation
 - Time
 - (Finke, McNaughton, & Drager, 2009; Ruppert, Dymond, & Gaffney, 2011)
 - Collaborative teaming/training
 - (Kent-Walsh & Light, 2003; Ruppert et al., 2011)

THE PROBLEM:

General educators, special educators, and SLPs struggle to understand:
(a) how to adapt all curriculum (e.g. literacy) in a timely manner and
(b) who should be adapting the curriculum

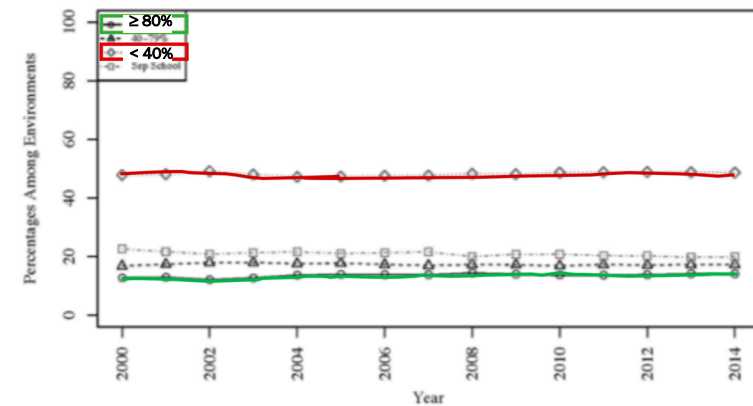
“Why is this important?”

“Why is this important?”

- Required by law (IDEA, 2004)
- Individuals would have greater access to rigor, relevance, and relationships (Carter & Draper, 2010)

Morningstar, Kurth, & Johnson (2017)

MD (Ages 6–21)



IMPORTANCE:

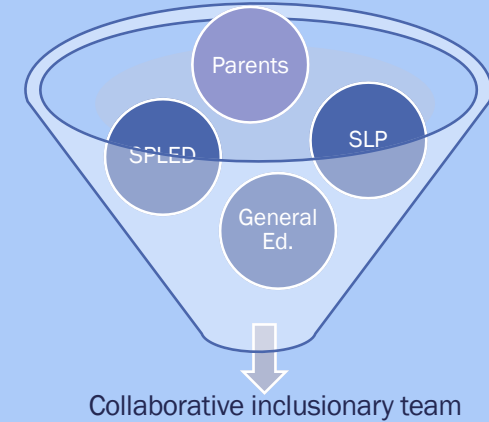
Schools and professionals are encouraged to include individuals with more severe disabilities within the general education classroom, but there seems to be difficulty in making that happen.

“What is the heart of the problem?”

“What is the heart of the problem?”

- Collaborative teaming

Who is involved in collaborative teaming?



“What is the heart of the problem?”

- Shared goals
- Clear roles (and needed expertise)
- Good communication
- Time

Perspectives from current research

General educators:

- Not always involved (Kent-Walsh & Light, 2003)

Special educators:

- Confident with collaborative teaming and curriculum adaptation strategies (Soto, Muller, Hunt, & Goetz, 2001).

SLPs:

- Belief that integration is critical for individuals who require AAC, yet they are encourage to have traditional pullout services (Soto et al., 2001).

HEART OF THE PROBLEM:

Collaborative teaming, expertise, & time -
What are the roles of the various team members, and how can each members' specialty area contribute to curriculum adaptation in a timely manner?

“Why hasn’t this problem been solved already?”

“Why hasn’t this problem been solved already?”

- Growing body of research
- Moving parts
- Many barriers

Barriers to literacy instruction in general education settings:

- Rupp, Dymond, & Gaffney (2011): Survey of 69 special educators in Illinois who taught individuals who participated in alternate assessments and required AAC.
- A few of the 17 barriers, according to special educators:
 - Level of content taught in general education settings is not appropriate
 - Type of content taught in general education settings is not appropriate
 - Lack of expertise of other professionals (therapists, general education teachers)
 - Time needed to adapt general education materials to student needs
 - Insufficient opportunities to address goals in general education settings

Knowledge

Time

Some suggestions

- Shared goals?
 - Disagreement about importance of general education content
 - (Kent Walsh & Light, 2003; Ruppert et al., 2011)
- Clear roles
 - General educators lack expertise in adapting curriculum
 - (Ruppert et al., 2011)
 - SPLED teachers may lack expertise in general education curriculum
- Communication
 - Limited opportunities to build consensus
- Time
 - Limited time to adapt curriculum (Ruppert et al., 2011)

WHY IS THIS UNSOLVED?

There are many barriers and moving pieces to successful inclusion. Specifically, there is a need for shared goals, defined roles, effective and frequent communication, and more time.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

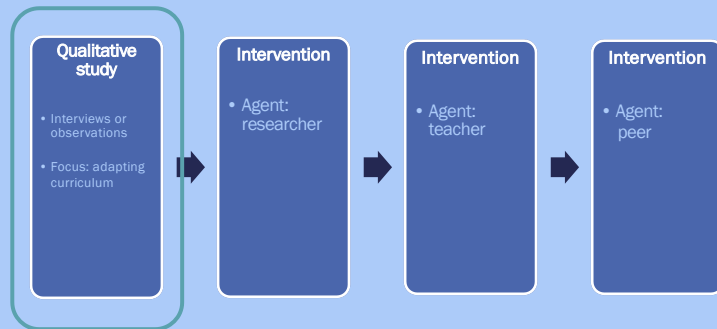
Analyze the problem!

How are general educators, special educators, and SLPs:
(a) adapting all curriculum (e.g. literacy) in a timely manner and
(b) who is responsible for adapting what pieces of the curriculum?

Analysis of success

- There are successful readers who use AAC
 - But what does that look like for these individuals in general education settings?

How do we get there?



Qualitative study

- Interviews
- Observations

Research methodology

Semi-structured interviews

- Interviewing teams or units:
 - SLP
 - SPLED Teacher
 - General Ed. Teacher
- Finding themes within units and between professionals

Observational

- In person OR recorded lesson to observe adapted curriculum
 - How long is the student engaged?
 - Does the task align with the goal of the lesson?

or... a combination of both?

DISCUSSION

The logistics of the project

Recruitment?

Recruitment?

- Semi-structured interviews:
 - Possibly through ASHA to recruit SLP's
 - Snowball recruitment for general and special educators
- Observational:
 - via social media/support groups
 - Begin with an interview → then request observational opportunity

Interesting topics to target

Interesting topics to target

- What possible questions should be asked?
 - Describe what is going well with adapting general education curriculum for the student you work with?
 - Describe a few challenges or barriers you encounter when adapting general education curriculum for the student you work with?
 - Have you noticed adapted general education curriculum benefiting the student you work with? How so?

References

- Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (2016). "Good Moves" in knowledge-creating dialogue. *Qwerty-Open and Interdisciplinary Journal of Technology, Culture and Education*, 11, 12-26.
- Carter, E. W., Draper, J., McNaughton, D., & Beukelman, D. (2010). Making school matter: Supporting meaningful secondary experiences for adolescents who use AAC. *Transition strategies for adolescents and young adults who use AAC*, 69-88.
- Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Melekoglu, M. A., & Kurkowski, C. (2007). Peer supports as an alternative to individually assigned paraprofessionals in inclusive high school classrooms. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 32, 213-227.
- Finke, E. H., McNaughton, D. B., & Drager, K. D. (2009). "All Children Can and Should Have the Opportunity to Learn": General Education Teachers' Perspectives on Including Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who Require AAC. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 25, 110-122.
- Glaser, R., & Chi, M. T. H. (1988). The nature of expertise: Overview. *The nature of expertise*.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.
- Kleinert, H., Towles-Reeves, E., Quenemoen, R., Thurlow, M., Fluegge, L., Weseman, L., & Kerbel, A. (2015). Where students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are taught: Implications for general curriculum access. *Exceptional Children*, 81, 312-328.
- McLeskey, J., Landers, E., Williamson, P., & Hoppey, D. (2012). Are we moving toward educating students with disabilities in less restrictive settings?. *The Journal of Special Education*, 46, 131-140.
- Morningstar, M. E., Zagana, A. L., Uyanik, H., Xie, J., & Mahal, S. (2017). Implementing college and career readiness: Critical dimensions for youth with severe disabilities. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 42, 187-204.
- Ruppar, A. L., Dymond, S. K., & Gaffney, J. S. (2011). Teachers' perspectives on literacy instruction for students with severe disabilities who use augmentative and alternative communication. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 36, 100-111.
- Soto, G., Müller, E., Hunt, P., & Goetz, L. (2001). Critical issues in the inclusion of students who use augmentative and alternative communication: An educational team perspective. *Augmentative and Alternative Communication*, 17, 62-72.

Thank you!