

M3-S8: Collaborating to Support Specially Designed Instruction Across Learning Environments

CLH	<p>Hello, Gina and welcome listeners! This is Session 8 in Module 3 of your TALE Academy learning experience, Collaborating to Support Specially Designed Instruction Across Learning Environments.</p> <p>We're going to be thinking about how classroom teachers and special education teachers can work together as a team, both in person and remotely.</p> <p>Let's start with a scenario. Meet Terri and Dylan. They need to understand each others' jobs.</p>
GK	<p>Terri is a special education teacher who is new to the district. This school year, they will be working with Dylan, a general education teacher, providing integrated services in a co-taught inclusive environment. This will be the first experience for both teachers implementing this particular model.. Terri has provided primary instruction in a self-contained classroom setting and incorporates many high-leverage practices into their teaching. Dylan is familiar with the term "specially designed instruction," referred to by the acronym SDI. He assumes Terri will be a good resource for helping him understand how SDI will be used to help students with disabilities access the general education curriculum and work toward their IEP, or individualized education program, goals.</p>
CLH	<p>At their first meeting, both teachers discuss how they approach teaching and what specific instructional practices they use. Terri shares their work with high leverage practices and specially designed instruction. Dylan shares that he has just started to learn about universal design for learning. Both agree that it seems like a lot and are unsure how they all fit together when planning and delivering lessons. They agree to take some time to examine the components of each of these instructional practices, how they relate to one another, and what it means for their lesson planning for both in-person and remote learning environments.</p> <p>Terri and Dylan's story isn't unique. As we achieve truly inclusive classrooms, it is critical that general education and special education teachers learn how to work in collaboration. As Barb Casey described in a May 2019 post on the ASCD website, "We must create time for special educators and general educators to get to know each other's strengths and dispel the mysteries that lie behind their separate doors. Each discipline has strategies and practices that improve student learning."</p>
GK	<p>That is so true. The TALE Academy's core curriculum is designed primarily for the general education teacher who leads core instruction. This session has the general education teacher, or Dylan in the scenario, in mind. We'll focus on helping the general education teacher understand specially designed instruction, which is led by the special education teacher. We'll explore how to ensure effective collaboration</p>

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	<p>between general and special education teachers later in this watch in the section devoted to Collaboration for Inclusion and Student Success.</p>
CLH	<p>So, we should probably answer the burning question, what exactly is Specially Designed Instruction?</p> <p>Let's start with the law. New York State, following IDEA regulations, defines specially designed instruction as:</p> <p>"adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs that result from the student's disability; and [ensuring] access of the student to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the education standards that apply to all students."</p>
GK	<p>Moving beyond compliance and into the classroom, the New York State Education Department Office of Special Education Partnership provides the following parameters for the delivery of Specially Designed Instruction, which we're going to start calling SDI::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed and monitored by a special education teacher and delivered directly or through co-teaching by a special education teacher• Offers individualized instruction to address the unique needs of each student with a disability and is more intensive than the instruction usually provided in general education• Provides instruction that is systematically, intentionally, and meaningfully planned and organized• Specified in each student's individualized education program (IEP)• Provides adaptations to content, methodology, or delivery of instruction• Allows students with disabilities to participate in the general education curriculum as well as extracurricular school-related activities with peers both with and without disabilities
CLH	<p>The United Federation of Teachers also notes that specially designed instruction can address any area of individual need, including academic, behavioral, social, communication, health, and functional needs. It can be provided in any location, including multiple locations during the course of the school day, as long as the location is consistent with the student's IEP and the student's least restrictive environment and it is provided by educators with expertise in progress monitoring, data-based decision-making, and individualizing and intensifying instruction. SDI does not lower standards or expectations for the student.</p>

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	Gina, how does SDI relate to core instruction?
GK	<p>SDI happens in multiple forms, locations, and modalities, based on the student's IEP. In inclusive classrooms, you may hear the phrase "push-in services." What this means is that the special education teacher joins the general education classroom to provide individualized instruction and support to students in acquiring specific skills they do not have but need in order to access and progress in the general education curriculum. SDI is individualized, must be delivered by a qualified special education teacher or related service provider, and delivered in the least restrictive environment.</p> <p>Students who receive SDI need individualized instruction in order to maintain adequate rates of progress. They may also receive instructional and testing accommodations.</p> <p>When a special education teacher "pushes in," the goal is that their instruction is aligned with the core instruction. If the inclusive classroom is using universal design for learning, or UDL, then the special education teacher will work with the UDL strategies in order to individualize instruction for their students. The priority, however, is the needs of the student.</p>
CLH	<p>Yeah, it's important to recall that universal design for learning (UDL) isn't a curriculum, it's a method that guides the design, instructional goals, assessments, methods, and materials that can be customized and adjusted to make learning accessible to all students. UDL is an approach using multiple means of engagement (the why of learning), representation (the what of learning), and action and expression (the how of learning). For more on this, follow the links in the podcast transcript.</p>
GK	<p>Now let's look at the value of TALE for delivering SDI. As a reminder, TALE stands for teaching across learning environments.</p> <p>Dylan and Terri offer their students a choice board after reading the classroom novel. Students can choose from a list of activities for each of the following learning preferences: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. The activities include developing a PowerPoint, writing newspaper stories on the characters of the book, choosing different songs that represent the tone and theme of the book, and creating a storyboard. They also planned for remote learning by providing instruction for each platform and text accommodations in the choice board. For example, if a student chooses to create a PowerPoint, they will be taught to share that remotely. If a student chooses to write a newspaper story, they can create a blog post on the characters of the book. If a student chooses songs that represent the characters, they can upload those into a shared music library for the class. If a student chooses to create a storyboard, an online version can be created in PowerPoint or another platform used by the class.</p>
CLH	<p>This approach helps reduce stigma for all students, particularly students receiving SDI, as everyone is engaging in a unique learning experience based on their choices.</p>

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	For the student receiving SDI, the special education teacher will ensure the student's choice works in conjunction with the requirements of the student's IEP.
GK	Dylan and Terri assess the students to determine their skill levels in reading decoding and comprehension. When assessing remotely, they create chat rooms so either of them can assess students individually. This data will inform them of the type of text and reading level each student will be able to access. As both have used explicit instruction in their lessons before, they decide to continue that practice for whole-group reading instruction. When the students break into small reading groups, Terri provides more intensive instruction to students with significant limitations in reading.
CLH	<p>Now let's look at collaboration for inclusion and student success.</p> <p>The success of SDI and the student receiving SDI is dependent upon many factors, one of which is effective collaboration between their general education and special education teachers. We know that the training for general education and special education is different, and teachers will arrive at the collaboration with different skill sets. For example, a 2007 study found that in teacher-preparation programs, general education teachers took an average of just 1.5 courses that focused on inclusion or special education, whereas their special education peers took an average of 11 courses on inclusion and special education. On the flip side, general education teachers take a broader range of courses and, therefore, teaching skills and strategies. Bringing these skill sets together for the benefit of our students is what collaboration is all about.</p>
GK	<p>The National Center for Learning Disabilities affirms this integrative approach to collaboration:</p> <p>No single educator should be responsible for holding the expertise in the infinite presentations of learner variability. Further, students work with multiple adults within a school building. Collaboration creates safe conditions for students and educators to share knowledge and collectively problem-solve ... Collaboration can bring together teachers with different perspectives and different knowledge to meet learner variability. For example, a general education teacher collaborating with a literacy specialist can efficiently identify strategies to support students with reading abilities that are above or below grade level.</p>
CLH	<p>The key to effective collaboration is to begin by building your skills and capacity for collaboration. Before you try to solve student challenges together, learn how to work together in general. The National Center for Learning Disabilities provides a list of core skills that both general education and special education teachers can learn to ground their collaborations.</p> <p>Teachers demonstrate preparedness when they do the following:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify a facilitator. This person may be the team leader, or you may opt to rotate facilitation responsibilities. ● Set an agenda ahead of time and identify meeting goals. ● Communicate pre-work, ideally no more than 30 minutes' worth, to maximize collaboration.
GK	<p>Teachers demonstrate active listening when they do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be present. Silence cell phones, close laptops, and focus only on the meeting agenda and goals. ● Allow others to fully finish their thoughts. ● Follow up with questions.
CLH	<p>Teachers demonstrate the process of summarizing when they do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As the meeting goes on, summarize what you're hearing (or think you're hearing!) from your colleagues. ● As the meeting concludes, summarize next steps, ownership, and any deadlines for follow-through. Identify any unresolved topics for the next meeting. Don't forget to revisit these next steps during future meetings to ensure follow-through.
GK	<p>Teachers demonstrate questioning when they do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approach colleagues with an inquiry mindset. Ask questions, particularly open-ended and clarifying ones. ● Check your own understanding of your colleagues' views by paraphrasing. <p>Teachers demonstrate delivering when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Deliver ideas and solutions with evidence.
CLH	<p>Teachers demonstrate integrating when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synthesize colleagues' ideas to arrive at an actionable solution. ● Use input and feedback to strengthen initial ideas. <p>Teachers demonstrate empathizing when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assume the positive intent of others.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that everyone’s voice is equally heard and that everyone is contributing.
GK	<p>Now it’s your turn!</p> <p>What’s up next? The choice board and activities in this session will provide you with an opportunity to gain insight into specially designed instruction, which is the primary instructional work of special education teachers.</p> <p>The goal of the TALE Academy is to help teachers rethink education so that everyone—students, families, educators, school leaders, and communities—all have the opportunity to succeed. You’ve just added another tool to your toolbox when you collaborate to support specially designed instruction.</p> <p>Thanks for listening.</p> <p>Bye!</p>
CLH	Bye!