A Shared Path to Success:

Instructional Planning to Meet the Needs of All Learners

Chancellor's Principal Conference 2013

Modified Three Levels of Text Protocol

Purpose:
To deepen understanding of a text and explore implications for participants' work.

Facilitation:
Stick to the time limits. Each round takes a maximum of 5 minutes. Emphasize the need to watch air time during the brief "group response" segment. Complete 3 rounds so each person has an opportunity to share his or her selected passage. Groups should be no more than 3 people.

Roles:
Facilitator/timekeeper

Process:

1. Sit in a circle and identify a facilitator/timekeeper.
2. Participants review the text and identify what's new, what's familiar, and a passage (and a couple of back-ups) that they feel may have important implications for their work. (5 minutes)
3. A round consists of:
    a. One person uses 3 minutes to:
       Level 1: Read aloud the passage she/he has selected.
       Level 2: Say what she/he thinks about the passage (interpretation, connection to past experiences, etc.)
       Level 3: Say what she/he sees as the implications for his/her work.
    b. The group responds for up to 2 minutes to what has been said.
4. Complete rounds so each person shares his or her selected passage.

Modified Success Analysis Protocol for Malik Case Study

Purpose:
To analyze the practices described in the case study that supported Malik to achieve academic success in the Least Restrictive Environment.

Facilitation:
The facilitator's role is to help the group to keep focused on identifying best practices that supported Malik and how these may differ from current school based practices.

Roles:
Facilitator/timekeeper

Process:

1. Read and reflect on the case study about Malik. As you read, identify the systems, structures, and practices that were "best practices" in supporting a student who was struggling. For one of the best practices you select, note what it was about the practice that made it so successful. Be sure to answer the question, "What made this work different from other experiences with students who are similar to Malik?" (10 minutes)
2. In groups of 3, each person shares the best practice they identified and why it was so successful. (8 minutes)
3. The group analyzes what they have heard from each of the presenters, offering additional insight about how the practices that were identified are different from other practices. (8 minutes)
4. Debrief as a group and conclude based on your grade band: "When a student struggles with reading, what must happen for him or her to be successful academically?" (4 minutes)

Case Study

Malik's mom and dad knew something was different about him. He was charismatic, active—and different.

Elementary School: As a preschooler, Malik could not trace or write letters and numbers, and he had difficulty with adaptive skills such as dressing and tying his shoes. By kindergarten he did not have the ability (or desire) to write, count, or recite letters/sounds, but he enjoyed going to school. His verbal skills were developmentally appropriate, and he was very social. He had excellent gross motor skills but poor fine motor skills. In first grade Malik still continued to enjoy school, but he was not able to retain knowledge of letters/sounds and their relationships. While he was not able to read formally, he enjoyed looking at nonfiction books—especially ones about animals. His parents were aware of the challenges he was having and made efforts to help him at home. They tried various reading/phonics programs such as "Hooked on Phonics," but none of them helped Malik. He enjoyed being read to and was able to retain information from books that were read to him from all genres, both on grade level and above.

In second grade, Malik was reading on a K/1 level and still struggled to read independently. Despite this, his school provided numerous opportunities for Malik to experience academic success because they used these common Tier I curricular, instructional, and assessment practices across all classrooms:

- Clear curricular goals were focused on the essential understandings and skills of the discipline.
- Units of study were mentally and affectively engaging to learners, with topics that were inquiry-based and often integrated the disciplines.
- Expectations for learning were clear, and instruction included the workshop model for reading and writing as well as accountable talk for listening and discussion.
- Students were taught how to meaningfully collaborate, with scaffolding for engaging in discussion, constructing thoughts, and asking questions.
- Small group instruction was used in all classrooms and content areas for differentiated instruction including re-teaching, pre-teaching, and enrichment.
- Student tasks and projects connected with students' lives and world, dealing with rich and profound ideas that mattered to them.
- High expectations challenged ALL students, calling on them to use what they learned in interesting and important ways.

Malik was able to engage in high-level thinking at grade level and above, especially when he was given opportunities to listen, speak, debate, and discuss. The real-world tasks and projects allowed him to contribute meaningfully and provided him with the motivation to persevere when he struggled with independent literacy and math tasks, or in keeping his things organized. Malik naturally leveraged his social skills to participate in class during collaborative work. Outside the classroom, he was known also for his kinesthetic strengths—he had good friends, and on the playground he was known for being the fastest runner and the most agile climber.

Despite this foundation, Malik still was not able to make enough progress in his independent literacy and math skills, and at the end of second grade his teacher and parents met to discuss a referral for an evaluation for special education services. Malik did see a reading specialist for intensive reading instruction throughout the year, but he was not able to "crack the code." Malik was found to have short-term memory deficit, slow working memory, grapho-motor dysfunction, high distractibility level, and mild ADHD. It was determined that a 504 Plan (testing and classroom accommodations) along with continued small group instruction in the general education class and outside tutoring would be the most appropriate support for Malik. This was provided to him for the rest of the year. At the end of second grade, his standardized assessment scores in literacy were still low—in the 18th percentile. Because of his strong social skills and high listening comprehension skills, it was determined that it would be detrimental to Malik to leave him back. It was determined that he should continue to access grade-level content in third grade (using the same strategies and accommodations) and receive extra support through small group instruction in the general education classroom to develop his basic literacy skills.

In third grade Malik was reading independently on a first grade level. The teacher, noticing the gap between his high listening comprehension and low reading comprehension, would sometimes pair him with a strong reader in the class to do shared readings during independent reading time. This was because his comprehension was so high that the books he could read independently were not rigorous enough for him; with shared reading, he could engage in meaningful book talk/discussions even more frequently than he did in second grade. To support Malik's acquisition of independent reading skills, he was provided pull-out services with a literacy specialist, both one-on-one and small group. Writing organization and spelling were also difficult for him, and he received targeted support for this as well through process-oriented graphic organizers and compensatory skill instruction. He was also introduced to Spell Check and taught how and when to use it. When Malik was given opportunities to share what he knew orally, his ideas and expressions were at or above grade level.

Malik's third grade teachers continued to leverage and celebrate his strengths. He was a strong class leader, so he would often be assigned to play the role of leader during group projects so that he could develop his organizational skills. The classroom had inquiry-based "centers" to meet the needs of all of the different learning styles in the classroom. For example, visual and kinesthetic learners were able to apply math skills by creating replicas of various architectural structures in a center with blocks and books on the topic. Malik was particularly talented at this, and his structures would be displayed for other classes to view. He enjoyed having responsibility and being part of the classroom community, for example by taking care of the class pets. Teachers in the building recognized his extensive knowledge of animals and would consult with him about their class pets.

In reading and writing, Malik began to make slow but steady progress with the help of the literacy specialist. He was given strategies to help him track words while reading, one line at a time, using an index card to help him focus and eliminate visual distractions on the page. A key accommodation for Malik to access grade-level text was to have texts recorded for him to listen to and read along. This was coupled with vocabulary instruction that focused on word families, morphology (word origins), and morphological features (endings and comparatives), and that was always taught in conjunction with grade-level content in social studies and science. Malik continued to receive small group reading instruction. In his "book baggie," he would have books on his current reading level—both fiction and informational—as well as books that were above his reading level (informational) yet matched his interests. His 504 accommodations allowed him extra time and a separate location for all classroom assessments and state exams.

While the staff worked hard to provide individualized strategies and build a diverse and inclusive classroom community, Malik was still very aware of his challenges. He expressed sadness over his inability to read chapter books like his peers and from time to time shut down. His parents explained the multiple intelligences theory to him and helped him to identify the "intelligences" that were unique to him, and were already being celebrated in class. The report cards Malik received were narrative and allowed for teachers to present and value Malik's strengths beyond the reporting of scores and letter grades.

Middle School: Year after year, Malik continued to make gains. By the end of sixth grade, Malik was reading on grade level. The support he was given had provided him the opportunity to learn compensatory strategies to minimize the impact of his disability on his learning and maximize his access to grade-level content. As a result of rigorous instruction and cognitively demanding tasks and discussion, Malik was able to leverage his strengths and succeed. His success can be attributed to using a strengths-based mindset in identifying interventions and supports, in contrast to remediating his disability, which is a lifelong condition that cannot be cured. Additionally, it is important to note that Malik's education exemplified a minimizing of the impact of disability and maximizing the opportunity to participate with nondisabled peers.

High School: In subsequent years, Malik had his successes and his challenges. The first year of high school was particularly difficult for Malik, and he felt he just couldn't do it. Upon meeting with teachers, his parents discovered that they were not giving him his accommodations (separate location, extra time, recordings of texts, access to Spell Check, and chunked text). Once his teachers understood the accommodations and implemented them properly, Malik experienced success—ultimately graduating with a Regents diploma and six college credits. Malik attended college, with a 504 Plan detailing his accommodations in place, and successfully graduated. He is now a personal finance and investment banker and plays rugby. To this day he leverages the compensatory skills he was taught and developed during his school years and well as the accommodations, especially Spell Check and close reading, that allowed him to engage at a high level.

Action Plan

Based on what you learned and experienced today, how would you describe the desired state for your school? Be specific.		
In order to reach the desired state, what are your first steps?	How will you build support for change? How will you create buy-in?	What are the bright spots? What are the promising practices that are emerging?
What is the biggest challenge you anticipate? What is your plan when this occurs?	What support will you need from your network to reach the desired state?	How will you know if you are making progress toward your desired state?

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Creating an Inclusive School

Information for Principals

2012-13

DSWDELL
A Shared Path to Success

Creating an Inclusive School

Every student must be on a path that will lead to strong post-secondary outcomes of college and career readiness, and independent living. Engagement in rigorous curriculum, full access to community schools and classrooms, and the appropriate level of services and accommodations will help ensure that every student is on this ***Shared Path to Success***.

School leaders know that every school is different, but all NYC schools have the common goal of raising student achievement. One way to work toward this goal is to develop an inclusive school culture where all students are valued and taught to high standards.

This document is designed to provide principals with guidance and resources to support the creation of an inclusive school. After describing what we mean by "inclusive school culture" and explaining what these cultures can look like, this document offers a set of key strategies to help principals make their schools more inclusive, descriptions of the most common service delivery models in community schools and links to key resources to support this work.

Key Point

Inclusion begins with the assumption that every student is a member of a general education class. This is very different from what many remember as the "mainstreaming" model where students had to earn their way in to general education classes and were considered "extra" students.

What does it mean to develop an "inclusive school culture"?

The law tells us that students with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible. All available research states that students with and without disabilities experience greater success when educated together. The social and academic benefits of inclusion for all students have been documented. Inclusive school cultures have high expectations for all students, with and without disabilities, and create a variety of supports and structures to ensure access to the general education curriculum and all school activities.

Inclusive school cultures:

- Are committed to the goal of success for all students. The school leader models and ensures that inclusiveness is a school-wide belief system and it permeates all academic and nonacademic areas of the school community.

- Focus on high-quality curriculum and instruction. Teacher pedagogy is developed from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by a research-based common teaching framework and aligned to curricula, engaging and meeting the needs of all learners across classrooms. See Quality Review for additional information.

- View special education and other services as seamless; they do not exist as separate entities. Special education is a service, not a place.

- Ensure that the New York State and Common Core standards apply to all students regardless of their experiential background, learning differences, interests or aspirations. Students with a wide range of abilities may pursue multiple pathways to learn effectively, participate meaningfully and work toward attaining the curricular standards. Review the NYC Common Core Library for tasks designed with universally designed supports for students with disabilities as well as other resources. See Universal Design for Learning for specific lesson planning ideas on making all curricula accessible to students from the onset.

Key Point
It is critical to remember that supports and accommodations do not in any way alter the content that is being taught, and do not in any way decrease the rigor of what is being taught. Accommodations do not reduce learning or performance expectations. Instead an accommodation allows a student to have access to material in another medium or to demonstrate learning of content/skills in another way. This is different from modifications which change the content and lower the expectation of mastery.

- Use the Individualized Education Program (IEP) as a strategic planning document that is far-reaching in its impact. Identify students' unique needs and how the school will strategically address those needs; recognizing how specially designed instruction will be provided in the context of supporting students in accessing the general education curriculum and in reaching the same learning standards as non-disabled students. Guide the ways in which the special education resources of a school will be configured to meet the needs of the students with disabilities in that school. The CORe checklist is a tool for schools to develop special education service delivery models that are unique to the student and focus on increasing access to the general education curriculum in the student's "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE). Descriptions of special education services are found in Special Education Services as Part of a

Unified Delivery System, known as The Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities. Please also reference the LRE Checklist and the New York State website for definitions and examples of accommodations and modifications.[1]

- Ensure physical and emotional safety of all students by providing social, emotional, and behavioral supports that respect differences and view disability as one aspect of diversity. One way to facilitate this is through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), which promotes school-based prevention systems to improve student behavioral outcomes and build a positive school climate and culture, providing a multi-tiered operational framework for achieving these outcomes for all students.[2]

- Have a strategic, organized staff development approach as a potent strategy for school change and improvement.[3] Build professional development and planning meetings into the school schedule, and engage planning teams that include special educators and related service providers collaborating with general educators in purposeful, meaningful ways. Everyone's skill set and expertise must be valued, respected and leveraged.[4]

Key Point

When asked for the most important resource that they used to support innovative and inclusive instructional practices, school administrators' resounding answer was "time." Although time can be costly, successful school leaders built time into the school schedule for teachers to develop strong working relationships, for grade level meetings, for professional development, and for daily planning (Thomas Hehir, "Effective Inclusive Schools", 2012).

[1] Quality Review Indicators: 1.1, 1.3, 1.4
[2] Quality Review Indicators: 1.4
[3] Quality Review Indicators: 3.1, 4.1, 4.2
[4] Quality Review Indicators: 1.3, 2.2, 4.2

How can I be sure that my school is inclusive and that I am maximizing structures and strategies that facilitate this?

The checklist below can help. Also see "Is it an inclusive school?", Dr. Kathleen M. Whitbread's checklist reprinted from "The Inclusion Notebook", which is intended to prevent some of the common pitfalls in creating truly inclusive school communities; and consultant, author, advocate, and independent scholar Paula Kluth's Web site for examples of essential questions and other critical information and resources.

Does your school:

- ☑ **Use standards-based curriculum maps and effective lesson plans** that articulate specific learning goals and employ strategies to maximize student interest, engage student voice and critical thinking and gauge student understanding in all classes?[5]

- ☑ **Ensure effective collaboration** among general educators, special educators and related service providers including expecting that all come to the table having planned in advance? It is helpful if some collaborative planning time is dedicated to refining a lesson, where teachers make decisions about which strategies will maximize support for students to make progress based on thorough knowledge of individual students.[6]

- ☑ **Tap your related service providers** to provide classroom personnel with powerful strategies that can meet the needs of diverse learners? Schools should integrate related services into the classroom to the greatest extent possible, and as appropriate, so that the student remains a full member of the class community, learns skills in the same environment in which they will be applied, and does not miss important content, activities, etc. due to many "pull-outs."[7]

- ☑ **Develop a strong, interdisciplinary Pupil Personnel Team (PPT)** that meets regularly and is used as a think tank to best meet the needs of students with and without disabilities? Your School Implementation Team (SIT) can be a sub-group of this team. Effective PPTs usually include representatives from instructional (general and special education), clinical, and supervisory staff and may also include the school nurse, the attendance teacher, the dean, etc. A system should be put in place for teacher referrals to the team and for follow-up once a student is discussed and a plan put into place. This should be aligned with your school's Response to Intervention (RtI) plan, so that prior to any discussion of a referral for special education services the student has been discussed at the PPT, including progress monitoring, follow-up, and refining plans as needed.

[5] Quality Review Indicators: 1.1, 1.2, 2.2
[6] Quality Review Indicators: 4.2b, 1.3

- **Continually focus on school-wide pre-planning** that moves students with IEPs along the program continuum? For example, if a school has three 12:1 classes, an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class per grade and SETSS, think about what programming may look like in the future as students meet their goals and are able to move to more inclusive environments. Get the "Big Picture." Determine the pattern of special education services at each grade level. You can use the tools that are linked in the CORe checklist.[8]

- **Create parallel schedules** where general education and special education teachers are providing instruction in the same content area during the same periods, thereby greatly increasing the ability for fluidity between general education and special education settings? No student will miss instruction in a content area by being in another setting for that period. Parallel schedules can be used for students with and without disabilities, whenever flexible, leveled groupings are utilized for targeted instruction in any area.[9]

- **Provide ongoing professional development, coaching, and support** for general and special education teachers and other staff members—including specific and meaningful suggestions and feedback to help all teachers meet the challenges and reap the benefits of serving all students? Training may be included in the IEP in the section titled "Recommended Special Education Programs and Services" under the subheading "Supports for School Personnel on Behalf of the Student" when appropriate. General education teachers and other staff working with students with disabilities must be given the support and professional development needed in order to provide appropriate instruction to all students in their classrooms.[10]

- **Understand which service delivery models match individual student needs**? A clear understanding of the nature of services and how they align to support the unique needs of individual students will greatly enhance planning, allow all educators to make intentional service decisions for individual students and provide a clear picture of how student needs will be explicitly met. Please review the next section regarding some of the specific program and service delivery models.

- **Examine student needs individually**? This process should be reflected in the development of high-quality IEPs, with parents as equal partners, based on objective and measurable data that reflects the abilities and needs of the student. This process drives decisions for appropriate programs and services to effectively support student progress.

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[7] Quality Review Indicators: 1.3
[8] Quality Review Indicators: 3.1, 4.1, 4.2

☑ **Implement Flexible Programming?** To flexibly program students means simply to ensure that students' daily program meets their individual needs. Rather than "bucketing" students into specific program categories we need to ensure that each student's program matches his/her strengths and needs and makes full use of all of the program and service options that are available to us. Some students will continue to require full-time services, while others will move into part-time and/or less restrictive environments. Students' programs and services must be individually determined on the basis of each student's abilities and needs. Click here for examples of templates.[11]

☑ **Examine staffing?** Teachers can frequently be scheduled more flexibly and do not need to be boxed into one particular service delivery model. In other words, rather than thinking of a teacher as a "self-contained teacher" or a "SETSS teacher," this teacher may be a "special education teacher,"able to provide special education services in multiple ways. In addition, more and more teachers are dually (or triply) certified, making them even more versatile. It is important to understand licensing and certification requirements and collective bargaining agreements. To view licensing requirements, click here or see NYC BEDS Training.[12]

What are the most common service delivery models in community schools?

Special Class (SC)

A Special Class (SC) is a class consisting of students with disabilities who have been grouped together because of similarity of individual needs for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a self-contained setting. A Special Class requires that the students receive their primary instruction separate from their non-disabled peers.

Key Point

It is important to remember that any time a student is removed from the general education setting this action needs to be justified in the IEP. Special classes can be offered for one period of the school day, multiple periods, or all periods, depending on the intensity of the needs of the student.

[9] Quality Review Indicators: 1.3

Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT)

An Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) model includes two teachers: a general education teacher and a special education teacher who jointly provide instruction to a class that includes both students with and without disabilities.

The maximum number of students with disabilities that can be on the class roster of a class where ICT services are provided in New York City is 12 or 40% (whichever number is lower). The total number of students includes any student with a disability in that class, regardless of whether that student has been recommended for ICT services. ICT can be offered for one period, multiple periods, or all periods depending on the needs of the student.

Sometimes school administrators fall into the trap of thinking that because there are two teachers in the room, all of the struggling students should be in this class. In fact that strategy can be very detrimental. Rather, the class composition needs to be as heterogeneous as possible, including very advanced learners, in order for ICT to be a successful model.

Also, ICT teachers must be provided with sufficient planning time. There are several ways to implement an effective co-teaching model. In some cases, the general education teacher will plan and create an outline of the lesson, and the special education teacher will add accommodations. Regarding the execution of the lessons, teachers can literally co-teach a lesson together, they can take turns teaching (while both remain actively engaged in the execution of the lesson), they can work with small groups simultaneously, etc. There is no one set way, which is all the more reason why well thought out lessons using the expertise of both teachers is critical. See Administrative Considerations for Successful Co-Teaching as a tool.

Key Point
Thoughtful staffing of your ICT classes is critical. It is essential to try not to match a very experienced teacher with a very novice teacher except under unusual circumstances because all of the students in the class need to perceive that they have two teachers of equal status, not one lead teacher and one assistant. Beyond this, drawing on teachers' strengths and making sure that they complement each other is ideal. These teachers will be spending a great deal of time together and need to develop a shared responsibility for all of the students in the class as well as a sound working relationship. It is also important to choose teachers who want to work together.

Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS)

Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) combines the services of Consultant Teacher and Resource Room and provides specially designed and/or supplemental instruction to support the participation of the student with a disability in the general education classroom and/or consultation to the student's general education teacher. These services may be provided within the general education classroom or in a separate location, and may be direct or indirect (see below).

SETSS may be provided in any combination for a minimum of three hours per week and a maximum of 50% of a student's school day, depending on the needs of the student.

When SETSS is provided in a general education classroom, the special education teacher can work directly with a group of students, or indirectly by consulting with the teacher outside of class time. Either way the student with the recommendation of SETSS benefits from accommodations that are made and supports that are put in place in order to ensure access to and full engagement with the curriculum.

Some planning teams have found it helpful to use ARIS Connect, Dropbox or Google Docs in order to co-plan lessons after curriculum mapping has taken place. These are effective tools for sharing information in a protected environment when face time is not sufficient.

Key Point

SETSS can occur in the classroom or in a separate location and can provide direct services (services that are provided directly to students) or indirect services (consultant services that are provided to the general education teachers). SETSS may occur in any combination of these services.

For research-validated interventions for students with disabilities, you may refer to the following sources:

- The What Works Clearinghouse promotes informed educational decision-making through a set of user-friendly databases and reports that provide high-quality reviews of the effectiveness of replicable educational interventions.
- The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY) provides a continually updated database that allows you to browse by topic, age or grade level, or key word.
- Building the Legacy: IDEA 2004 provides more details about requirements of federal special education law through a series of brief video clips.

For additional information and resources, see the Shared Path to Success and the NYC DOE Intranet.

“Inclusion begins not with the assumption that students have to earn their way into the classroom with their behavior or skills, it begins with the right of every child to be in the mainstream of education, perhaps with modifications, adaptations, and support. Full inclusion requires teachers to think about all aspects of their classrooms—pedagogy, curriculum, and classroom climate.”

Mara Sapon-Shevin, Professor of Inclusive Education from Syracuse University