

The Changing Curricular Context for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Developing 21st Century Skills

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Goals of the Session

- Develop a working understanding of college, career and community readiness (CCCR)
- Discuss the relationship between 21st century and functional skills
- Discuss how supports, scaffolds, and AT can be used to develop 21st century skills



“...**21st century skills** refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed... to be critically important to success in today’s world, particularly in collegiate programs and modern careers... 21st century skills can be applied in all academic subject areas, and in all educational, career, and civic settings throughout a student’s life”.

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What is College, Career and Community Readiness (CCCR)?

Changing Curricular Paradigm for SWSCD

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How Did We Get Here?

Early 1970s

- Adapting infant/early childhood curriculum for students with the most significant disabilities of all ages

1980s

- Rejected "developmental model"
- Functional, life skills curriculum emerged

1990s

- Also: social inclusion focus
- Also: self determination focus
- Assistive technology

2000s

- General curriculum access (academic content)
- Plus earlier priorities (functional, social, self determination)
- Digitally accessible materials

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Presume Competence!

Viewing students through the lens of a disability label may increase the likelihood of misjudging capabilities and barring some students from opportunities to learn what other students their age are learning (Jorgensen, McSheehan & Sonnenmeier, 2007)

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Issues with IQ testing

"We will always need some way of making intelligent decisions about people. We're not all the same; we have different skills and abilities. What's wrong is thinking of intelligence as a fixed, innate ability, instead of something that develops in a context."

Diane F. Halpern, PhD
APA President-elect
2003



Lessons Learned

Students with significant cognitive disabilities...

- Can, need and have learned
 - academic content, functional skills and activities
- Benefit from instruction in
 - actual settings and functional activities
- Academic content should be taught in a progression rather than a menu approach
- Need to learn skills and concepts, not just activities



What is College, Career and Community Readiness (CCCR)?

What it Means for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities?



Career Readiness for All

- Workforce Preparedness
- Sample pathways include:
 - Apprenticeship programs
 - Community College certification
 - Job training programs
 - On the job training
 - Vocational technical institutes



College and Career Ready for All...

- Components of college readiness for typical high school students
 - Key Cognitive Strategies
 - Problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, critical thinking
 - Key Content
 - Full Access to the general curriculum to maximize life long learning
 - Academic Behaviors
 - Self monitoring, time management, using information resources, social interaction skills,
 - Contextual Skills and Awareness
 - Seeking help with admissions, procedures, group interaction skills



CCCR and Alternate Assessment

- Well developed academic skills for continued life-long learning
- Social and communication skills needed for working with others as essential for community ready
- Recognizing the need for and seeking assistance when needed
- Problem solving using academic skills

Kearns, Kleinert, Harrison, Shepherd-Jones, Hall, & Jones (2011). What Does College and Career Ready Mean for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.



Group Processing Time

- How do the past approaches in sped affect our view of college, career and community readiness for students with disabilities?
- What does 'college, career and community ready' mean for students with disabilities?
- How can this information help teachers support students with diverse needs?
- How can this information ensure better access for all students?

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Why is Communicative Competence Important to College, Career and Community Readiness (CCCR)?

Communicative Competence

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Intent

MODE

Listener

Comprehension



Successful Communication

Language – implies standardization, rules, and *symbols*; implying mutual understanding by the individuals who share knowledge of the language system

Communication – implies a much broader set of *output behaviors and combinations of output behaviors which may or may not be of a standardized form*, but which convey intent and are understood and “readable” by the listener

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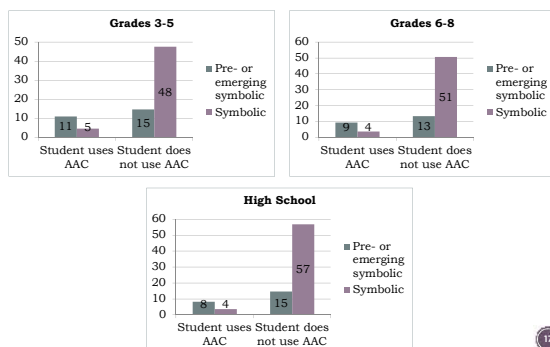
Communicative Competence

CONTEXT

- Emerging data showing that students who need communication support are not receiving it.
- Emerging data showing that students are not developing symbolic language across grades/years in school.



Use of AAC across Grade Bands in NCSC States



Group Processing Time

How Do We Prepare:

- Students
 - How does communicative competence relate to being 'college, career and community ready' for students with disabilities?
- Teachers
 - What information/help do teachers need to support students with diverse needs?
 - How can this information ensure better access for all students?





Group Processing Time

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How are the CCSS related to the College, Career and Community readiness?

Teaching the Standards

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Common Core State Standards

- Goal of CCSS
 - students will graduate with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in workforce and in academic college courses.
- The Common Core State Standards can be found at the following website: <http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>
 - Also, available via an app on your smart phone.

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Common Core and SWD

- “Students with disabilities...must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers.”

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What can we do to ensure a balance?

- How can we incorporate functional and academic approaches to best meet students' needs?
- How do we “define” functional skills in the 21st century?
- How do we ensure that we **really** have high expectations?

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ELA Literacy for All Students

- demonstrate independence
- build strong content knowledge
- respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- comprehend as well as critique
- value evidence
- use technology and digital media strategically and capably
- understand other perspectives and cultures

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Group Processing Time

▪ What strategies can be used on an individual/ building/district level to promote CCR?

▪ Students

- What is “Functional” in the 21st Century?
- How can the use of supports/scaffolds/AT promote 21st Century Skills?

▪ Teachers

- What information/help do teachers need to ensure student development of 21st Century Skills?
- How can this information ensure better access for all students?

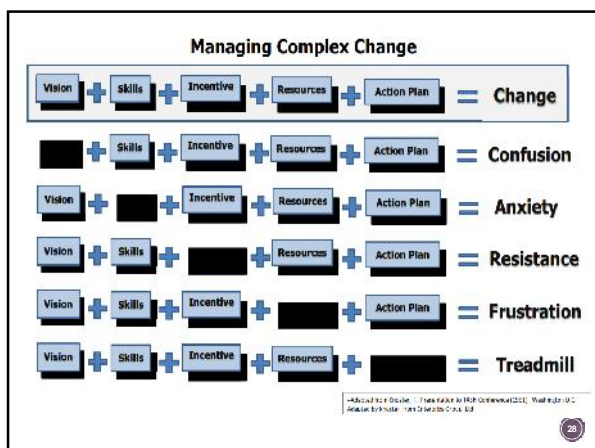


Final Thoughts on CCSS

“One of the most promising elements of common academic standards for students with disabilities...is that they offer explicit connections from one set of skills to another”

Christina A. Samuels
EdWeek.org





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