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ED 3602

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Accommodating Individual Needs

**1) Compare and Contrast the IPP Process and Challenges in...**

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| Elementary Schools | Similarities | Junior-Senior High Schools |
| 1) A big challenge with IPPs is assessing whether assistance enables independence or creates dependence  2)In the IPP process, it is important to explore options for accommodations to choose which works best  3) Because having an IPP is a new experience for an elementary student, the purpose for it should be clear so that he/she understands that it is a plan to enable, not isolate | 1) The IPP process should be student-focused and constantly assessed for necessary re-adjustments  2) When developing IPPs, plans for transition should always be included  3) IPPs require inclusive environments to increase success of implementation | 1) The IPP should now address student’s emerging independence and be re-adjusted where necessary  2) The IPP should re-assess accommodations based on progress in existing conditions and advances in assistive technologies |

2) 3 different challenges that confront teachers when attempting to implement an IPP in junior/senior high settings are larger class sizes, involvement of multiple teachers, and more complex curriculum demands.

Larger class sizes in middle and high schools create difficulties for a teacher trying to implement an IPP because there are more students with different learning needs who also require assistance. This may limit the teacher’s availability with the student who has an IPP and prevent its full implementation. If the IPP is not fully implemented or re-adjusted, then the student’s progress is greatly hindered. Being able to differentiate in a classroom, regardless of the size, is a strategy that can overcome this challenge and benefit both students and staff. According to Chapter 6 in the IPP Manual, differentiation involves “adjusting instruction [and] [assessment] to support individual strengths and areas of need” (p. 9). By collecting information about students’ readiness level and learning preferences, identifying important learning concepts, and choosing effective instructional strategies for student practice, students can learn and demonstrate their understanding to the best of their abilities, despite being in a large class.

In Middle and High Schools, the involvement of multiple teachers can be challenging when implementing an IPP because some teachers may have limited experience in exceptionalities and adapted programming as they are specialized in specific curricular areas. This greatly impacts the progress of the student and poses problems for the staff attempting to fully implement the IPP. If other teachers do not promote the goals and objectives of a student’s IPP in their classroom, then the students’ progress is limited. A strategy that can overcome this challenge is to have all school staff committed to create an inclusive environment. This can be done by encouraging all teachers to build their professional capacity and understanding of exceptional learners. Also, by providing teachers with opportunities to communicate with students and parents and by maintaining communication between various members of the learning team, the IPP can be fully implemented for the benefit of both students and school staff.

As a student with an IPP enters Middle/High School, curricular demands become more complex. Students are required to perform at a higher level because it is assumed that they have obtained essential skills and knowledge in elementary school. This transition can be challenging for students if necessary IPP re-adjustments are not made. It is therefore important to re-assess the goals, objectives, and accommodations in a student’s IPP in order to match the current learning outcomes, progress in existing conditions, and advances in assistive technologies. Besides re-assessment, another strategy teachers can use to overcome the challenge of more complex curricular demands is to practice differentiated instruction and assessment. This will give students with IPPs the best opportunity to learn according to his or her needs and abilities and demonstrate their understanding to teachers.

3) I believe that it is sound educational practice to place students with significant learning needs within inclusive classrooms at the junior/senior high level for the following two reasons:

1. *To help them realize their full learning potential and give them a sense of independence.*

The isolation of students with significant learning needs will only serve to highlight their inadequacies, as well as create dependence on teachers and staff. These students may already feel isolated enough by having to need accommodations, what more if they are alienated from inclusive classrooms? By placing students with learning needs in a supportive environment, their focus is diverted to achieving their full learning potential. This truly fosters a sense of independence which is necessary for when they move forward in life from junior/senior high school.

2. *To gain essential social and interpersonal skills by interacting with a variety of different peers in an inclusive classroom.*

Developing social and interpersonal skills will positively impact students with significant learning needs, especially as they transition out of junior/senior high settings. For example, learning useful conflict resolution skills can help them overcome difficult situations that they may encounter. Such knowledge and skills cannot be acquired by being isolated, which is why it is crucial to place students with significant learning needs within inclusive classrooms that help them to become not only effective learners, but individuals as well.