Inclusionary Practices and Systems:

EMBEDDED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN GENERAL EDUCATION

WHAT IS EMBEDDED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN GENERAL EDUCATION?

Embedded academic instruction is a teaching method that integrates individualized, explicit instruction of academic content into the routines and activities of the general education classroom (Bowman & Taub, 2021). Embedded academic instruction can be used across grade levels to target a variety of academic concepts and has been used to teach a wide range of students. In addition, embedded instruction can be implemented by a variety of staff and peers, making this a versatile teaching strategy.

While it is most beneficial for instruction to occur during natural teaching opportunities, embedded instruction for students with more complex needs can also take place during transitions or breaks within the general education classroom.

WHY IS EMBEDDED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN GENERAL EDUCATION IMPORTANT? WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES?

Embedded academic instruction is crucial for students, particularly those with disabilities, as it promotes a more natural and holistic learning experience. Incorporating short, frequent opportunities for instruction throughout a student's day offers personalized and meaningful opportunities to develop essential skills in a real-world context. Research highlights the effectiveness of embedded instruction in acquisition and maintenance of skills, improving outcomes for a variety of students with disabilities and emphasizing the need for a flexible and contextually relevant approach to teaching (Jimenez & Kamei, 2015).

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- For successful embedded instruction, collaboration is key.
- Review the student's target objectives and daily schedule to determine the activities and routines that would provide meaningful learning opportunities
- Consider who will be implementing the embedded instruction. This can be a special educator, general educator, paraeducator or even a peer.
- Collect and analyze your data frequently to determine progress and make data-based instructional decisions.

CASE STUDY: LOWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Lowell Elementary School serves a diverse student population in Seattle. Lowell's population includes 78% students of Color furthest from educational justice, including 40% of students eligible for multilingual supports and 21% of students eligible for special education services across a continuum of service pathways. As an "early adopter" school for the Seattle Public Schools inclusionary practices initiative, they have been working with Novak Education to anchor classroom instruction on Universal Design for Learning principles and Restorative Practices. Their data-based decision-making and adult culture of collective efficacy have resulted in increased attendance and academic outcomes, ensuring all students at Lowell have access to robust tiered systems of support. Lowell has also been committed to flexible service delivery to embed academic instruction within general education settings.

The first two examples of embedding instruction happen during their what I need (WIN) block. This is dedicated time for students to have a variety of their needs met academically and/or socially emotionally. Some students may attend small groups with the counselor, or work 1:1 with a mental health provider in the school based health clinic. Academically, students may work in small groups for pre-teaching, reteaching or targeted math or reading instruction. For instance, interventionists, classroom teachers, special education teachers, and trained tutors provide targeted small group literacy instruction in the classroom based on student data. The WIN structure also allows for flexibility in service delivery. For example, kindergarten students with extensive support needs that have historically been instructed in self-contained settings receive explicit, systematic letter instruction with the classroom teacher and IA support that the special education teacher helps co plan and oversee.

Another example during WIN highlights the strategic collaboration and co teaching between the multilingual (ML) teacher, special education teacher and classroom teacher to support access to 3rd grade literacy. Drawing from shared electronic access to lesson plans, the ML and special education teacher co-teach a small group of students using GLAD strategies prior to the whole group classroom lesson. This provides ML students and ML students with disabilities
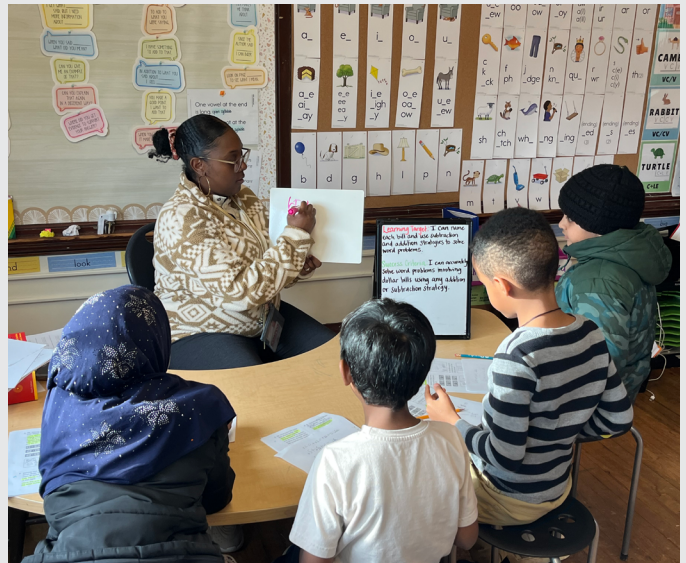
scaffolds for the vocabulary, language structures, and content needed to access the whole group lesson. During the whole group lesson, multilingual students have access to iPads to take a picture of the reading passage in English to be translated and read aloud in their additional language. A key driver to making this practice sustainable has been the electronic lesson plan hub that all teachers have access to reducing the need for additional meetings or more elaborate co-planning.

The final example includes collaboration between the special education teacher and 5th grade classroom teacher to promote social communication for a 5th grader with extensive support needs. Again, using the shared lesson plan hub, the special education teacher can plan for the morning meeting conversation topic by pre teaching the question with the student and uploading her response to her talk box. As a result, this learner can participate with her classmates during morning meeting.

These examples highlight how flexible service delivery, flexible methods, and collaborative structures can support embedded academic instruction for students with disabilities.

RESOURCES

1. Bowman, J. A., & Taub, D. (2021). *Embedded instruction in the inclusive classroom (TIPS Series: Tip #20)*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, TIES Center.

2. Jimenez, B. A., & Kamei, A. (2015). Embedded Instruction: An Evaluation of Evidence to Inform Inclusive Practice. I*nclusion, 3*(3), 132–13. https://doi-org.offcampus.lib.washington.edu/10.1352/2326-6988-3.3.132