



Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent

QUARTERLY
SPECIAL
EDUCATION
NEWSLETTER

Special Education



Our purpose is to share Tips, Information, and Updates from the Georgia Department of Education with our teachers.

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TO JOIN the SPED Newsletter Group, send a blank email to join-specialeducation@list.doe.k12.ga.us.

GaDOE Special Education Resources

[Special Ed Staff Contact List](#)

[Implementation Manual](#)

Provides practical ideas and best practice information on the implementation of the Georgia Special Education Rules.

[GaDOE Website](#)

The Georgia Department of Education redesigned its website last February. The site features user friendly navigation. Be sure

Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships: Three Rs for Implementing CCGPS

By now, everyone is in the midst of CCGPS implementation. All the professional development, planning, and preparation are coming together to impact teaching and learning and improve student outcomes. As this real work progresses, it may be beneficial to step back and take another look at the big picture, to put everything in perspective, and to reflect on three Rs for implementing the CCGPS: rigor, relevance, and relationships.

Rigor

The CCGPS and rigor are essentially synonymous. A sample 7th grade essay prompt released by PARCC illustrates what this rigor in reading and writing actually looks like:

You have read three texts describing Amelia Earhart. All three include the claim that Earhart was a brave, courageous person. The three texts are:

“Biography of Amelia Earhart”

“Earhart's Final Resting Place Believed Found”

“Amelia Earhart’s Life and Disappearance”

Consider the argument each author uses to demonstrate Earhart’s bravery.

Write an essay that analyzes the strength of the arguments about Earhart’s bravery in at least two of the texts. Remember to use textual evidence to support your ideas.

As we embrace the rigorous learning progressions in the CCGPS, we need to make sure we include the other two Rs: relevance and relationships.

Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships: Three Rs for Implementing CCGPS

(continued)

Total number of
Active apps -

711,420

Number of apps
under \$4.99 -

668,735

Average app price
- **\$1.69**

Finding the right
app for your
students –

Priceless

Technology Tip

Ways to Evaluate Educational Apps

Learning In Hand

With the volume of apps available, and continuing to grow, it is impossible to keep up a list of 'good ones'. For this reason, it is important that districts develop a system to acquire and vet apps that are right for the need of their teachers and students. Resources like the Learning in Hand blog contain tools to help districts develop their own guidelines to choose apps. With these tools in hand you'll be able to find the right apps for your students.

Relevance

As John Hattie notes, "for all students, the basic principle is that there needs to be a reason to be at school" (141). In other words, students need to have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn (learning intentions), what that learning looks like when it's achieved (success criteria), and why it's important for them to persist until they've achieved the overarching learning goals (real world applications). In terms of Universal Design for Learning, this translates into providing multiple means of engagement: recruiting interest, sustaining effort and persistence, and self-regulation. By providing choice; optimizing challenge while ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and strategies to meet learning expectations; increasing meaningful feedback; and developing the kinds of self-assessment and reflection that lead to self-efficacy, we can make learning relevant for all our students and ensure that they are ready to tackle the rigor of the CCGPS.

Relationships

Of the 138 influences analyzed in Hattie's synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses, teacher-student relationships rank 11th overall in terms of their impact on student achievement. While building relationships with students includes getting to know them and caring about them as individuals, it also includes empathy, respect, trust, and optimism. As we plan units and lessons, we need to step back and view these plans from the perspective of the students, anticipating misconceptions or difficulties and strategizing how to overcome barriers and build in temporary supports diverse students may need to be successful. As we work with students in and out of the classroom, we need to show students that we value their ideas and their efforts and that we believe they are capable of achieving the learning goals, especially when they're struggling. Finally, we need to send a continuous message that our students have untapped potential to learn that we are going to access together.

The rigor of the CCGPS is a given, but it's up to us to make learning relevant and develop the kinds of teacher-student relationships that result in improved student outcomes. Synergistically, these three Rs will result in our successful implementation of the CCGPS.

Daggett, W. R. (n.d.). *Making Education Work for All Georgians: Supporting Evidence from Research, Model Schools, and Exemplary Practices*. A White Paper. Rexford, NY: International Center for Leadership in Education.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. New York: Routledge.

Item and Task Prototypes. (2012). PARCC. Retrieved from <http://www.parcconline.org/samples/item-task-prototypes>.

Rigor/Relevance Framework.® International Center for Leadership in Education. Retrieved from <http://www.leadered.com/rrr.html>.

UDL Guidelines - Version 2.0. (2011). National Center on Universal Design for Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.udlcenter.org/aboutudl/udlguidelines>.

Behavior Bits

Cognitive Strategies provide scaffold structure for learning and using appropriate behaviors or changing inappropriate behaviors.

Using a cognitive strategy to change a behavior helps the student to understand why and how they react to certain situations. With the use of the strategy the student becomes empowered to make good decisions.

When you begin to teach a cognitive behavior strategy to a student, start - SIMPLE. The other part is to include the student's teachers and parents for support and continuity of implementation.

Marzano shares a 4-step process for the student.

1. When you feel like you might do something that is harmful, STOP and THINK.
2. What are some other things you can do?
3. What will happen if you do them?
4. Pick the best one.

To teach this strategy you will need to discuss the behaviors you want the student to work on. Next you will **describe** each step of the strategy then **model** the type of thinking the student should use. It will be important to role-play to provide the student with alternative responses to various situations and **practice** the appropriate behaviors with **feedback**.

To ensure a student uses this cognitive strategy it is important to initially set up a cue to signal it is a good time to use the strategy. Another helpful tool would be to provide the student with a visual representation of the steps or make a video of self talk student can watch when you need.

Marzano, Robert. (2003). *Classroom Management that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.



Rethinking Accommodations

In the [October 2012 issue of the Special Education newsletter](#), I wrote about empowering students, noting that "It's often easier and quicker to do things for students, to tell them what we want them to know, or to lower our overall expectations; but these actions enable learned helplessness rather than empowering students to be successful" (page 1). Keeping this in mind, as we implement the CCGPS and move toward the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessments in 2014-15, we need to rethink the purpose of accommodations for students with disabilities who have IEPs or 504s.

What is an accommodation?

"Accommodations are changes to the manner in which instruction/assessment is administered or how a student responds to a learning task/assessment. Accommodations *do not reduce or change the learning expectations* for the student" ([Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), Part 1, page 105, *emphasis added*). In other words, with the exception of the 1% of students with significant cognitive disabilities, students with IEPs or 504s should have the same overall learning expectations/goals/targets as students without disabilities.

How does this purpose differ from common practice?

Misconceptions regarding the difference between an accommodation and a modification generally result in lowered expectations for students. For example, decreasing the number of items that a student must answer on a classroom assessment may *modify* the content of the assessment, which then makes this practice a modification rather than an accommodation. If a student can meet learning expectations and demonstrate mastery with fewer items, why not include fewer items on the assessment for all students? If, on the other hand, completion of all items is necessary to demonstrate mastery, then students with IEPs or 504s need to complete all the items. Rather than decreasing the number of items, an appropriate accommodation might be to break the assessment up into smaller chunks and provide extra time and frequent breaks.

Why does this matter?

More rigorous standards (CCGPS) mean more rigorous common, standardized assessments (PARCC). Every item on the PARCC assessments for ELA and literacy will be text based. These assessments will require in-depth, close, independent reading and more text-based writing, both of which necessitate increased stamina and persistence in students. All students need to develop this stamina and persistence in the classroom throughout the year.

Accommodations should reduce or eliminate the effect of a disability; they should empower students for success. If what we're calling an accommodation requires students to do less or meet lower learning expectations, this may simplify things for the short run, but it undermines the development of stamina and persistence and *dis-ables* students in the long run.

Think about it.

For more detailed information about accommodations, see Chapter Nine of the [Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), Part 1 and the [Accommodations Manual: A Guide to Selecting, Administering, and Evaluating the Use of Test Administration Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#).

The Braille Code for Math

Metacognition

Think about your Thinking

(Thinking Stems)

Some stems you might want to encourage students to use to help them to recognize their thinking process.

I'm thinking...

I'm wondering...

I'm noticing...

I'm picturing...

It reminds me of ...

I'm figuring out...

I just learned ...

[The Teaching Thief](#)

Braille is an important form of written communication for many people with visual impairment. Modern computer technology has helped bring about a renaissance in braille. Digital documents can be passed through translation software and sent to a braille printer or braille display. Usually with some minimal configuring or correction, this process will provide access to print information in a solid literary braille format. The provision of mathematical information in a brailled format is quite a different matter however. Of course, students who are blind are required to learn math and pass math tests just as are other children. This means that these students must be taught the braille code for math called nemeth code. They must also be provided access to correctly encoded brailled math, and this is much more difficult than the provision of accurate literary braille. Programs used to produce nemeth code documents are not the same as those used for the literary braille code. They require much more knowledge of the math code and more direct work in translation in order to produce a correct format.

Children who are blind are introduced to numbers as literary concepts at first, but they should be familiar with reading and writing both literary and nemeth code numbers by the end of kindergarten. They need to be ready to begin addition and subtraction using nemeth code upon entering first grade. Just as there are many skills that lead up to reading, there are also readiness skills that prepare a child to add, subtract, and perform more complex math operations. Students with visual impairment require specialized manipulatives together with specialized instruction. Learning math using the nemeth code will prepare a child to understand more abstract concepts such as how to quantify and compare objects.

An appropriate instructional model for students learning to perform math using nemeth code would be for the general education teacher to alert the braille teacher to any new concepts and skills that will be introduced so that the braille teacher can teach the new parts of the code (ex: signs such as *plus*, *minus*, *equals*, *greater than*, and *less than*) to the student before the new concepts are introduced in class. In this way, the child will be familiar with the code for the new concepts and will be ready to learn along with the other students. If the teacher of the visually impaired (TVI) serves as a collaborative teacher in a student's math class, that student can access concepts first hand. Later the new knowledge can be reinforced when the student receives direct instruction in nemeth from the TVI. The complexity of math concepts advances with each grade level, and the set of skills required to be an efficient user of nemeth code also increases. In general, students will require continued instruction in nemeth as long as they continue to take math and science courses.

"You'll miss the best things if you keep your eyes shut.

Dr. Seuss - [I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!](#)

Co-Teaching: Planning is a Must

Collaboration through Co-Teaching can be the key to **SUCCESS.**

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.

—Helen Keller

The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.

—Phil Jackson

Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.

—Henry Ford

Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.

—Andrew Carnegie

Planning with a colleague makes teaching truly joyful. Co-planning can provide new excitement, energy, and rejuvenation for teaching by taking you from the isolation of the traditional system to collaboration that exponentially increases your capacity to meet the needs of all students.

At this point in the year many co-teaching teams have been working together for at least a semester. Are you satisfied with your co-teaching partnership? Revisit the two basic questions that guide the co-teaching process and relationship: “Is what we are doing working for both of us? Is what we are doing working for all of our students?” If you want to enhance your co-teaching practices, consider whether you’re utilizing effective planning strategies.

If your participation has been limited to distributing materials and other non-instructional tasks and/or you do not have input into instructional planning decisions to improve student achievement, then effective planning probably isn’t occurring. At this point it is important to take the initiative to invite your partner to a planning session and, in a non-judgmental way, discuss your need to be more involved in the planning and execution of instruction.

It’s important to enter this discussion with specific examples of what/how you can contribute to planning and instruction to enhance the achievement of all students, especially your knowledge and skills to help ensure that IEPs for students with disabilities are being implemented and monitored. This may be the time to volunteer to take on specific responsibilities such as the warm-up, teaching a vocabulary strategy, summarizing at the closing of a lesson, assisting with organization, etc.—specific tasks that will require you plan together.

Finding opportunities to plan can be a challenge; however, planning can take place many different ways. Try some of the ideas that teachers who do not have common planning time have shared: plan before or after school, share lunch together, email, use cloud technologies, or collaborate with building administrators to provide substitutes to allow for all-day planning sessions, either quarterly with all co-teachers in the building or at intervals by grade level or department. If substitutes are not an option, try enlisting principals, assistant principals, counselors, department chairpersons, and/or psychologists to cover classes while co-teachers plan for units.

The key to planning is making sure that you set up and commit to a specific time and a specific planning format. Both co-teachers must attend and participate in these planning sessions so students can benefit from instruction and both teachers can feel comfortable with their roles and responsibilities. Take the time to make these sessions enjoyable by bringing healthy snacks and/or playing music.

Planning for instruction is a must to ensure that students with disabilities are getting the appropriate services and progress toward their goals is being monitored. Bottom-line, whether you teach alone or co-teach you have to plan! However, when you co-teach, you have to be more thoughtful about including another person in setting up the time. Everyone must be willing to be creative and think outside the box.

SAVE the DATE!

June 3-6, 2013

2nd Annual

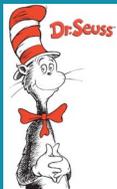
Institute
Designed for
Educating All
Students

IDEAS Conference
Epworth by the Sea
St. Simons Island,
GA

This conference is
teacher and class-
room focused.

Please consider
attending and/or
presenting.

More information to
follow in next issue.



The more
That you read,
The more
Things you
Will know.
The more that
You learn,
The more Places
You'll go.
-Dr. Seuss

What's New?

[GaDOE Special Education Services and Supports is now on Twitter!](#)

Do you Twitter? Do you know what Twitter is? It's a free micro-blogging service! At the very core of Twitter are small bursts of information called Tweets. Each Tweet may be no longer than 140 characters long. Don't let the size fool you – you can get a lot of information in a little space!

Not on Twitter? You can sign up at www.twitter.com. Want to know more about Twitter and how to use it? Here are some links:

[What is Twitter?](#)

[The Ultimate Twitter Guidebook for Teachers](#)

[The Beginner's Guide to Twitter](#)

[12 Reasons to Start Twittering](#)

Teacher Resources

[Comprehensive Reading Solutions](#)—The GaDOE has funded this site; through the Striving Readers initiative. We are using it to provide free access to materials for professional learning. The GaDOE wants as many teachers as possible to use this content. You can choose to read, listen, and/or watch the various modules ranging from Birth till 12th grade.

New modules for Early Learning include: Reading Aloud to Infants and Toddlers, Introduction to Language and Literacy for Infants and Toddlers. New modules for grades K-5 include: Differentiating in Vocabulary and Comprehension, Differentiating in Fluency and Comprehension.

Books Read Aloud Websites—This is a list of websites that have books that read aloud to students. It can be : 1) projected on a Promethean Board 2) used at a student workstation 3) shared with parents for practice at home.

[Story Line Online](#)

[Children's Story Books Online](#)

[Book Pop](#)

[Speakaboos](#)

[Between the Lions](#)

[KIDS AOL Stories](#)

[Read to Me](#)

GPB Videos Focusing on CCGPS

There are eight new GPB videos focusing on CCGPS that are now available with close captioning. These sessions are intended for K-12 teachers in all content areas.

[Making Challenging Texts Accessible](#)

Each of the four segments of the *Making Challenging Texts Accessible* series provides a 30-minute standalone session appropriate for K-12 professional development in all subjects/contents during faculty meetings, before or after school, or during teacher planning time. Following each 30-minute segment, teachers and instructional leaders can work collaboratively to implement the ideas and strategies in their classrooms and schools.

[Facilitating Student-Led Discussions](#)

Each of the four segments of the Facilitating Student-Led Discussions series provides a 30-minute standalone session appropriate for K-12 professional development in all subjects/contents during faculty meetings, before or after school, or during teacher planning time. Following each 30-minute segment, teachers and instructional leaders can work collaboratively to implement the ideas and strategies in their classrooms and schools. Although Part 3 provides a kindergarten example and Part 4 a high school example, all teachers may wish to view both to see the learning progression that characterizes CCGPS.

Expectations for GROUPS

Get along

Respect others

On task

Use quiet voices

Participate

Stay in your group!

LRE for Students with Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

This link will lead you to the step by step guide for successful inclusion of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SCD) as well as video clips, examples of LRE/IEP Matrices, Action Plans, Circle of Friends, and links to Curriculum Access for SCD. This guidance has been successfully replicated in elementary, middle and high schools throughout Georgia.

[LRE for Students with Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities](#)