Using Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to Bridge the Achievement Gap

Georgia Department of Education
Special Education Services and Supports
G-CASE
November 18, 2021
Learning Targets

• Participants will be able to define Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
• Participants will be able to identify how SDI occurs within all tiers of the MTSS framework
• Participants will be able to utilize the components of SDI to develop an appropriate Individualized Education Program (IEP)
• Participants will be able to list at least two ways to monitor the implementation of Specially Designed Instruction for fidelity
Essential Component: Multi-Level Prevention System

- Tier I: Primary Level of Prevention – Instruction/Core Curriculum
  - 15% of students

- Tier II: Secondary Level of Prevention - Intervention
  - 80% of students

- Tier III: Tertiary Level of Prevention – Intensive Intervention
  - 3% to 5% of students

Students receive services at all levels, depending on need.
Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students

**Tier I – Primary Level of Prevention**
Instruction/Core Curriculum

Focuses on ALL Students

**Tier II – Secondary Level of Prevention - Intervention**

Focuses on students identified through screening and other data sources who need enrichment/acceleration or are at risk for poor learning and behavioral outcomes

**Tier III – Tertiary Level of Prevention – Intensive Intervention**

Focuses on students who have not responded to primary or secondary level prevention or who need enrichment or acceleration
SDI within Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students With Disabilities

• All students, receive core instruction (Tier I), supplemental (Tier II) and intensive interventions (Tier III) as needed; students with disabilities MUST receive SDI
• SDI can occur within all tiers of the MTSS framework
• SDI is required under IDEA and must be available to eligible students with identified disabilities with an IEP
Knowledge Check

Link: https://www.menti.com/vkddrng7ap
Code: 6544 1796
Specially Designed Instruction – IDEA

Adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction (i) to address the unique needs of a child that result from the child’s disability; and (ii) to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the same educational standards within the Jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), C.F.R 34§300.39.
Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

The [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](https://www.ed.gov/about/what-we-do/idea) (IDEA) states that each child who has a disability and needs [special education](https://www.ed.gov/about/what-we-do/special-education) and [related services](https://www.ed.gov/about/what-we-do/related-services) will receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>F</strong></td>
<td>Free means that all eligible students with disabilities will be educated at public expense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>Appropriate means that a child with a disability is entitled to an education that is appropriate for him/her considering the IEP and progress in the general education curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>P</strong></td>
<td>Public refers to the public-school system.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong></td>
<td>Education must be provided to every eligible school-age child with a disability. The education should prepare the child for future - employment, education and independent living.</td>
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[Understood.org](https://www.universalsignals.org)
Why SDI?

SDI is required to be provided to students with disabilities in order to:

• Meet their unique needs as described in the IEP
• Address gaps and/or accelerate academic, behavioral, and/or functional progress toward age- and grade-level standards
• Ensure a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE)
• Support graduation and meaningful post-secondary outcomes
• To ensure all school programs, activities, and environments are accessible
What is SDI?

• The term Specially Designed Instruction or SDI is very broad, but it specifies the type of instruction students with disabilities should receive. When you change instructional content, methods, or delivery to meet the student’s individualized needs, you are creating SDI.

• Thus, supporting students with disabilities to access the general curriculum while meeting their IEP goals and objectives.

(Riccomini et al., 2017)
The What, How, Who, Where, and When

“**The What**”
Content
Refers to knowledge and skills being taught to the student with a disability

“**The How**”
Methodology
Refers to utilizing different instructional strategies and approaches to teach content to a student with a disability

“**The Who, Where, and When**”
Delivery
Refers to the way instruction is delivered to a student with a disability

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Richard Woods, Georgia’s School Superintendent | Georgia Department of Education | Educating Georgia’s Future
## Specially Designed Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who designs &amp; monitors SDI?</th>
<th>When is SDI delivered?</th>
<th>Where is SDI delivered?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>Any time school activities occur</td>
<td>Any place school-related activities occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Related Service Providers</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>With children who are non-disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Education Teachers</td>
<td>Tailored to individual student needs</td>
<td>In the least restrictive environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowledge Check  

Link: [https://www.menti.com/vkddrng7ap](https://www.menti.com/vkddrng7ap)  
Code: 6544 1796
Accommodation or SDI?

**Important Note** -

Specially Designed Instruction is different from Accommodations.

Accommodation refers to the supports given to a child that helps him to access the curriculum and demonstrate learning.

- Accommodations are what teachers provide to support access to the general education curriculum.
- Accommodations do not change:
  - what is taught
  - strategies used to teach the content
  - how instruction is delivered to students
Differentiated Instruction or SDI?

Differentiated Instruction

• The adaptation of all curriculum to better meet the needs of all students. *Fattig and Taylor Co-Teaching in the Differentiated Classroom*

• Strategy used by teachers to help students focus, perform, and clue in better on the important parts of a lesson.

  LRP Publications

Specially Designed Instruction

• Adapting as appropriate the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction;
  • To address the *unique needs* of the student that result from the student’s disability
  • Ensure access by the student to the general curriculum
  • Meet the same educational standards that apply to all students
High-Leverage Practices (HLP)

- Defined as “a set of practices that are fundamental to support K-12 student learning, and that can be taught, learned, and implemented by those entering the profession” (Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012).

- HLPs are a starting point for the selection, design, and implementation of SDI in light of a student’s special learning needs (Riccomini et al., 2017).

- HLPs are used to teach evidence-based practices (EBP) such as explicit instruction or intensive instruction.
What are Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)?

- Content Specific
- Developmentally Appropriate
- Learner Dependent
- Supported by Research

National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI)
HLPs

- Cuts across content domains and levels
- Fundamental to effective teaching
- Used Frequently
- Supported by research

Teaching Works
High Leverage Practices

Collaboration
- Collaborate with other professionals
- Collaborate with families
- Organize and facilitate effective meetings with both

Assessment
- Use multiple sources of information to develop comprehensive understanding of a student’s strengths and needs
- Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs

Social, Emotional, Behavioral Practices
- Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment
- Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide student’s learning and behavior
- Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans

Instruction
- Explicit Instruction
- Intensive Instruction
- Provided scaffolded supports
- Systemically design instruction toward specific learning goals

https://highleveragepractices.org/about-hlps
CEC & CEEDAR Center 2017
Big Ideas in Special Education: Specially Designed Instruction, High-Leverage Practices, Explicit Instruction, and Intensive Instruction (gadoe.org)

(Riccomini et al., 2017)
So, where do we begin?

Select | Prepare

Deliver | Evaluate
Designing the *Special* in SDI

- It must be...
- Data Driven
- Planned and Purposeful
- Disability-Related
- Necessary for student to access and progress in the general curriculum
How is Specially Designed Instruction Monitored?

• Progress Monitoring
• Analysis of Data (IEP goals, formative and/or summative assessments, growth on grade level standards)
• IEP Team Feedback
• Implementation of appropriate instructional accommodations to support students with accessing the GSE
Individualized - Intervention - Intensity

• When and how to increase instructional intensity are based on frequent progress-monitoring data that allows for individualized instruction (Riccomini et al., 2017).

• Guidance for service providers in evaluating and building intervention intensity for students can be found on the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity (Fuchs, L.S., Fuchs, D., & Malone, A.S. (2017).

Specially Designed Instruction (in the IEP)

Key areas of the IEP where Specially Designed Instruction is documented (it is not limited to a particular area):

• Description of Needs
• Student Supports
• Impact Statement
• Supports for Personnel
Adapting as Appropriate Examples

Stephen is a student with a specific learning disability with deficits in the area of mathematical reasoning.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Adapting Content</th>
<th>Evidence-Based Methodology</th>
<th>Delivery of Instruction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remove extraneous information from the word problem that is not needed to solve the problem</td>
<td>Explicit instruction on how to use a graphic organizer: example and non-examples-charts to organize categories</td>
<td>Peer modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present as short answer questions instead of multiple choice</td>
<td>Visualization: color coding</td>
<td>1:1 explicit instruction to reteach the skill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stephen requires specialized instruction in math reasoning due to difficulty representing problems in an equation and determining the best solution to word problems. The teacher may have the student explain their strategies when problem solving to expand solving options.
SDI Considerations - IEP

• Does the SDI component relate directly to assessment information on the student?
• Can another adult read the SDI component and understand what to do?
• Does the SDI component include “brand names?”
• Does the SDI component define “who” is going to implement it, and how often a day or week it will be implemented?
• Is it possible to measure the effectiveness of the SDI?
• Is “As needed” or “Requested by student” used?
Knowledge Check
Specially Designed Instruction

**Is...**
- In addition to core instruction
- A service
- What a teacher does
- Specific to the student (individualized)

**Is Not...**
- In the place of core instruction
- A place or setting
- What a student does
- Driven by students’ daily schedule
Specially Designed Instruction – Is…

• Unique instruction developed from standards-based IEP goals provided to promote progress toward the student’s annual goals

• Teaching specific skills, a student does not have in order to access and make progress toward annual goal(s) which, in turn, assists the student in reaching the general curriculum standards

• Instruction that enables a student to make progress in the general education curriculum to close the gap in academic performance as compared to general education peers
Specially Designed Instruction – Is not…

• A restatement of the academic content standards being taught
• A commercial program
• An excuse for setting low expectations or teaching below grade level (not making grade level content available/accessible to a student with disabilities)
How Can Technology Support SDI?

- Organization
- Notetaking
- Communication
- Independence
- Efficiency

C.F.R. § 300.105 (Assistive Technology)
C.F.R. §300.6 (Assistive technology service)
C.F.R. §300.5 Assistive technology device
Use of Assistive Technology (AT) in SDI

• Provide an audio version of the material or audio books
• Use a video that presents the same information
• Use instructional technology to utilize text to speech
• FM device
Top 10 AT Supports for Every Classroom

• Using the technology/AT that is currently in the classroom
• Text to Speech (TTS)
• Audiobooks and/or Digital Books
• Speech to Text (Dictation)
• Built in Accessibility Options
  • PC - Ease of Access
  • Mac Book - Accessibility Options
  • Mobile Devices – Accessibility Options

• Graphic Organizers
• Using Extensions and/or Add-ons with internet browsers
• Mobile Devices
• Visual Supports (classroom and/or behavior management)
• Closed Captioning

Special Education Services and Supports - Assistive Technology
Knowledge Check
Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Keeping Students First

“Special Education is instruction delivered to a student that is more urgent, more intensive, more relentless, more previously delivered, more highly structured and direct, and more carefully monitored for procedural fidelity and effects.” - J.M. Kaufman

Specially designed instruction (SDI): IDEA defines that term as adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of an eligible student under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction (i) to address the unique needs of the student that result from the student’s disability; and (ii) to ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet the educational standards of the public agency that applies to all children (§300.39(b)(3)). Special education, therefore, involves adapting the “content, methodology, or delivery of instruction” [IDEA Regulations, 300.39(b)(3)].

SDI is the instruction delivered to a student with an IEP to help the student access the general education curriculum. SDI goes beyond differentiated instruction and addresses the unique needs that exist because of a student’s disability.

New Updates

- Coherence Literacy Equity (C.U.E.) Card - SDI - Florida Inclusion Network
- IEP Tip Sheet: What is the Statement of Special Education or SDI? - SDI

Contact Information

- Wren Love, Interim Director, Special Education Services and Supports
- Contact Information
- Website: www.gadoe.k12.ga.us
- Email: SpecialEducation@gadoe.k12.ga.us

Resources for Teachers

- Specially Designed Instruction Mini-Module
- Virtual Specially Designed Instruction
- Specially Designed Instruction SDI 2015
- Self-Paced SDI and HELP Modules
- Effective Co-Planning to Ensure SDI is Provided - GaDOE

- Special Education Teacher Tools and Resources - GaDOE
- What is Specially Designed Instruction? (short video)
- The Big FOUR: Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): Literacy
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): Mathematics
- Specially Designed Instruction: A Resource for Teachers - Texas Education Agency (TEA)
- The Five Steps of the Data-Based Individualization (DBI) Process
- Intensive Interventions for Students Struggling in Reading & Math - Center on Instruction
- Big Ideas in Specially Designed Instruction Article - TEACHING Exceptional Children
- Specially Designed Instruction - Realizing the Potential of Co-Teaching Article

- Significant Cognitive Disabilities - GaDOE
- Instructional Support for Teachers of Students with Significant Disabilities - GaDOE
- Curriculum Resources for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities - GaDOE

- SDI for Students with Significant Disabilities
Resources

• Understood.org
• Introduction to Specially Designed Instruction.pdf (includenyc.org)
• Big Ideas in Special Education: Specially Designed Instruction, High-Leverage Practices, Explicit Instruction, and Intensive Instruction (gadoe.org)
• sdi_document.pdf (mdek12.org)
• High Leverage Practices and Specially Designed Instruction: Powerful Means to Address Students’ Learning Needs and Ensure Positive Academic Outcomes - WMTTAC Link Lines
• High-Leverage Practices (gadoe.org)
• ConsiderationsForSpeciallyDesignedInstruction.pdf (ksde.org)
• Specially Designed Instruction Guidelines (utah.gov)
• Teaching Works
• About the HLPs | High-Leverage Practices (highleveragepractices.org)
Questions?

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Georgia Department of Education
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Preparing students for life.

www.gadoe.org

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