CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

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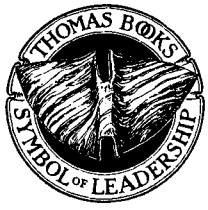
Second Edition

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

Academic and Social Skills for RTI Planning and Inclusion IEPs

By

CARROLL J. JONES, PH.D.



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In memory of Lola Scheuerman

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FOREWORD

Curriculum, assessment, and instruction are irrevocably linked elements in the pursuit to ensure that students with disabilities in today's schools benefit from the attention provided them. Without a highly specified curriculum, there is no target for the learning process. Indeed, the whole curriculum development issue has long been troublesome for special education, as teachers have struggled to address broader state level curriculum guidelines while providing the degree of specificity needed to teach students with special needs. Without means of assessing detailed levels of students'progress toward their goals, teachers are left to guess what to teach. Without knowledge of what to teach derived directly from students' performances on real-life skills, the best instructional practices may be wasted.

Dr. Jones has produced a text that offers a highly useful road map through the minefield of educating students with disabilities in the general curriculum alongside their peers as much as possible while still addressing their individual needs as indicated on their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). Curriculum-based instruction used widely and skillfully has immense implications for strengthening the curriculum, assessment, and instruction links. It is useful for identifying students in need through a Response-to-Intervention approach. It also provides critical support to educators serious about ensuring their students are learning as a result of teacher input into the classroom.

With special education teachers in short supply and the demands on their time so great, this book can provide a valuable resource for cutting the clutter and moving to the heart of the teaching process—determining what skills students need to move effectively to the next level. In this revised edition, Dr. Jones has expanded the usefulness of the text in both breadth of skills addressed and in applied examples of the curriculum-based assessment process.

Congratulations, Dr. Jones, on making a great resource even better!

Virginia J. Dickens, Ph.D.
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Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville, North Carolina

PREFACE

When we discuss curriculum for students with mild disabilities, we are talking about the contents of Individual Education Programs (IEPs) which should contain the outline of the specialized and adapted general education curriculum for children and adolescents with disabilities. Since l975 and the passage of P.L.94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, when Individual Education Programs (IEPs) were mandated for all students with disabilities, there has been controversy about the contents, form, and length of IEPs.

The required curriculum for IEPs was changed in the l997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (formerly Education for All Handicapped Children's Act), and continued in the IDEA 2004 reauthorization. The mandated curriculum for students with disabilities is the "general education curriculum," modified as needed. This book focuses primarily on the basic academic and social skills in the general education curriculum in the form of scope and sequence charts that can be used as objectives for the State Frameworks (goals and benchmarks) in preparing IEPs for children and youth with mild disabilities.

For the most part Individual Education Programs have focused on form rather than on curricular content. There have been nearly as many forms for writing IEPs as there are school districts in the United States. A number of State Departments have adopted IEP forms to provide some consistency across school districts. Often designers of IEP forms have been more concerned about complying with legal requirements, providing accountability, and avoiding lawsuits than with designing appropriate curricula for students with disabilities. The curriculum part of IEPs has varied from small checklists to huge computer banks of skills to state specified minimum competencies handwritten into yearly program outlines. Many school districts use computer programs that generate IEPs for teachers to use as curriculum guides. Many of the IEPs today are the specific state standards written into goals and benchmarks.

A number of problems make writing IEPs very difficult and time-consuming for beginning special education teachers even with access to computer programs. The extreme shortage of special education teachers has resulted in large numbers of teachers with emergency or alternative licenses who possess inadequate experience in teaching, lack a foundation in the general education curriculum of academic skills and sequences associated with each grade level, and possess little, if any, experience in modifying and teaching curriculum for

at-risk and special needs students. Writing IEPs also requires a knowledge of the theoretical foundations of both general education and special education, and the instructional techniques and assessment procedures associated with each major approach.

The traditional IEP form relates assessment results on one page, goals on another page, and objectives on additional separate pages. This form is difficult for new IEP writers to see the relationship between assessment results, and goals and objectives. The specific IEP form used in this text is concerned only with the curriculum development part of the IEP. This form was designed to illustrate clearly to students the relationships among assessment results in the Present Level of Performance, the Annual Goals, Instructional Objectives, and Evaluation Methods and Materials sections of the IEP.

In order to reduce the paperwork load on inexperienced as well as experienced teachers according to IDEA 2004, many states are having special education teachers use the state academic framework goals to create IEPs. The Frameworks do not task analyze subject areas to indicate a sequence of basic skills to be taught. Obviously, writing goals only, and primarily those specified in the State Frameworks requires much less time and curricular knowledge.

However, teachers are often asked to write Individual Implementation Plans (IIPs) composed of the objectives or scope and sequences of skills to be taught, which may or may not be included in the IEP, but provides the individual skills that teachers must teach to assist special needs students in reaching their goals. Perhaps there was a reduction in curricular information included in the IEP, however, teachers still must write IIPs or something similar, and lesson plans with skills for teaching and monitoring progress.

This book for preservice teachers and special education teachers was designed to provide a foundation in the general education academic curriculum and the generic skills sequences at each grade level. It provides information on the new process of identification of children with disabilities through their responses to intervention (RTI). The scope and sequence charts should assist teachers in pinpointing the specific deficits a child/youth experiences, in modifying the general education curriculum for each student with mild disabilities, and in writing complete Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and Individual Implementation Programs (IIPs).

This new edition of *Curriculum Development for Students With Mild Disabilities* has been reorganized so the first three chapters focus on historical curriculum development and primary theorists in early childhood education curriculum, general education curriculum, and special education curriculum. An additional focus is on the impact of federal laws (IDEA and NCLB) on the cur-

riculum and assessment in schools today including the new methods of identifying children and youth who need special education services. The current focus on the education of preschoolers who are at-risk and/or disabled has changed the curriculum of this population of children. Also, developing the IEP is presented from a number of different perspectives including the use of norm-referenced testing scores, criterion-referenced scores, and curriculum-based assessment results.

The chapters have been updated and several chapters have been included in a different sequence to provide the major generic theory in the first three chapters. The scope and sequence charts were modified to include current national education standards and benchmarks, and the scope and sequence of skills in each of the academic areas that require annual state assessment. The book has been reorganized into ten chapters as follows: Historical Perspectives of Curriculum (Chapter 1); The Curriculum Development Process (Chapter 2); Early Childhood Special Education Curricula (Chapter 3); Oral Expression Curricula (Chapter 4); Reading and Listening Curricula (Chapter 5); Written Expression Curricula (Chapter 6); Mathematics Curricula (Chapter 7); Educational Technology Curricula K-12 (Chapter 8); Social and Self Competence Curricula (Chapter 9); Science Curricula (Chapter 10); and Evaluation Reports: Case Studies (Appendix).

Thanks to Dr. Tandra Tyler-Wood, Associate Professor, Department of Technology and Cognition at the University of North Texas, for revising the technology chapter and writing the new Science chapter. A special thanks to Dr. Virginia Dickens, Professor of Special Education, Fayetteville State University, who serves as a sounding board and provides insight; and for writing the Foreword.

This book is dedicated in memory of a dear friend, Lola Scheuerman, who was one of the finest public elementary school reading teachers in our nation, and who worked with at-risk and disabled learners in the Shawnee Heights School District in Topeka, Kansas and in the Shawnee Mission School District in Shawnee Mission, Kansas for over thirty years. Lola Scheuerman was the consummate "Master Teacher."

C.J.J.

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES

Chapter 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CURRICULUM

Special education is different today in many dramatic ways than it was in the not-too-distant past. Today, standards-based education drives what schools do, how teachers function, and how students respond.
(Polloway, E., Patton, J. & Serna, L., 2008, 3)

What is Curriculum?
U.S. General Education Curriculum Development
Historical General Educational Periods
Current General Educational Curriculum Focus
History of Special Education Curriculum
Historical Special Education Periods:1800s–1900
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Historical Special Education Periods:
Early to Mid-1990s
Historical Special Education Law and Curriculum
Current Special Education Law and Curriculum
Response-to-Intervention System of Tiers
Summary
Response-to-Intervention System of Tiers: Table 1

Curriculum for children and youth with mild disabilities must be developmentally-appropriate and age-appropriate to prepare them intellectually, academically, and socially to function in society. The curriculum or content of instruction reflects the historical development of general and special education, as well as the legal impact of general education and special education laws. Inclusion and Response-to-Intervention for students with mild disabilities frequently require modification of the general education curricula. Individual Education Programs (IEPs), mandated by special education laws, are the documents that contain the specially planned curricula for students with disabilities.

WHAT IS CURRICULUM?

The public school system is a small microcosm of society which mirrors society's cultural, social, political, economic, ethical, moral, religious, professional, intellectual, legal, historical, and personal beliefs and problems. The curriculum of the public schools is intended to prepare students to succeed in society as responsible citizens, therefore, is reflective of society and often sensitive to the concerns of society.

Curriculum has been defined in many different ways, however, curriculum is the content, the what we teach, the age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate life tasks (Adelman & Taylor, l993). The curriculum or content of instruction is built on the goals of education set forth by federal, state and local education agencies. In addition to the planned or static learning experiences and competencies, curriculum, also, includes the dynamic and unplanned learnings and experiences (Shepherd & Ragan, l992). In further delineating curriculum, it has been described as (1) a series of courses, (2) documents (teacher guides and manuals), (3) sequential learning objectives, and (4) experiences (Shepherd & Ragan, l992).

Curriculum Guides

All states have a state adopted curriculum, often referred to as curriculum frameworks, which outline the instructional program in each subject at each grade level. The elementary school general education curriculum is often divided into the following broad categories: language arts and reading, science, mathematics, social studies, health and physical education, the arts, and optional subjects such as computer technology, foreign language, and instrumental music (Jarolimek & Foster, l989). The secondary curriculum is separated into discrete courses in each field such as mathematics: algebra, advanced algebra, geometry, trigonometry, calculus.

Previously, the states' required minimum competency testing program provided a "remedial curriculum" in basic subject areas for children and youth who did not pass these tests. The minimum competency tests in most states have been discontinued. All states now have state curriculum standards or frameworks for each grade level which are the goals of the state academic program. Progress is now monitored through a state required grade-level testing program that is aligned with the state required curriculum. Currently, testing is required in the curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, and science as a result of the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act 2001.

The state adopted commercial textbooks for each subject, the most widely used curriculum documents, are utilized to instruct students. The teachers'

editions or curriculum guides of these commercial textbook series contain structured and sequential learning outcomes (scope and sequence charts of skills and concepts to be developed), lesson objectives, suggested teaching approaches, provisions for evaluation, suggestions for enrichment activities, and educational media available (Shepherd & Ragan, l992). Thus, most of the state adopted curriculum (state curriculum frameworks) is contained in the students' state adopted textbooks and the teachers' curriculum guides or manuals.

U.S. GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 350 years, educational curriculum in the United States has changed considerably in response to the changing forces of economics, politics, religion, and social forces.

Historical General Educational Periods

Colonial Period

For the first 150 years (l625–l775), the schools in the United States adhered to religious purposes evidenced by the Puritans who established schools to teach children to read the Bible to guide their personal salvation (Shepherd & Ragan, l992). Discipline was considered to be a very important part of education. New England, at that time, was controlled in both public and private life by the Puritan ministers. The Puritans were encouraged to beat and punish their children in an effort to drive out the inborn sin or willfulness, especially in the school situation (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The education of children during the early years of the settlement was conducted by the family and the church rather than through any school. The goal of education was to instill the habits of obedience, reverence, and industry, which were fundamental for the adult Christian life of a Puritan (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000, 186). Reading was taught on a one-to-one basis by a parent or a literate neighbor's wife, who set up a Dame School. Most children learned their adult roles as apprentices in their own homes (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000). The Puritans set the scene for schools of the future when they passed the "Old Deluder Satan" Act in 1647 requiring that children be provided schooling at the expense of the community (Shepherd & Ragan, l992).

The reading curriculum for colonial children was contained primarily In the *Hornbook*, *The New England Primer*, and the *Bible.* The first book from which colonial children learned was the *Hornbook* which contained their let-