



# From Disability to Learning Gap. How some schools have accomplished it.



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“One of the major challenges that teachers face in schools today is meeting the wide range of student needs”.

(Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman, and Anastasiow (2012, xxix).

# The majority of classes



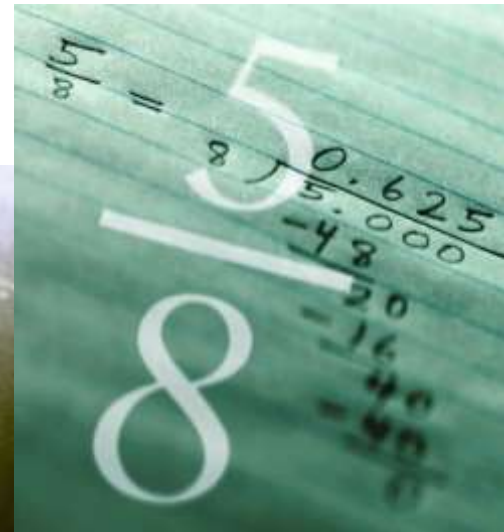
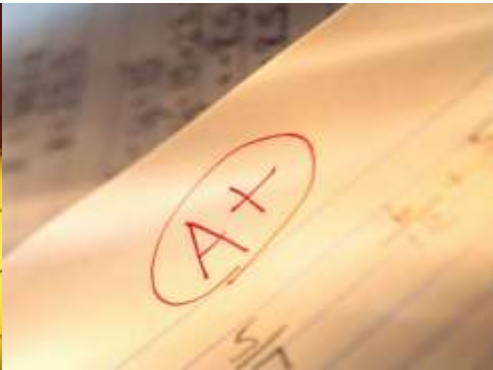
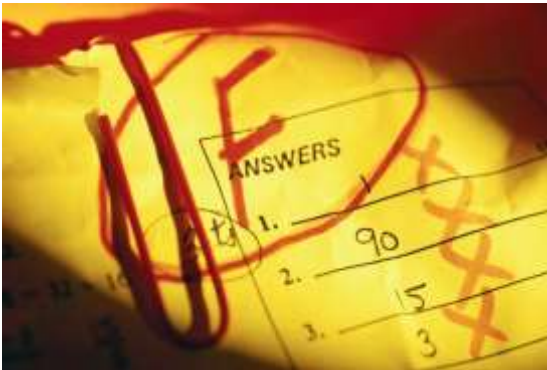
- Will most likely have students that have been diagnosed with disabilities and other students who require more scaffolded support in order to achieve success. Some students will have behaviour problems, social emotional adjustments difficulties and /or emotional difficulties. The wide range of student needs can feel overwhelming to a teacher.

(Kirk, Gallagher, Coleman, and Anastasiow (2012, xxix).

# The Pilot Study Investigated



*Mathematics instructional practices and testing accommodations adopted by general, special education and Support Teachers Literacy and Numeracy*





- Phase A – survey of 16 participants from six schools
- Phase B – Interviews conducted at three sites with three selected participants involved in the first phase of data collection. Year 7 classroom teacher, a Support Teacher Literacy and Numeracy and a Head of Special Education

# What does it mean for us?



+ Plus

- The good

- Minus

- The bad

? Interesting

- The stuff we're wondering about



# What happened?



- All participants utilised a variety of instructional practices



## Instructional practices used:



- use of objects for conceptual understanding  
commonly interactive resources
- peer or cross-age tutoring strategies
- organisational strategies for retention (e.g. cue cards of strategy steps, graphic organisers, mnemonics, time for additional practice).





# Instruction practices used:



- back to basics - using hands on material, chanting number facts, making arrays models; drill and practice, use of cues to try and embed knowledge and concepts into memory;
- explaining concepts in different ways and often with interactive resources and through more simplistic language



# Instructional practices used:



- streaming of students based on their learning gap needs so smaller groups were created with more intense human resource support;



- checking for understanding using 'the fist to five'.

# More instructional practices used



- All participants explained that instructional practices were often individual where the target for a group of students learning may be the same but it was presented in different ways and with different resources, checking for understanding using a variety of strategies.



# More Instructional Practices:



- Instructional practices linked to National testing were routine based in both schools.
- all teachers linked the instructional practices and accommodations that they made to the intervention programs operating in the school.





- There was a great deal of commonality in the responses by participants and these responses centred around modified assessment procedures (scheduling, timing, presentation) or materials (setting, response) to enable a student to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, or competencies.
- gave lots of encouragement



**Figure 3: Examples of Accommodations**

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buddy/peer tutoring</li> <li>• Note-taking assistance</li> <li>• Duplicated notes</li> <li>• Contracts</li> <li>• Reinforcement incentives</li> <li>• High structure</li> <li>• Partnering</li> <li>• Ability grouping</li> <li>• Augmentative and alternative communications systems</li> <li>• Assistive technology, such as text-to-speech software</li> <li>• Graphic organizers</li> <li>• Non-verbal signals</li> <li>• Organization coaching</li> <li>• Time-management aids</li> <li>• Mind maps</li> <li>• More frequent breaks</li> <li>• Concrete/hands-on materials</li> <li>• Manipulatives</li> <li>• Tactile tracing strategies</li> <li>• Gesture cues</li> <li>• Dramatizing information</li> <li>• Visual cueing</li> <li>• Large-size font</li> <li>• Tracking sheets</li> <li>• Colour cues</li> <li>• Reduced/uncluttered format</li> <li>• Computer options</li> <li>• Spatially cued formats</li> <li>• Repetition of information</li> <li>• Rewording rephrasing of information</li> <li>• Extra time for processing</li> <li>• Word-retrieval prompts</li> <li>• Taped texts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alternative work space</li> <li>• Strategic seating</li> <li>• Proximity to instructor</li> <li>• Reduction of audio/visual stimuli</li> <li>• Study carrel</li> <li>• Minimizing of background noise</li> <li>• Quiet setting</li> <li>• Use of headphones</li> <li>• Special lighting</li> <li>• Assistive devices or adaptive equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended time limits</li> <li>• Verbatim scribing</li> <li>• Oral responses, including audiotapes</li> <li>• Alternative settings</li> <li>• More frequent breaks</li> <li>• Assistive devices or adaptive equipment</li> <li>• Prompts to return student's attention to task</li> <li>• Augmentative and alternative communications systems</li> <li>• Assistive technology, such as speech-to-text software</li> <li>• Large-size font</li> <li>• Colour cues</li> <li>• Reduced/uncluttered format</li> <li>• Computer options</li> <li>• Extra time for processing</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of tasks used to assess a concept or skill</li> </ul>

Note: A typical IEP would not include all of the accommodations listed above. Only the accommodations that are specifically required by the individual student should be listed in his or her IEP.



# Decision Making and School Organisation



- The decision making process linked to a school vision, was informed by data and professional knowledge, focused on clustered needs and creative resourcing, and involved a strong process of collaboration which also involved parents and students.
- The decision making processes used appear to be very people centred with on-going self-reflection.

- Appears to be layered; whole school and strategic, middle management involving key expertise, and then classroom based focusing on every individual child, then clustering the needs of students and aligning available resources.





# Change in inclusive education



- Worth noting is that all participants commented on the changes in Australian education and how schools and educators now include students with disabilities in a way that is needs focused rather than disability focused.
- The focus is not on a child with a disability but on every child in the school and the individual needs that they have as a learner and member of a school community.

# The Findings:



*The findings suggest that decisions regarding the selection and implementation of instructional practices and accommodations are made in a collaborative manner with emphasis on the needs of every individual child rather than on the basis of a disability label.*



# The Findings:



## **Summary:**

*The findings suggest that decisions regarding the selection and implementation of instructional practices and accommodations are made in a collaborative manner with emphasis on the **needs of every individual child rather than on the basis of a disability label.***



Four themes emerge from the findings:

- 1) all participants use a large variety instructional practices
- 2) accommodations are made based around NAPLAN guidelines
- 3) decision making and school organisation is a shared focus
- 4) changes in inclusive education are viewed as positive

# Reflect



- How we view our world....
- Our children....
- It matters....



# Contact details



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fulfilling lives

# References



- Kirk, S., Gallagher, J. Coleman, M. R., and Anastasiow, N. (2012). *Educating Exceptional Children* 13<sup>th</sup> Ed. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. Canada.