Case Study:

MAKING CONNECTIONS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM THROUGH THE

7 Step
IEP PROCESS

PGC
Progress in the
General Curriculum

TEA
Texas Education Agency

Introduction

Students with disabilities who qualify for special education must be provided an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is specific to the child and the child's disability, with a focus on how the child's disability impacts his/her access to and progress in the general education curriculum. The IEP must include annual goals and special education services/specially designed instruction (SDI) that ensure access to and progress in the general education curriculum. All of these must be connected to the grade level instructional standards. In Texas, at K-12, the grade level instructional standards are the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Specially designed instruction does not take the place of general education instruction. Students in special education receive SDI in addition to general education curriculum and instruction, in order to help them with the impact of their disability in accessing and progressing in the general education curriculum.

This document is organized around a case study of a student who receives special education services. The student is based on a student created by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) and the case study is organized around the Seven-Step Process to Creating Standards-based IEPs developed by Project Forum at NASDSE.

The purpose of this document is to provide support for educators in developing annual goals that are linked to the TEKS and in designing SDI that is connected to the general education curriculum.

Student Profile/General Information

Anthony is included in general education classes with accommodations and supports. He has a learning disability in reading comprehension. Anthony demonstrates a variety of inattentive behaviors that interfere with learning. He has a history of getting out of his desk/chair during class. He is easily distracted by other students, noise, and other activity in and near the classroom. A review of classroom data and incident reports over the last two months indicate that Anthony is learning to ignore some distractions in his environment.

Anthony can remain on task for 15 minutes when closely monitored by an adult and reinforced at frequent intervals.

Classroom, district, and state assessments indicate that Anthony is reading at a third -grade-level. A review of brief classroom assessments indicates that Anthony needs to improve reading fluency, which will increase his reading comprehension. He is currently receiving reading instruction in an intervention curriculum and is working to improve reading with fluency and applying comprehension strategies. His low fluency has negatively affected his reading comprehension.

Step

1

Consider the grade-level content standards (TEKS) for the grade in which the student is enrolled or would be enrolled based on age.

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Anthony

Classroom, district and state assessments indicate that Anthony is reading at a third-grade level. He is currently receiving reading instruction in an intervention curriculum and is working to improve reading with fluency and applying comprehension strategies. His low fluency has negatively affected his reading comprehension.

Anthony is working on fourth grade math standards. Progress monitoring data reveal inconsistent scores on Anthony's weekly quizzes. Teachers report that he can do the math but is easily frustrated if he makes a mistake and may crumple or tear up his paper. He often rushes through assignments and turns his paper in early without checking his answers. Anthony is pleased when he does well on a quiz and responds positively to teacher recognition, such as good day certificates.
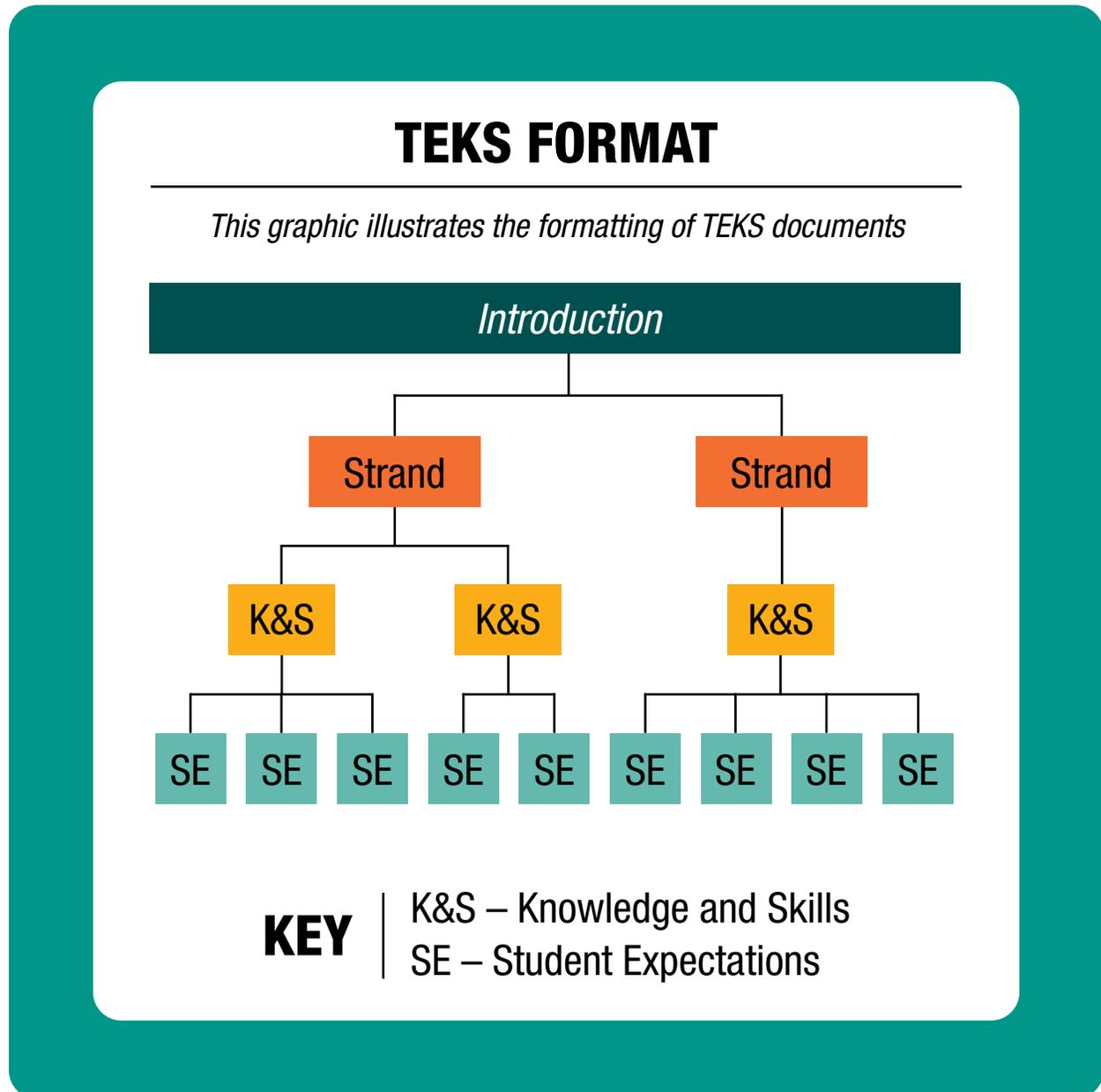
Anthony's grandmother reports that he likes school and looks forward to going. He plays football with the YMCA and she is glad that he burns off some energy during practice.

Anthony receives accommodations for brief scheduled breaks every 20 minutes during classroom assignments and classroom and state assessments. He is accommodated by arranging for seating in an area of the classroom and assessment area that is relatively free from distractions. Anthony's on-task behavior has improved since implementing an agreed-upon signal with his teacher. The agreement states that each time Anthony needs to get out of his seat, he will signal the teacher and wait for her signal of approval before leaving his seat.

The ARD committee, including Anthony's mother, spent time reviewing their state's content standards to learn specifically what Anthony was expected to know in each subject area.

What are TEKS?

TEKS stands for Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. They are a set of skills that the state of Texas has determined are essential for each student to learn. These skills ensure that all schools are providing a learning experience that is equitable and objective for all learners. This ensures that all students in Texas receive the same content at the same time.

TEKS FORMAT

This graphic illustrates the formatting of TEKS documents

Introduction

Strand | Strand

K&S | K&S | K&S

SE SE SE SE SE SE SE SE SE

KEY | K&S – Knowledge and Skills
SE – Student Expectations

Because Anthony's struggle has been identified as being related to fluency, for the purpose of this case study, we will focus on the 4th grade English Language Arts and Reading TEKS related to fluency.

4th Grade English Language Arts and Reading TEKS are located at 19 TAC §110.15.

Deconstructing the TEKS: Introduction
Provides key contextual information and brief overview of the essential knowledge & skills for a grade or course

(a) Introduction.

(1) The English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are organized into the following strands: Reading, where students read and understand a wide variety of literary and informational texts; Writing, where students compose a variety of written texts with a clear controlling idea, coherent organization, and sufficient detail; Research, where students are expected to know how to locate a range of relevant sources and evaluate, synthesize, and present ideas and information; Listening and Speaking, where students listen and respond to the ideas of others while contributing their own ideas in conversations and in groups; and Oral and Written Conventions, where students learn how to use the oral and written conventions of the English language in speaking and writing. The standards are cumulative--students will continue to address earlier standards as needed while they attend to standards for their grade. In fourth grade, students will engage in activities that build on their prior knowledge and skills in order to strengthen their reading, writing, and oral language skills. Students should read and write on a daily basis.

Deconstructing the TEKS: Strands
Organizers for the knowledge and skills statements

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(1) Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to read aloud grade-level stories with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension.

Deconstructing the TEKS: Knowledge and Skills Statements
Concepts and skills to be learned

(b) Knowledge and skills.

(1) Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Students are expected to read aloud grade-level stories with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension.

Deconstructing the TEKS: Student Expectations (SEs)
Demonstration of the concepts and skills learned

Many TEKS have student expectations that go along with the knowledge and skills statements.

In this particular case, the Reading/Fluency knowledge and skills statement does not have additional student expectations. However, many TEKS do, and those are generally organized underneath the knowledge and skills statements with letters such as (A), (B), (C), etc. The student expectations are demonstrations for the concepts and skills learned.

For example, below is a fourth grade reading TEKS that includes Student Expectations.

(3) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:

   (A) summarize and explain the lesson or message of a work of fiction as its theme; and

   (B) compare and contrast the adventures or exploits of characters (e.g., the trickster) in traditional and classical literature.

In the above example, the TEKS would be deconstructed as follows:

   • Strand: Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre

   • Knowledge and Skills Statement: Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to…

   • Student Expectations (SEs):

      (A) summarize and explain the lesson or message of a work of fiction as its theme; and

      (B) compare and contrast the adventures or exploits of characters (e.g., the trickster) in traditional and classical literature.

| Strands | K&S | SEs |

Readiness vs Supporting Standards (TEKS) within the STAAR Assessment System

To design a state assessment that was focused on the most critical TEKS to assess, a distinction was made between readiness and supporting standards from the TEKS content standards eligible for assessment. Readiness and supporting standards are only identified in the grade levels that participate in STAAR testing. Knowing which TEKS are readiness and which TEKS are supporting can assist ARD committees in prioritizing critical areas of need for students.

The Readiness and Supporting standards can be found on TEA's website at http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/#G_Assessments under Assessed Curriculum for each grade level tested.

1. Readiness Standards:
- are essential for success in the current grade or course
- are important for preparedness for the next grade or course
- support college and career readiness
- necessitate in-depth instruction
- address significant content and concepts

2. Supporting Standards
- introduced in the current grade or course but may be emphasized in a subsequent year
- reinforced in the current grade or course but may be emphasized in a previous year
- play a role in preparing students for the next grade or course but not a central role
- address more narrowly defined content and concepts

Step

2

Examine classroom and student data to determine where the student is functioning in relation to the grade-level standards.

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Anthony

The ARD committee recognized it was important to compare what Anthony was expected to know in each content area with his present level of performance. The team reviewed the methods by which Anthony had been taught and examined whether this content was aligned with TEKS. It also was important for the committee to examine the methods by which data about Anthony's performance were collected to determine whether these measures were good indicators of Anthony's progress.

There are many data sources that can be examined, and these vary for each individual situation, based on what particular area is being examined for a student. In Anthony's situation, the data sources below were examined for information on how he was performing in reading compared to the state standard (TEKS) for students in fourth grade.

DATA SOURCES

- SPED Assessment (FIE)
- Progress Reports
- Work Samples
- Behavioral data
- Parent Feedback
- Standardized Tests
- Formative Assessment
- Anecdotal records

- Running Records
- Statewide Tests
- Benchmark Tests
- Teacher-made Tests
- Observations
- Checklists
- Discipline Referrals
- Reading Inventories

Additional specific input that was collected is represented below:

Student Input	Parent Input	Formal Assessment(s)	State Assessment Information
Anthony reports that he does not like to read aloud. He is uncomfortable when his peers hear him read. Anthony reports that he would rather get in trouble than have to read aloud in front of his peers.	Anthony's grandmother reports that he does not read for pleasure at home. If his homework includes reading, his grandmother has to sit with him until the homework is complete.	FIE indicates Anthony is LD in Reading Comprehension. His fluency and comprehension at the time of the FIE (2 years ago) were tested at 2.2 grade level.	Anthony did not pass the 3rd grade state assessment in reading that was administered last Spring.

Teacher Administered Assessment/ Other Informal Assessments	Special Education Teacher/ Staff Input	Special Education Teacher/ Staff Input	Discipline Data
Informal reading inventories and timed fluency tests administered by his classroom teacher indicate average fluency and comprehension during the Fall of 4th grade (current school year).	The special education teacher, who works with Anthony during reading, indicates that he has to provide frequent reminders to stay on task, even with adapted materials.	Teacher reports that Anthony works better with 1:1 support during reading, as it helps keep him on task.	Anthony has had 2 behavior incidents in the last month, 1 of which was during a reading task. This is a decrease in behavioral incidences, as Anthony averaged 4 behavioral incidences per month during the previous school year.

Step
3

Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).

Step 3

Develop the present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP).

While Anthony struggles with on-task behavior as well as reading fluency, for illustrative purposes in this case study, we are focusing only on his fluency issues.

Anthony

Summary of Reading Skills (as discussed by ARD Committee):
A review of brief classroom assessments indicates that Anthony needs to improve reading for fluency, which will increase his reading comprehension. Anthony can read 80 words per minute of connected text with 100% accuracy, which is within the range of words per minute established for typical peers in the second grade. Anthony is working toward automaticity by reading passages at the second grade level for which he has achieved a high level of accuracy in oral reading fluency. Determining the meaning of unknown words by reading words in context and applying word structures (prefix, base words, and suffix) are relative strengths for Anthony in the area of reading. Behaviors associated with Anthony's disability, such as limited attention span and distractibility, can detract from completing assigned tasks, focusing on the details of the reading passages/assignments (reading comprehension) and remaining on task.

Anthony's PLAAFP in Reading (as ARD Committee developed for Anthony's IEP):
Reads 80 words per minute in high interest, low level adapted text at the third grade-level with fewer than 5 errors in 4 out of 5 trials (based on informal reading inventories* and timed fluency tests*)

*data sources are not required to be included in a PLAAFP

Step

4

Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standards.

Develop measurable annual goals aligned with grade-level academic content standards.

Anthony

Reading:
Measurable annual goal related to meeting Anthony's critical needs in reading, as identified in his PLAAFP:
- In 36 instructional weeks, using grade-level text, Anthony will fluently read 80 words per minute with fewer than 5 errors in 4 out of 5 trials.

Developing annual IEP goals is one of the hardest parts of the IEP process. The annual goal is designed to help the student make progress from their present level (PLAAFP) to the grade level expectation (TEKS). However, the annual goal must be written in measurable terms, and must not simply be a restatement of the TEKS. Instead, the annual goal must be whatever is a reasonable amount of progress for the student, based on individual data for that student. This is a professional judgement call that the ARD committee must make.

One great resource for the ARD committee to use in making this determination is the district's vertical alignment document/district-related curriculum alignment resources. Additionally, TEA has created STAAR Alternate 2 Vertical Alignment Documents for each content area*, which show how the TEKS align from Pre-kindergarten through End-of-course exams. For the purposes of this case study, we will use the STAAR Alternate 2 Vertical Alignment document in Reading.*

What is the Vertical Alignment Document?

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) Vertical Alignment documents provide a complete listing of the TEKS curriculum from pre-kindergarten through end-of-course. These documents provide a total overview of the knowledge and skills statements and align student expectations across the grades. The student *expectations provide access points to the general education curriculum* by serving as prerequisite skills for STAAR Alternate 2 and can be used as a guide for developing IEP goals for all students receiving Special Education services.

Reading/Fluency is addressed on page 7 of the Reading Vertical Alignment Document, as shown below.

Reading/Fluency. Students read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension (1.5; 2.4; 3.3; 4.1; 5.1; 6.1; 7.1; 8.1). Students are expected to
- read aloud grade-level appropriate text with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension (1-3)
- read aloud grade-level stories with fluency (rate, accuracy, expression, appropriate phrasing) and comprehension (4-5)
- adust fluency when reading aloud grade-level text based on the reading purpose and the nature of the text (6-8)

At the end of the Reading/Fluency strand, you see all the grade levels in the TEKS where the Reading/Fluency strand is addressed (in this case, 1.5, 2.4, 3.3, 4.1, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, and 8.1 – meaning it is addressed in grades 1-8, as the first number in the Knowledge and Skills Statement is the grade level.

The bullet points under the strand show the specific Knowledge and Skills Statements where fluency is addressed in each grade level. So, you can see that grades 1-3 share a Knowledge and Skills statement, grades 4-5 share a Knowledge and Skills Statement, and grades 6-8 share a Knowledge and Skills Statement.

This information is useful in helping the ARD committee understand where Anthony's current functioning level is, and how much gap he has to bridge to get to the expectation for 4th grade. Additionally, looking to upper grade levels, it can help the ARD committee determine if he is not able to bridge the gap, how much difficulty might he experience in future years (i.e., how much will this skill be relied on in future years?) This information can help the ARD committee prioritize annual goals, especially when a student has multiple deficit/critical needs areas.

Finally, because TEKS Readiness Standards are central to preparedness for future years as well as for college and career readiness, many schools choose to focus on those as critical factors when students have many deficits. However, these decisions should always be made on an individual basis, based on the student's individual circumstances.

For additional information on developing annual goals, go to www.texaspgc.net or view Individualized Education Program (IEP) Annual Goal Development – IEP Q & A

Step

5

Assess and report the student's progress throughout the year.

Assess and report the student's progress throughout the year.

Anthony

Reading:

All types of assessment and report formats were considered for Anthony in the area of reading. The following were chosen based on Step 5 questions:

- Curriculum-based assessments
- Teacher/text tests
- State assessment (with accommodations): Anthony will participate in the regular 4th grade level state assessment program with accommodations. (For specific accommodations, see Step 6.)

Note: Anthony's ARD committee determined annual goal progress reports will be sent to Anthony's parents each time report cards are issued (every 9 weeks).

For additional information on grading and progress monitoring go to www.texaspgc.net or view Grading and Progress Monitoring for Students with Disabilities: A Resource for Teachers

Step

6

Identify specially designed instruction including accommodations and/or modifications needed to access and progress in the general education curriculum.

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Anthony

Special education and related services, including supplementary aids and services, program modifications, classroom and assessment modifications, assistive technologies, personnel development, and others, were considered based on the questions for Step 6.

All Classes/Settings:

- Supplementary aids and services: Anthony will be allowed brief, scheduled breaks every 20 minutes or as needed in response to an agreed-upon signal during classroom assignments. His seating will be in an area that is relatively free from distractions (applies in all classes/settings). Anthony will also be given extra time on in-class assignments due to the use of frequent breaks.

Reading:

The following were decided for Anthony in the area of reading:

- Special education services: The special education teacher will provide intensive reading instruction to improve reading fluency using a research-based reading program. It was decided that Anthony would receive this service 20 minutes daily in a special education setting.

For additional information on specially designed instruction go to www.texaspgc.net or view Specially Designed Instruction: A Resource for Teachers.

Step

7

Determine the most appropriate
assessment option.

Determine the most appropriate assessment option.
http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/

Anthony

The ARD committee decision regarding the most appropriate assessment option for each student is based on a number of factors. The ARD committee must follow the TEA-required participation requirements when considering an alternate assessment (STAAR or STAAR Alternate 2).

Anthony's ARD committee considered the following data in deciding Anthony could participate in the **regular state assessment program with accommodations**:
- Instructional levels are approximately one year behind grade level and gaps are being closed based on focused interventions.
- Anthony participates in grade-level instructional activities planned for all students.
- He makes progress on grade-level standards within approximately the same time frame as typical peers when behavioral interventions are successful.
- He uses learning and behavioral strategies to improve achievement.

Anthony qualifies to use the accommodation of extra time (due to frequent breaks) on all assessments.

Anthony will take:
- STAAR with online embedded accommodations

Adapted from Project
Forum "Standards-Based Individualized Education Program Examples"
Marla Davis Holbrook
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