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General Education Teachers and Students with Disabilities: Using Targeted Information and Delivery Methods to Improve Perceptions of Preparedness in Inclusion Models

Kaitlyn Lemos

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GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
USING TARGETED INFORMATION AND DELIVERY METHODS TO IMPROVE
PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS IN INCLUSION MODELS

by

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A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the
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in partial fulfillment for the degree of
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GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: USING TARGETED INFORMATION AND DELIVERY METHODS TO IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS OF PREPAREDNESS IN INCLUSION MODELS, a Doctoral research project prepared by KAITLYN LEMOS in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership.

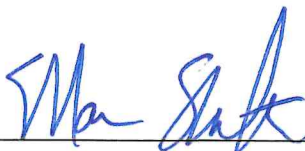
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ABSTRACT

This Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) was designed to gain insight into what areas 21 teachers at one elementary school felt they lacked to effectively work with students with disabilities. The study was also designed to discover which delivery methods teachers felt were most effective in providing useful information that respected their busy schedules and limited time. This study provided school districts with valuable information to pursue similar information across many schools to aid in the development of targeted and worthwhile professional development opportunities for educators.

When provided with targeted information via video and infographic, participants reported a preference for infographics over videos; however, when provided with an opportunity to share their preference between an in-person professional development and an alternate method, such as the two described in this study, all participants preferred alternate methods.

It could be inferred that participants' responses would be consistent across schools in Bend-La Pine School district. The concerns plaguing teachers are most likely consistent across the same district given the reach of district policies. For future research and practice, educating preservice teachers about working with students with disabilities is critical. With inclusion models becoming more common in schools, teacher education programs must adopt a more robust approach to addressing students with disabilities. For teachers already in the profession, school districts need to prioritize continued education regarding students with disabilities and effective inclusion models. School districts implementing full-inclusion must intentionally seek feedback from teachers regarding what they need to be successful teachers of disabled students.

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Many people have helped me complete this doctoral dissertation. I want to extend a special thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Dane Joseph, for keeping me on track and being honest with me throughout my work.

I could not have completed my dissertation research without the participation and support of the teachers at La Pine Elementary. They all took time out of their very busy schedules to view my material and complete surveys. Because of their hard work, I was able to gather information that will hopefully impact the way inclusive education is implemented in our district and beyond.

I must also express my appreciation for my NIC. They met with me often throughout this dissertation process to help me synthesize data, give their suggestions, and offer support. As busy professionals themselves, I am indebted to them for the time they dedicated to me and my project.

My good friend Jared and I have been on this education journey together since we met freshman year at George Fox in 2011. Having Jared on this rollercoaster with me was life changing, and I often wonder if I could have done it without him.

Most importantly, I would also like to express my gratitude for my husband, Zeke. During my time in this doctoral program, and especially during this dissertation year, he has gone above and beyond to make me feel cared for and supported. He found ways to make me laugh in the depths of stress and constantly reassured me that I would finish this dissertation and become Dr. Lemos.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to our rainbow baby.

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Chapter 1

Purpose of the Project

This Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) aimed to gain insight into general education teachers' perceptions on their ability to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. In response to newly implemented inclusion models in the studied school district, this ISDiP explored:

1. What information general education teachers feel they are lacking in order to successfully teach students with disabilities in their classrooms.
2. Which delivery methods teachers felt were most effective in providing useful information that respected busy schedules and limited time.

Bend-La Pine Schools has implemented inclusion models at all of its schools as of 2021, with each school at a different place in their implementation process. La Pine Elementary is one of a handful of schools in the district that has fully embraced inclusion and eliminated all behavior, life skills, and other self-contained special education (SPED) programs. This shift means all students identified as having a disability are fully included in their general education classrooms with their typical peers.

Out-of-class resources continue to be available to these students (e.g., calm down rooms, behavior and social skills groups); however, most students spend at least 80% of their day in their general education classrooms. School personnel previously provided instruction to SPED students with challenging behaviors in life skills or behavior classrooms, and as such, these students spent less than 50% of their day in a general education classroom. When these students were in the general education classroom, they were supported by an adult and typically attended to for highly preferred activities. Following the new inclusion model implementation, most of

these students are in their general classrooms for the majority of their day. Amid a lack of available staff to support these students, students do not receive the amount of adult support they received previously. Further, without specific training on how to best serve these students in their classrooms, general education teachers at the studied site feel underprepared and overwhelmed.

Background to the Problem

SPED services in the United States have changed dramatically since the steady acceptance and implementation of inclusion models. In the early 1970s, new civil rights legislation required that all students with special needs receive a free and public education. By 1997, new additions to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) called for including students with special needs into the general education setting and curricula (National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion, 2023). This shift marked the beginning of the partnership between special educators and classroom teachers to meet the needs of special needs students. In 2002, No Child Left Behind was signed into law, which solidified the law that most students with disabilities need to be removed from segregated classrooms (National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion, 2023). Since then, school district personnel across the United States have adopted full-inclusion models in their schools at varying speeds and levels. In larger districts like Bend-La Pine school district, changes were implemented gradually until the 2021–2022 school year, when self-contained behavior and life skills classrooms were dismantled to push the district's full-inclusion initiative forward.

Inclusion is the practice of educating disabled students in their least restrictive environment, which means students with disabilities are typically placed in their general education classroom alongside typical peers. Students with individualized education plans (IEPs) are still provided SPED services in their least restrictive environments, but those services can be

delivered in the students' general education classroom setting rather than being removed from their classroom to visit a separate SPED classroom (National Catholic Board on Full Inclusion, 2023). The impact of educating disabled students alongside nondisabled peers has been highly underrated by researchers and educators, because academic growth is positively associated with the skill level of their classmates (Hanushek et al., 2001). Justice et al. (2014) stated, "Children with low skills in a given area seem to benefit the most from being surrounded by more competent classmates" (p. 1).

Disabled students and typical students alike benefit from teachers who are confident and knowledgeable at educating children with disabilities. Unfortunately, many teachers do not have adequate time in their busy schedules to partake in training for every aspect of inclusion that presents as new and challenging. Additionally, most school districts lack the resources to create quality professional development opportunities for general education teachers' work with disabled students. The number of students in the 2019–2020 academic year who qualified for SPED services increased to 15%, compared to just 13% in 2009–2010 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022); however, professional development opportunities for general education teachers have not become more robust in their content regarding students with disabilities.

When district SPED leaders dismantled life skills and behavior classrooms in 2021, students who occupied those programs were placed into general education classrooms with general education teachers. The latter educators oftentimes do not have the level of experience and expertise to effectively manage many of La Pine Elementary's most challenging SPED students. For students to be successful in the school environment, they must be able to self-regulate. Self-regulation includes the ability to pay attention, regulate behavior, and control

impulses (Mather et al., 2001). When students are not able to demonstrate self-regulation, individuals with developmental disabilities often engage in challenging behaviors such as eloping, yelling, refusing tasks, using inappropriate language, and experiencing overall dysregulation (Desrochers & Fallon, 2014). Symptoms of dysregulation can disrupt teaching, learning, and can also create a hostile and frustrating environment for teachers and students. Teachers in the Bend-La Pine school district have expressed frustration about the disrupted learning occurring from dysregulated students remaining in general education classrooms. Additionally, SPED teachers have described being overwhelmed by the lack of appropriate staffing provided to support challenging students being fully included into general education classrooms.

Many of the aforementioned concerns have been brought to union representatives, who have been in communication with district leaders in an attempt to remedy the concerns. In a February 2023 Bend Education Association survey regarding disrupted learning, there were over 940 member responses. All union members were invited to participate in the survey, which was compiled and provided to school board members following union review. On one particular question where respondents were given a sliding 0–100 scale, with 0 being *no concern* and 100 being *high concern*, union members had an opportunity to rate their level of concern regarding disrupted learning environments and behaviors. Results showed the average level of concern was 83 out of 100 (Barclay, 2023). With the average rating being in the *very concerned* range, it was clear something needed to be done to better support teachers in their work with SPED students.

Bemiller (2019) conducted a mixed methods study that examined attitudes toward inclusion and preparation to teach in inclusive classrooms. A third-grade teacher in Bemiller's (2019) study expressed concern and stated, "The district is pushing inclusive curriculum but not

providing students with help with social and emotional issues that are also a part of successful inclusion. To be successful teaching children with special needs, more targeted support staff is essential” (p. 7). In addition, other participants expressed the need for training to better understand how to best work with students who have social and emotional challenges.

To increase teachers’ perceptions of preparation toward inclusive education, they need to be better equipped through special education training (Kisbu-Sakarya et al., 2021). If teachers are educated on the various disabilities and their characteristics, many unwelcomed student behaviors could be avoided or reduced. Further education on engaging effectively with SPED students could improve both teachers’ opinions of these students and their own perceptions of their abilities to effectively teach these students. Most traditional teacher preparation programs include some instruction on working with students with disabilities; however, this instruction typically includes one course over the entirety of the program, and educators have often described this course as “generic and perfunctory” (Mader, 2017, p. 1). Many new teachers enter jobs in education without adequate experience or instruction on how to most effectively teach students with disabilities. As full-inclusion models increasingly become standard practice in schools, teachers are unprepared.

Additionally, even experienced teachers may be new to having students with challenging academic needs or behaviors in their classrooms for an entire school day. Many teachers have inflexible methods of classroom management and students with disabilities may struggle to function in these classrooms. Teachers should not be left to figure out the nuances of working with students with disabilities without support. When teachers are required to face these challenges alone, their self-efficacy for carrying out instructional and related tasks might be adversely impacted. These challenges might also lead to professional attrition.

In the Bend-La Pine School District, the new inclusion models were implemented swiftly and with little training for classroom teachers. Immediately following the district's rapid shift during the 2021–2022 school year, general education teachers became responsible for educating students who, in many cases, had spent their entire school careers either in self-contained behavior or life-skills classrooms with no additional training. In an attempt to provide opportunities for collaboration between general education and SPED teachers, La Pine Elementary's principal scheduled one-on-one weekly meetings for learning specialists and classroom teachers to discuss issues and concerns relating to their shared students. This practice was not standard across the district, but was seen as necessary by the principal due to the number of high-needs students at the school. As the school year progressed, teachers expressed their concerns over their perceived failures in working with disabled students in their classes and pleaded for additional support. Providing every teacher with the support they need was difficult with many students to serve and limited SPED staff. Despite teachers sharing their concerns with learning specialists, school administrators, and district administrators, no additional support was provided in the form of training or additional personnel. These myriad challenges led classroom teachers to develop negative perceptions of inclusion models that could have been avoided, had training and support been provided.

Such a challenge is reflected in prior research; for instance, researchers found a lack of knowledge about Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) led to negative attitudes about inclusion (Kisbu-Sakarya et al., 2021). However, this phenomenon is not unique to challenges with ASD students. As time has continued to pass into the 2022–2023 school year without action taken by the district to support teachers in their work with students with disabilities, students have continued to exhibit unsafe behaviors in classrooms, and teachers have expressed nearing the end

of what they can tolerate. Without district intervention to remedy these problems and support teachers in their work with SPED students, it is likely teachers will leave education altogether to pursue different careers. As such, it is an important mission to explore and identify ways to increase the quality of the inclusive education implementation, particularly teacher preparation and support.

The Council for Exceptional Children (2023) published a set of high-leverage practices (HLPs) for special educators and other teacher candidates. Through this list, teachers are able to evaluate themselves in the areas of practice of (a) collaboration, (b) assessment, (c) social–emotional–behavioral, and (d) instructional. Within these four categories are 22 standards for practice that every special education teacher should practice and master. These HLPs were constructed following a need in recent decades for clearer standards for teacher preparation programs and for special educators to follow in their own practice. Although these HLPs are aimed to support special education teachers, many of these practices could and should be applied to general education teachers in their work with students with disabilities. For example, teaching social behaviors (HLP 9) and providing scaffolded supports (HLP 15) are two of the 22 standards that should be addressed by general education teachers. The challenge is that many general education teachers do not know these practices exist, which is similar to other resources that positively impact the education of students with disabilities. Having clear standards for effectively teaching students with disabilities guides special education and general education teachers alike toward more effective practice.

Significance of the Study

Bend-La Pine schools must find more effective and efficient ways to provide information regarding inclusive practices to teachers (e.g., inclusion model implementation strategies)

besides traditional professional development, which typically takes half or sometimes a whole school day. Providing alternative methods in delivering crucial information to teachers to improve their practice would save monetary resources on the substitutes who would otherwise have to cover classrooms during these professional development sessions. These innovative methods would also allow teachers to spend less time out of their classrooms, away from their students. At La Pine Elementary and across Bend-La Pine school district, pleas for training and additional preparation, specifically in regard to their most challenging students, have since been overlooked. If Bend-La Pine school district does not begin to provide general education teachers with targeted resources to increase their knowledge and skill in their work with students with disabilities, the possibility of additional teacher turnover and teachers leaving the profession permanently may be inevitable.

Teachers who are properly educated in working with students with disabilities yield a positive impact on both those with disabilities and their typical peers. Students with disabilities have more diverse and unique educational needs compared to their typical peers. These needs could be academic but may also include additional sensory, social, emotional, and behavior support. When disabled students do not have any combination of their needs met, classroom disruptions are inevitable. These situations pull teachers away from other students to attempt to help the struggling student or seek help from school personnel. During these situations, which can happen multiple times per day, the remaining students are forced to wait patiently for their teacher to return to the task at hand. These seemingly small chunks of missed instructional time add up and are frustrating for students and teachers; unfortunately, when one student constantly disrupts learning, their typical peers can form negative perceptions of that student and others like them (Autio, 2019). When classroom teachers have the appropriate skills to effectively engage

with students with disabilities, classrooms can remain places of learning and safety for all students. Moreover, when disabled students have their needs met in their classrooms, typical students see these students as their peers, and not as frightening or distracting students who do not belong. Providing teachers with resources and education in this area benefits everyone, as this support helps all involved to accept and care for those with different needs—one of the founding principles behind inclusive education (EducationLinks, 2018).

Ethical Considerations

All members of the Networked Improvement Community (NIC) signed a confidentiality statement (see Appendix A) to ensure the information discussed in NIC meetings remained in the team. Each research participant signed a research subject informed consent form (see Appendix B), which outlined the basis of the study and what to expect. Participants were given a number only known to themselves and me. The number was used to track fidelity of responses and maintain confidentiality within the NIC. NIC members were given pseudonyms so their insight and responses could be shared in the final research product. Only the respective individual and I are aware of each pseudonym; however, given the conversational nature of the NIC meetings, it is possible that other NIC members might decipher the identity of a particular pseudonym. It is highly unlikely anyone else would.

Throughout the course of the study, paper copies of survey results were kept in a locked file cabinet in my locked office. When copies of surveys were made for the purpose of NIC planning, copies remained in the meeting room throughout the duration of the meeting and were shredded following meeting closure. No research participants are identified by name in any ISDiP documents (including surveys). All data will be kept in a locked cabinet by me for a 5-year period following the completion of the ISDiP. After that 5-year period, all data will be

shredded. The initial meeting with NIC members was held without the presence of the school principal to assess staff comfort levels and thoughts on their willingness to share opinions in their principal's presence. After each team member agreed they were comfortable with the presence of the school principal, the principal was invited to participate in further NIC meetings. A one-on-one meeting between the school principal and I took place prior to the initial NIC meeting to discuss their position of power relative to others in the NIC. The principal was reminded that whatever information was shared in the NIC meetings needed to remain confidential and could not be used to negatively affect other NIC members outside of the context of this research.

Definitions of Terms

The term *disabilities* includes each of the 13 disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

- *Autism spectrum disorder* is a developmental disability with varying levels of severity and ability. ASD is often characterized by differences in communication, repetitive behaviors, rigidity, and specific interests (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022).
- *Deafness/hearing impairment* describes hearing loss that is aided or unaided, impacts the processing of linguistic information, and adversely affects performance in the educational environment (Florida Department of Education, 2023a).
- *Developmental delay* refers to a child who has not yet gained the developmental skills typical of children their age and could include cognitive, functional, motor, social, language, or speech delays (SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital, 2023).

- *Emotional disturbance*, known in Oregon as *emotional behavior disorder*, is persistent (i.e., not sufficiently responsive to implemented evidence-based interventions) and consistent emotional or behavioral responses that adversely affect performance in the educational environment (Florida Department of Education, 2023b).
- *Intellectual disability*: A person with an intellectual disability has problems with the mental abilities that affect skills in intellectual functioning (i.e., learning, problem solving, and judgment) and adaptive functioning (i.e., activities of daily life such as communication and independent living; Schaepper et al., 2021).
- *Multiple disabilities* is when a student has more than one disability affecting their ability to function in the academic setting.
- *Orthopedic impairment* is a severe skeletal, muscular, or neuromuscular impairment (Florida Department of Education, 2023d).
- *Other health impairment* includes disabilities that require a medical diagnosis and affect a student's ability to learn and access curriculum. These diagnoses include, but are not limited to, asthma, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), Tourette syndrome, diabetes, epilepsy, or a heart condition (Florida Department of Education, 2023c).
- *Specific learning disability* is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language (spoken or written), that can affect the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or engage in mathematical processes (CT.gov, n.d.).

- *Speech or language impairment* is a disorder of speech sounds, fluency, or voice that interferes with communication and adversely affects performance and/or functioning in the educational environment (Florida Department of Education, 2023e).
- *Traumatic brain injury* is an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or impairment that adversely affects educational performance (Florida Department of Education, 2023f).
- *Visual impairment/blindness* describes students who are blind, have no vision or little potential for using vision, low vision, a visual impairment after best correction that adversely affects their educational performance, or who have been diagnosed with a progressive condition that will most likely result in a visual impairment (Florida Department of Education, 2023g).

At La Pine Elementary as of February 2023, the following disability categories were represented in the student population: (a) ASD, (b) specific learning disability, (c) developmental delay, (d) other health impairment, (e) intellectual disability, and (f) emotional disturbance.

Life skills programs are SPED placements for students whose developmental, intellectual, and academic levels are significantly delayed compared to typical peers. Even with appropriate accommodations and modifications, the general education classroom and curriculum would not be accessible for these students. Life skills programs teach students the necessary skills to be a functioning member of society. These skills may include (a) job skills, (b) money, or (c) basic cooking (Judson Independent School District, 2023).

Modifications and *accommodations* are strategies put in place in SPED to make education more accessible for students with disabilities. Accommodations are tools that can be provided to students to allow them to access their education. Examples of accommodations are (a) flexible

seating, (b) access to breaks, or (c) additional time on tests or assignments. A modification is an actual change to the curriculum to make the assignments less challenging or shorter than what is assigned to typical students. Some examples of modifications could include (a) a fourth-grade student working on first-grade math, or (b) a student being asked to write three paragraphs when their peers are expected to write five (Center for Parent Information and Resources, n.d.).

Self-contained behavior classrooms are placements for students whose education is highly impacted by their behavior. These classrooms typically have a small group of students where the teacher addresses academics in addition to social, emotional, and behavioral skills to eventually transition them back into a general education classroom (Chen, 2022).

Chapter Summary

This ISDiP aimed to determine which aspects of the newly implemented inclusion model were challenging for teachers in their work with students with disabilities. A particularly critical aspect of this research was determining what information teachers felt they were missing to successfully teach SPED students. Additionally, I sought to determine which alternative delivery methods to traditional training teachers felt respected their time and effectively taught needed information.

The full-inclusion model is relatively new in the Bend-La Pine school district. In the 2021–2022 academic year, district leaders dismantled life-skills and behavior programs. The transition away from life-skills and behavior programs put these more challenging students into general education classrooms for nearly a full day, which teachers were unprepared to handle. Research has shown educating students with disabilities alongside their typical peers has many benefits (Justice et al. 2014); however, these benefits occur only when teachers have been properly trained on how to effectively work with students with disabilities. Teachers in the Bend-

La Pine school district have expressed frustration by the lack of training and support provided during this important shift in how to approach special education. Unfortunately, inclusion models have received negative reviews among teachers because of the problems that have arisen due to lack of appropriate training and support.

Chapter 2 describes the participants, reviews data analysis approaches, and explains the qualitative and quantitative results. Chapter 3 contains a discussion of the research findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The purpose of this Improvement Science Dissertation in Practice (ISDiP) was to gain insight into general education teachers' perceptions of their knowledge of full-inclusion model aspects implemented to effectively teach students with disabilities. Additionally, I aimed to understand how teachers preferred to receive new information in regard to their work with students with disabilities.

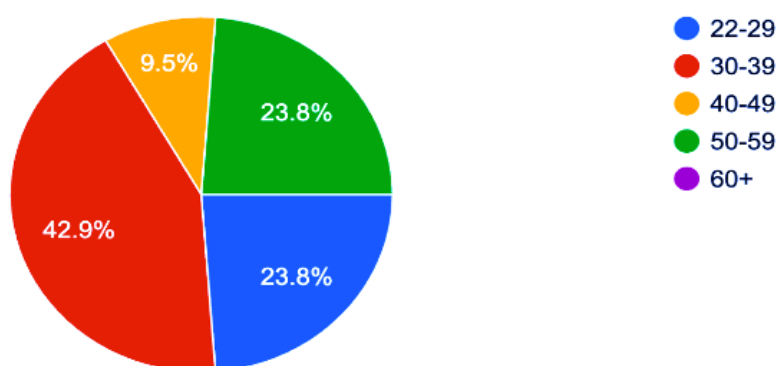
For this study, data were collected from teachers at La Pine Elementary, a K–5 elementary school in the city of La Pine, Oregon, in the Bend-La Pine School District. La Pine Elementary had approximately 405 students in the 2021–2022 academic year, with a racial and ethnic distribution of 89% White, 5.9% Hispanic/Latino, 3.3% two or more races, 1.5% Black or African American, and 0.4% Asian or Pacific Islander (U.S. News & World Report, 2023). The school participates in a Title I program, as 70% of students are considered low-income.

The research participants in this ISDiP were general education teachers from kindergarten through fifth grade, and three teachers who taught physical education (PE), art, and library, respectively. The sample consisted of 21 staff members with (a) three teachers per grade level (18), (b) two licensed teachers (PE and art), and (c) one certified staff member (library). The participants' ethnic distribution was 85% White, 10% Asian, and 5% Hispanic. As the primary researcher, I chose to include specialists (i.e., PE, art, library) due to their daily experiences with special education (SPED) students in their classes and their lack of training in working with these students. This study provided a valuable opportunity to gain further insight into the perceptions of these teachers, and equipped these staff members with information that could improve their work with disabled students. Participants had between 1–18 years of

teaching experience, with 25% having between 1–5 years of experience, 40% having between 6–10 years of experience, and 35% having between 11–18 years of experience. Participants' ages at the time of the study are described in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Self-Identified Age Ranges of Research Participants



The sample was chosen based on need and accessibility. Additionally, a Networked Improvement Community (NIC) was formed to advise my efforts in the study. The five NIC members were involved in the study on a voluntary basis and were not participants in this ISDiP study. The NIC employed a plan–do–study–act (PDSA) model, which ran for a 90-day cycle. Many conversations took place during the 2021–2022 school year with teachers regarding the swift shift to district-wide inclusion models. These conversations prompted the NIC team to learn more about which aspects of inclusion were the most challenging for teachers to implement. The team also sought to discover what could increase teachers' perceptions of preparedness to include students with disabilities in their classrooms.

The “plan” phase of the PDSA ran from September 13, 2022 through October 18, 2022. This phase of the study involved frequent NIC meetings to strategize how information would be delivered to teachers and which topics would be addressed. The “do” and “study” phases ran from October 24, 2022 through January 12, 2023. These phases of the study involved informational pieces being released to participants approximately once a week, which was followed by a short survey. The “act” phase took place after the conclusion of the study for the educational purpose of completing the ISDiP document. The “act” phase included acknowledging additional areas that had not been addressed throughout the course of the “do” and “study” phases.

The ISDiP was presented to the sample group before the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year. Participants completed a research participant informed consent form (see Appendix B) and a beginning of year survey (see Appendix C). The latter asked participants a variety of questions about perceptions of preparedness in various aspects of inclusion. Data were also collected on variables such as years of classroom experience, age range, and grade taught.

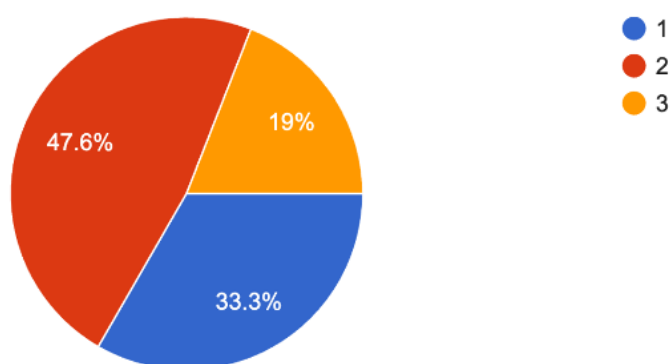
Survey questions focused on the following categories: (a) specific impactful disabilities primarily represented at La Pine Elementary, (b) individualized education plans (IEPs), (c) beginning of year tools and resources, and (d) challenging components of specific disabilities. Questions 1–26 asked teachers to rate themselves on a 1–3 scale, with 1 being little to no knowledge on the subject, 2 representing some knowledge, and 3 being extensive knowledge. A 3-point response scale was chosen because it simplified the choices for participants, allowing them to only have one midrange option from which to choose.

Questions 27–30 provided teachers with a table with various challenging behaviors associated with typically difficult disabilities; participants circled the behaviors that most

impacted their classroom settings. Survey results were entered into a Google form and converted into visualizations (e.g., pie charts) for clear interpretation. Figure 2 is an example of the pie charts created.

Figure 2

Teacher Perceptions of Comfort Regarding Reading and Interpreting IEPs



The NIC team analyzed the data to identify themes across participants. These themes informed which topics and in what order I distributed informational pieces to participants. The NIC analyzed the data and planned content and delivery methods after baseline data were collected. Immediately following the delivery of information, participants were sent the link to a post informational feedback Google survey (see Appendix D). These surveys were designed to gather opinions on the efficacy of delivery of informational pieces. Additionally, survey answers showed how the information increased teacher knowledge of inclusion aspects previously identified as areas of weakness.

Resources were provided to participants approximately once per week, and post-information surveys were collected following each delivery. The resources provided to teachers

served as intervention opportunities in addition to providing new information about a specific topic. Participants were provided with six informational pieces from October 24, 2022 through January 12, 2023 that addressed topics from the beginning-of-year survey previously identified as low-confidence areas. Following the conclusion of the “do” and “study” phases, participants were provided with an optional research participant feedback form (see Appendix E). This survey provided the opportunity to share any final thoughts and overall perceptions of the delivery methods presented in this study versus a traditional professional development opportunity.

Qualitative Findings

The beginning of year survey revealed valuable information regarding the confidence of classroom teachers on various SPED-related topics. The first section of questions asked teachers to rate their comfort level on a scale from 1 (low confidence)–3 (high confidence) in identifying the observable characteristics of various disabilities. Results from the first section are noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Teacher Perceptions of Ability in Recognizing Identifiable Characteristics of Disabilities

Disability	1- Low confidence <i>n</i> (%)	2- Moderate confidence <i>n</i> (%)	3- High confidence <i>n</i> (%)
Autism Spectrum Disorder	1 (4.8)	18 (85.7)	2 (9.5)
Specific learning disability	5 (23.8)	16 (76.2)	0 (0)
Developmental delay	7 (33.3)	14 (66.7)	(0)
ADHD	4 (19)	13 (61.9)	4 (19)
Emotional/behavior disorder	8 (38.1)	11 (57.1)	1 (4.8)
Intellectual disability	8 (38.1)	13 (61.9)	0 (0)

Low and moderate confidence scores demonstrated an area of need for resources and additional training. Although some areas had more high-confidence ratings than expected, the amount of disabilities with zero high-confidence ratings was also surprising. Originally, the plan was to provide teachers with information about the various disabilities to increase their overall knowledge about the students they serve in their classrooms; however, after various discussions with the NIC, it was determined that solely providing information may not be as valuable as providing teachers with tools for how to address the challenges associated with those disabilities.

The second section of questions asked teachers to rate their comfort level on a similar scale in regard to specific components of working with students with disabilities. Results from the second section are described in Table 2.

Table 2*Teacher Perceptions of Ability to Effectively Manage Aspects of Work With SPED Students*

Specific components of working with students with disabilities	1- Low confidence <i>n</i> (%)	2- Moderate confidence <i>n</i> (%)	3- High confidence <i>n</i> (%)
Reading and interpreting IEPs	7 (33.3)	10 (47.6)	4 (19)
Modifications and accommodations	3 (14.3)	12 (57.1)	6 (28.6)
IEP versus 504	5 (23.8)	10 (47.6)	6 (28.6)
Standards based grading	9 (42.9)	11 (52.4)	1 (4.7)
Delivering service minutes	8 (38.1)	10 (47.6)	3 (14.3)
Teaching and modifying writing	4 (19)	11 (52.4)	6 (28.6)
Teaching and modifying math	5 (23.8)	9 (42.9)	7 (33.3)
Teaching and modifying reading	4 (19)	11 (52.4)	6 (28.6)
Teaching and modifying other subjects	6 (28.6)	11 (52.4)	4 (19)
Teaching routines	5 (23.8)	9 (42.9)	7 (33.3)
Relationship building with students	0 (0)	8 (38.1)	13 (61.9)
Peer relationships	2 (9.5)	13 (61.9)	6 (28.6)
Discussing disabilities with typical peers	3 (14.3)	10 (47.6)	8 (38.1)
Using Paraprofessionals in class	4 (19)	5 (23.8)	12 (57.1)
Using SPED teachers in class	4 (19)	12 (57.1)	5 (23.8)
Communicating with SPED staff	1 (4.8)	8 (38.1)	12 (57.1)
Using visual schedules/PECS	6 (28.6)	10 (47.6)	5 (23.8)
Introducing & using fidgets	6 (28.6)	12 (57.1)	3 (14.3)
Determining if fidgets/flexible seating are appropriate	1 (4.7)	14 (66.7)	6 (28.6)
Determining the best types of fidgets/flexible seating for a student	8 (38.1)	8 (38.1)	5 (23.8)

Data demonstrated the lowest confidence areas were in (a) delivering service minutes, (b) reading and interpreting IEPs, (c) conducting standards-based grading, and (d) providing flexible seating and fidget options. There were other low-confidence areas; however, due to time constraints and availability, only the topics with the greatest need were addressed. The NIC team attempted to address multiple low-confidence areas in each information delivery provided to teachers.

Alternatively, teachers expressed many areas of high confidence, such as relationship building with disabled students, using paraprofessionals in classrooms, and using SPED teachers in classrooms. For some participants in this study, reporting their confidence levels lead to results that do not align with what is typically observed. For example, the beginning of year survey data indicated 57% of teachers felt highly confident in their abilities to use educational assistants (EAs) effectively in their classrooms. Conversely, EAs have expressed informally that they felt teachers do not always use their assistance appropriately, especially with full-inclusion in place. This difference in teacher self-ratings versus what is observed by others was discussed with the NIC, and one member noted their surprise at how many areas were rated as high confidence despite experiences indicating otherwise. Large percentages in most areas were rated as moderate confidence areas. Whereas a 3-point scale can provide simpler answer choices for participants than more extensive scales, having fewer options created lack of clarity in this circumstance. If participants did not feel highly confident or low in confidence, they rated themselves as having moderate confidence. Although these areas were still reviewed by the NIC, using a 4-point scale to allow for variances in middle-choice options may have provided more useful data.

The last section of questions listed four disabilities that are typically accompanied by challenging behaviors. Some of these behaviors include (a) task refusal, (b) defiance, (c) emotional dysregulation, (d) aggression, and (e) rigidity. When provided with a list of choices, teachers were asked to select which behaviors associated with that disability were the most challenging for them to manage in their classrooms. For autism, teachers had the most challenges with (a) managing aggression and outbursts, (b) redirecting, and (c) facilitating positive peer communication. The most common challenges with emotional behavior disorders were (a) task refusal and defiance, (b) aggression, and (c) emotional dysregulation. Teachers expressed many difficulties working with students with intellectual and learning disabilities, with impulse control being the most challenging. ADHD can pose many challenges in classrooms, and teachers reported (a) movement and sensory needs, (b) lack of focus, and (c) finding effective accommodations as the most difficult.

Following each of the six topics presented, participants were prompted to complete a short survey. Each survey aimed to determine the perceptions of teachers' knowledge on the topic following the presentation. The surveys also sought to gain perspective into teachers' opinions on the method in which information was delivered.

Post Delivery Survey 1 Findings

Topic 1, reading and interpreting IEPs (see Appendix F), had the lowest engagement rate of the six surveys. This result was most likely due to the lack of incentives at this time, which were implemented for the remaining surveys. Originally, incentives were not offered to participants for completing surveys. I overestimated the number of participants who would complete surveys solely based on agreeing at the beginning of the year that they would. As the school year picked up and teachers became busier, survey participation was not a priority and I

determined that providing incentives would help boost participation. The first presentation was delivered in the form of a narrated video sent to participants' emails that used a current student's IEP (with identifiable information removed). In the video, I reviewed aspects of a student's IEP that classroom teachers need to know, such as (a) goals, (b) accommodations, and (c) present levels. Of the 61% of participants who engaged in the survey, 69% felt the presentation provided them with helpful or new information that informed their teaching practice. Thirty-one percent felt they were neutral; the information was not unhelpful, but did not necessarily present any new information they could use. Ninety-two percent of participants expressed they liked the way the information was delivered, and only 8% rated themselves as neutral. Every teacher who participated in the survey felt the video delivery honored their time; however, nearly 40% of teachers did not participate in Survey 1, which could be attributed to multiple factors.

Lack of incentives may have played a role in low participation; however, low participation could be attributed to the potential that teachers felt the video was too long (14:28) and not worth their time. Such an inference was derived from participant number 16, who stated, "I think ideally 10 minutes or under would be best to honor everyone's time." Many participants chose to leave additional feedback in the form of comments. Participant number 20 explained, "The video format was great. It allows for learning to take place on my own time. And, it allows me to go back and refer to it if need be." Number 20 also mentioned:

Although the information was helpful in addressing the needs of students with disabilities in my classroom, it can't give me more time, less other students, and other adults in the room to truly meet the IEP holder's needs and accommodations.

Although the topic did not specifically aim to address implementing student IEPs, comments similar to those helped guide future topics, which were designed to address more tools and tips for working with disabled students.

Post Delivery Survey 2 Findings

Topic 2, the ADHD Iceberg (see Appendix G), yielded greater teacher participation (90%). Information was presented in the form of a paper infographic delivered to teachers' classrooms. Teachers were asked to rate their confidence and knowledge in recognizing the characteristics of ADHD and the reasoning behind its criteria. Teachers were also asked to rate the degree to which the information improved their practice, and whether the delivery respected their time as a busy teacher. Of the teachers who participated, 90% felt the information provided them with new or helpful information, and 95% liked the infographic format for delivery. All participating teachers (100%) felt the infographic delivery method honored their time. Teacher comments on Survey 2 were overwhelmingly positive. Participant 16 mentioned, "Dense infographics are 10/10. I like that with this method I now have a physical resource I can file away and reference later." Participant 21 shared, "I love the hard copy cheat sheet that I can add to my teacher notebook and refer to when I need it. Sometimes this is better than trying to remember which file it is kept in." Participant 8 said, "Super helpful and a really quick method of delivery." Participant 20 noted:

It is also a reminder that: there is always more lying under the surface, to have more empathy for students that exhibit these behaviors, and more knowledge about these behaviors and their possible causes can help me in my approach to these students.

Post Delivery Survey 3 Findings

Topic 3 addressed the challenges with redirecting students and being ready to learn after recess (see Appendix H). Oftentimes, students return from recess and are still very physically and emotionally escalated from the excitement. Calming students down and getting them ready to learn again can be challenging and, without the right strategies, ineffective. The information was delivered in the form of a narrated PowerPoint sent to participants' emails. This presentation was 10 minutes and 14 seconds in duration, and 95% of teachers completed the survey. Seventy-five percent of participants felt the information provided them with new or helpful information, and 25% were neutral. Of these participants, 95% liked the narrated PowerPoint presentation format. The remaining 5% (one participant) expressed they did not like to be taught new information in this manner and left a comment stating they prefer paper handouts. Ninety-five percent of participants felt this presentation honored their time. In the comments section, participants expressed they enjoyed both the video and the content. Participant 17 stated:

I'd love to start some sort of calming routine when classes come into the art room. The video was good with good resources linked too. I think it honored my time. Maybe it was because I was really engaged in the subject, but I was surprised when the video was already over.

Many participants enjoyed the strategies provided in the presentation. Participant 7 shared, "I appreciated getting info along with some strategies to try if needed." Participant 11 wrote, "I thought the presentation of information was very informative and engaging. I learned some simple strategies that I will implement. It's nice to know that recess is an issue for many grades."

Post Delivery Survey 4 Findings

Topic 4 addressed chunking tasks to limit refusal and avoidance, which was delivered as a double-sided, color infographic (see Appendix I). Participants received a paper copy of the infographic and were also sent an email copy. Survey 4 had 95% participation. Ninety percent of teachers chose to engage in the paper infographic, and the remaining 10% engaged in the electronic version sent to their emails. When participants were asked to reflect on their ability to implement the strategies presented in the infographic, 80% of teachers felt very confident with the content and their ability to implement the knowledge in their classrooms. Twenty percent felt neutral, which may be attributed to the nature of some participants' roles; for example, PE and library teachers typically do not provide students with many opportunities to complete written work. Participant 2 shared, "This one [survey] was a little harder for me because I don't use pencils in my subject matter very much." Of the total participants, 95% liked the infographic delivery format, whether they chose to engage in the paper or electronic copy. The remaining 5% were neutral. All participants (100%) felt the infographic delivery honored their time as a busy teacher; participant 17 stated it contained "good information, and not too much." Overall, participants felt the infographic contained useful information with tips they could use in their classrooms immediately.

Participants also appreciated they could refer to the infographic later when students were struggling to tackle larger tasks and assignments. Participant 10 wrote, "This was a perfect reference guide with a ton of to-the-point, helpful information." Participant 11 shared, "I've seen how when kids are presented steps in chunks of time it creates more positive results. This information reinforced that." Teachers recognized these strategies have positive impacts for disabled students and their typical students. Participant 20 noted, "Along with our students with

disabilities, this strategy fits well for most LPE students whose executive functioning skills aren't well developed [yet].”

Post Delivery Survey 5 Findings

Topic 5 addressed strategies for accommodating and meeting students' sensory needs in the classroom. Information was presented to teachers in the form of a narrated PowerPoint presentation video (15:58) sent to their emails (see Appendix J). Participants were also emailed the PowerPoint slides to view at a later date and to access links to videos and resources. The goal of this topic was to give teachers tools that work for *all* students, not only their disabled students with sensory needs written into their IEPs. The topic also aimed to provide teachers with additional knowledge about the various types of sensory needs and how to help students learn about their own sensory profiles. Oftentimes, teachers are overwhelmed by the sensory needs of a small handful of their class and feel they do not have the time or support to manage those needs (Mere-Cook, 2016). When teachers can find ways to integrate sensory experiences and breaks into their whole-class routine, they can meet the needs of their disabled students without much additional effort.

Survey 5 had a 76% participation rate, which may have been attributed to the timing of the delivery directly following winter break, when many teachers work hard to reestablish routines and procedures in classrooms. Teachers may have been more tired and less willing to take on additional tasks, subsequently choosing not to engage in the material. Teachers expressed varying opinions of both the information and the method in which it was delivered. Of the 76% who responded to the survey, only 38% of participants felt confident with the material and implementing it in their classrooms. In the remaining group, 56% expressed they still had questions and parts of the material felt confusing.

Over half of participating teachers felt they still needed more information and needed clarity, which implied that addressing students' sensory needs may be an area for future training. Perceived efficacy of the delivery method was low compared to previous topics. Fifty-six percent of participants liked the way the information was delivered, and 44% felt neutral. Interestingly, 95% of participants liked the format for Topic 3, which had an identical delivery format. The final question on the survey added clarity to this change in opinions regarding the same delivery method. Thirteen participants felt the narrated PowerPoint presentation did not honor their time as busy teachers compared to the 5% who felt similarly following Topic 3. The difference in video length was approximately 5 minutes, which many teachers felt was too long. Participant 10 explained, "I loved the video so much and it had great info, but it was hard to attend. . . . But overall, I loved the information given!" Similarly, participant 14 wrote, "It was a really long video. . . . I found myself fast forwarding a couple of times." Participant 17 expressed, "Getting the info through a video is not my favorite. I appreciate that you sent the ppt [PowerPoint] as well." Teachers enjoyed the examples provided in the video that they could access at later dates, and also enjoyed the video clips included of their colleagues using some of the strategies in their own classrooms.

Post Delivery Survey 6 Findings

Topic 6 was a double-sided, colorful infographic presented both electronically and on paper and addressed how to optimize the use of learning specialists (SPED teachers) and EAs in classrooms (see Appendix K). Survey participation returned to 95% for this final survey and had positive feedback from teachers. Of the 95% who participated in the survey, 55% viewed the paper copy and 45% viewed the electronic version. This topic could have been addressed in multiple ways over the course of weeks due to the sheer volume of changes that have been made

to the district's SPED model. Full-inclusion is a new concept for many classroom teachers and looks quite different from traditional SPED models (Odom et al., 2001).

As represented by the 30% of participants who still felt confused and had questions about the information presented in Topic 6, there is still great need for further clarification on many academic subjects for teachers. Ninety percent of teachers appreciated the paper and electronic infographic delivery format, and the remaining 10% felt neutral. All but 5% of participants felt this method of delivery honored their time, which was consistent with the other infographics delivered throughout the study. More than one teacher expressed they enjoyed having access to both paper and electronic copies of resources. Participant 10 wrote, "I love having a digital copy, but I also love a paper copy." Participant 21 expressed, "I look forward to the paper copy. . . . It's actually kind of nice to have it both ways." The content of this presentation also proved to be needed and timely. Participant 11 stated, "This was really great to understand the different ways IEP minutes can be met and how there are many outlets for students to receive these minutes. I like the in-depth breakdown. Perfect timing." The need for this information, and further information, was clear. Participant 7 stated, "I found the document very informative. There were things that I learned about our [inclusion] model that I did not know; this after months here."

Classroom teachers at La Pine Elementary felt frustrated by the lack of communication from district leaders about how inclusion should look. Many teachers only had experience with traditional SPED models and felt it was wrongly assumed school staff would know how to approach a new model. Because SPED students are typically removed from their classrooms for SPED services, teachers were alarmed when this removal did not occur. Teachers perceived their students' SPED needs were not met, which caused relational strife between SPED staff and general education teachers. Although it is partially SPED staffs' responsibility to be clear about

how SPED minutes can be met, ultimately it is the responsibility of district leaders to provide education to classroom teachers. When teachers gained knowledge about how their school and district approaches SPED, there was an observable shift in attitude toward inclusion and empowerment in their role in educating these students.

A challenge encountered with gathering information through surveys occurred when participants declined to engage with the material for a specific topic; subsequently, the survey data lacked substance. Participants were encouraged, but not required, to engage with information and surveys following each delivery. The variance in participation rates across surveys may have affected the reliability of the study. All teachers have responsibilities that extend outside their typical work duties (Tingley, 2018). Perhaps during some weeks of the data collection phase of the study, teachers were busier than normal with outside duties and responsibilities, which may have affected their willingness to participate in additional school tasks and limit one's capacity to take on an additional responsibility.

Cycles of Analysis and Implementation

Reading and interpreting student IEPs was an area on the beginning of year survey with a comparatively low score for teacher perceptions of knowledge. Thirty-three percent of participants rated themselves as a 1 (low knowledge/confidence), 48% as a 2 (moderate knowledge/confidence), and only 19% as a 3 (high knowledge/confidence). I determined reading and interpreting IEPs would be the first of six topics addressed with participants and would be done in the form of a narrated video presentation. Survey participation for Survey 1 was 61%, which was lower than anticipated. I addressed the concern with the NIC, who determined low participation could have been due to participants perceiving the content was not applicable or immediately implementable. One NIC member shared although participation was low, the

resource would be available to teachers when they needed the information. A different NIC member revealed an important theme they saw, stating:

We know from these [beginning of year survey] results that many teachers are concerned with explosive, disruptive, and aggressive behaviors. Mr. F confirms that those are the things he mostly gets radio calls for, and knows that it is a problem at the school.

Information regarding dealing with those behaviors is always going to be helpful for teachers.

The NIC determined each of the remaining topics would address the behaviors with which teachers most frequently expressed frustration and difficulty. The NIC believed providing helpful information addressing challenging behaviors would increase participant engagement with the content and provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Topics 3 through 5 addressed regulation and behavior challenges often seen by classroom teachers. Across grade levels, students were returning from recess dysregulated and not ready to learn. This dysregulation posed a difficult area for teachers to address without the necessary tools on regulating after a period of escalation. Additionally, teachers often encounter students who refuse to engage in academic tasks for various reasons. Teachers needed tools for understanding *why* students may refuse to engage in tasks and *how* they can combat task refusal and avoidance. Topic 5 addressed students' sensory needs and the behaviors that can arise when those needs are not met or students feel overloaded. With tips from the school's occupational therapist, I provided teachers with tools they can use with their entire class to provide sensory experiences to calm and regulate students.

Topic 6 addressed the many questions and concerns that arose when a full inclusion model was implemented. In traditional SPED models, many students with academic needs are

removed from the general education classroom for a period of time and brought to a resource room. These resource rooms typically consist of a SPED teacher and a handful of paraprofessionals who can work on student IEP goals either one-on-one or in a small group (Watson, 2019). Because resource rooms no longer exist in Bend-La Pine elementary schools, many students receive their specialized instruction in the general education setting. Similar to a traditional model, these services can be provided by a SPED teacher or paraprofessional. Often, this additional support can be provided in the general education classroom and does not require a removal from the classroom. Understandably, this change was confusing for teachers in this study. Little information was provided regarding full inclusion and what the participants should expect for the SPED services of their disabled students. Teachers needed information about full inclusion, the changes that were made, and how SPED services could be delivered to their students. Table 3 describes the six topics delivered to teachers based on the beginning of year survey results.

Table 3*Information Delivery Topics Provided to Teachers*

Topic	Reading and interpreting IEPs <i>n</i> %	The ADHD iceberg <i>n</i> %	The post-recess insanity <i>n</i> %	Chunking tasks to limit refusal and avoidance <i>n</i> %	Sensory needs <i>n</i> %	Maximizing learning specialists and EAs in your classroom <i>n</i> %
Survey participation rate	61	90	95	95	76	95
Medium	Narrated video	Paper infographic	Narrated PowerPoint presentation	Paper/ electronic infographic	Narrated PowerPoint presentation	Paper/electronic infographic
% high confidence	46	79	85	80	38	70
% med confidence	54	16	15	20	56	30
% low confidence	0	5	0	0	6	0

The daily lives of teachers are busy; as such, the NIC decided to use incentives to increase engagement with the material in the hopes that it would benefit the study by increasing the amount of survey data available. Participants were entered to win a gift card each time they submitted a post-information survey. Additionally, entire grade level teams that completed the surveys received a different prize for each informational delivery. Addressing high-demand topics and providing incentives for completed surveys had a positive impact on overall engagement and participation.

Much of the conversation during NIC meetings related to the method in which information would be delivered to participants. This study sought to gain insight into the specific aspects of inclusion teachers perceived as challenging or unknown, and then provided them with the information they needed to know in a manner that respected their time. Topic 1, reading and interpreting student IEPs, was provided in the form of a narrated video. Topic 2, the ADHD iceberg, was provided in the form of an infographic. The NIC discussed presenting information using a different delivery method for each of the six topics. One NIC member initiated an interesting discussion, and suggested using only two delivery methods: (a) videos and (b) infographics. They shared:

If we were to do a bunch of different information delivery methods and someone really liked the content of one, they may say they liked the delivery even though it had a lot to do with the content. Since part of the research is about *how* [emphasis added] teachers like to learn, it makes sense to stick to two methods that are commonly used to see what they prefer or like about each. This may provide more definitive data. It is a huge problem in the school setting that teachers need to learn things but there isn't enough time to teach them things. People are absent, have other meetings, etc.; In-person training

just doesn't always work. It's important to learn what other ways are effective for delivering information to teachers that they need to improve their practice.

The NIC agreed using the two methods of information delivery would provide clearer data by having more control over the variables.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 2 of this ISDiP, I discussed the beginning of year survey results and the NIC team's process for choosing and creating meaningful information to deliver to participants. Additionally, Chapter 2 details survey results from the six surveys that followed each delivery of information, including feedback and thoughts from participants on the information and methods of delivery.

Chapter 3 contains a further discussion of survey findings and additional participant feedback, along with detailed inferences that were drawn from survey results and outlines implications and recommendations for practice. Recommendations for teacher education programs and school districts are considered, and suggestions for further research are presented.

Chapter 3

Discussion of Findings

Following IRB approval (see Appendix L) and the beginning of year survey, teachers were provided with six pieces of information catered to their specific needs. The information was delivered to teachers using infographics for three of the topics and videos for the remaining three, in alternating order. Participants were asked to complete a short survey following each delivery that gathered opinions of the content in addition to the method in which it was delivered.

Each survey asked participants if they felt the format in which the information was delivered was helpful. The survey also asked if they felt the delivery method honored their time as a busy teacher. On average, 81% (92%, 95%, 56%) of participants felt the video format was helpful, and an average of 94% (100%, 95%, 87%) felt the videos honored their time as busy teachers. For the infographics, an average of 93% (95%, 95%, 90%) felt the delivery was helpful, and an average of 98% (100%, 100%, 95%) felt the infographics honored their time as busy teachers. Each individual survey's data demonstrated teachers preferred the infographics over the videos. Many comments on the surveys following videos expressed videos longer than about 10 minutes felt too long and were therefore challenging for teachers to engage. On longer videos with lengths of approximately 16 minutes, I suggested to teachers that they split the video into chunks or find a time when they are mentally available to fully engage in the content. Regardless of suggestions, participants expressed discontent with the length of some videos and preferred the flexibility of accessing infographics. Participants enjoyed having access to both paper and electronic copies of infographics, although some strongly preferred one over the other.

As a leader, understanding the learning preferences of the teachers in the building can be the difference between teachers ignoring information and engaging willingly with information. Muijsenberg et al. (2023) explained individuals receive and process information differently across individuals and “education does not automatically lead to learning” (Muijsenberg et al., 2023, p. 1). Most educators know this about their students but can be easily forgotten by school and district leaders when they aim to impart new information to teachers. Providing learner-centered education opportunities for teachers, when possible, respects the unique learning preferences of teachers and results in better learning outcomes (Muijsenberg et al., 2023).

Following the conclusion of the study, participants were given the option to complete a feedback survey. This survey asked participants if they preferred the alternative methods of information delivery over traditional professional development opportunities. The survey also provided participants with space to express any remaining thoughts about their experiences with the study. All participants (100%) in the final, optional survey expressed they would rather view an infographic or video than attend an in-person professional development session. Traditional professional development opportunities typically take place over a half or full day and often occur at a location that is not the home school. In addition to the length of the sessions, they often do not address the topics teachers so desperately need. According to a survey in an article from Jayaram et al. (2012), only 27% of teachers rated the training they received on student behavior, discipline, and classroom management as useful. Considering these aspects of working with students with disabilities pose the greatest challenges, this finding is highly problematic. It makes sense that teachers would prefer to learn new information in the form of a video or infographic that they can access on their own time. Participant 10 noted:

For things I don't just need reminders on and instead need to actually learn, the videos were a perfect mode. I could watch them on my own time. Sometimes we have meetings when we aren't mentally in the headspace to take in new information but we still have to sit there and "listen." With videos, we can watch them on our own time, when we are mentally ready to intake information.

Recognizing teachers are not always in the head space to learn new material, especially during after-school hours, is crucial. When possible, providing teachers with material using methods they can access when they are ready shows respect for their time and trust that teachers are responsible professionals.

The comments participants chose to share highlighted both the need for additional training and the need for greater levels of support in school buildings. An anonymous non-classroom teacher noted, "I received no education or guidance from the district on working with students with disabilities." This lack of guidance reflects a problem, considering the educators who teach PE, art, and library work with every student in the school at some point during the school week. Participants noted at La Pine Elementary, there is a large handful of special education (SPED) students who refuse to attend specials because they feel the way classes are run do not accommodate their needs. In addition to providing classroom teachers with training in working with SPED students, these same opportunities should be offered to those who teach specials.

In-person training and professional development opportunities have their place; there is great value in collaborating with peers about classroom strategies and learning from other educators. Unfortunately, many of these opportunities are not targeted to meet the specific needs

of teachers, which can be frustrating and not a valuable use of district resources. Participant 10 further explained:

First, I want to make it clear that I don't want ALL PD via video and I don't want it all in person. I think it truly depends on the training at hand. I find with some trainings, I enjoy the collaboration time with colleagues.

Limitations

This study had some potential limitations. One limitation surrounded the initial survey that was designed to learn what aspects of working with students with disabilities were the most challenging for general education teachers. The results of that survey demonstrated there were many areas in which teachers felt confident already that may not have been demonstrated in practice. This sense of overconfidence can be attributed to the Dunning-Kruger Effect, which occurs when a person's lack of knowledge in a specific area causes them to overestimate their competence (The Decision Lab, 2023). Large percentages in most areas were rated as 2, or moderate confidence areas. Although a 3-point scale can provide simpler answer choices for participants, the smaller scale created a lack of clarity in this circumstance. If participants did not feel highly confident or low in confidence, they rated themselves as having moderate confidence. These areas were still reviewed by the NIC; however, a 4-point scale may have provided more useful data to allow for variance in middle-choice options.

Additionally, the post-information surveys were replicated six times, but reliability could not be guaranteed due to changing conditions throughout the study. One condition was the variance of topics. Teachers may have declined to participate if they perceived a particular topic as less helpful or applicable to their practice. Additionally, there were existing factors outside the control of the primary researcher, such as participant sickness, increased work demand, or lack

of time that potentially contributed to reduced participation. Each of the six surveys were identical, except for a slight modification to one question that was specific to the topic of the information delivered. The same instrument was used following each information delivery, but did not produce consistent results in participation; however, the survey was reliable in gaining consistent information about teachers' opinions of various delivery methods and what was found to be highly effective.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

It could be inferred that participant responses from the beginning of year survey may be consistent across schools in Bend-La Pine School district. The concerns that plague teachers, particularly at the elementary level, are most likely consistent across elementary schools in the same district given the reach of district policies within and across individual schools; however, La Pine Elementary serves a particularly challenging population of students due to higher rates of trauma and increased behavioral needs. Although the concerns of teachers may be consistent across the school district, levels of staff concern regarding aspects of inclusion may be elevated at La Pine Elementary.

La Pine Elementary also has a higher teacher turnover rate compared to other schools in the district. A sample with less overall years of experience with the population may have elevated levels of concern and lower perceptions of preparedness. La Pine Elementary has greater percentages of teachers under the age of 40, which implies less years of teaching experience. Younger teachers with less experience may have greater difficulty managing challenging students. Alternatively, teachers who have more recently completed teacher certification programs may have newer, updated knowledge on how to best work with these students compared to older teachers with more experience.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

An important place to start would be educating preservice teachers about working with students with disabilities. Lee and Cheung (2019) conducted a study involving preservice teachers that suggested receiving actual training in inclusion classrooms was connected to self-efficacy and feelings of preparation.

Many teacher education programs do not have extensive education on working with these students. This gap in curriculum poses a major disservice to teachers, disabled students, and their typical peers. With inclusion models becoming more common in schools, it is critical that teacher education programs adopt a more robust approach to addressing students with disabilities. Participant 13 shared:

I don't think that many teachers know/understand how to approach and/or understand our high-flying students, so oftentimes, they resort to making assumptions about why students act out, and even sometimes ignore those students altogether. This is problematic because it does not give said students the opportunity to learn [academically and socially] from positive role models [teachers and peers], and it's not fair to a student to not receive appropriate accommodations simply because the adult does not understand their diagnosis.

This problem could be remedied if teacher education programs took a more direct approach to educating teachers about the disabled students who will inevitably end up in their future classrooms as full-inclusion models continue to emerge.

For teachers already in the profession, school districts need to prioritize continued education regarding students with disabilities and effective inclusion models. Teachers have expressed two primary concerns underlying ongoing barriers to successful inclusion. First,

schools do not have the appropriate staffing and adult support to sustain SPED students being fully included in general education classrooms. Second, many teachers are not prepared and do not have the appropriate training to effectively teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. Unfortunately, hiring enough additional staff to sufficiently accommodate student needs is not possible for funding and availability reasons. If specialized staff cannot be hired to aid in the implementation of full inclusion, the teachers who work with these students need to receive that specialized and targeted training. It is my recommendation that school districts implementing full-inclusion intentionally seek out feedback from teachers regarding what they need to be successful teachers of SPED students. Learning what information teachers want and need provides a clear roadmap for future training opportunities, which can be delivered through a multitude of methods that respect teacher's time and learning preferences. Participant 13 further explained:

When teachers/adults are aware of a students' diagnosis, they're better able to understand the *why* behind said students' actions. They're able to pull resources that are more fit for the individual, rather than view the situation and give consequences based on what they use for the rest of the students.

It would be helpful for future researchers to examine themes across school districts that implement full inclusion. This study was designed to determine what areas the teachers at one elementary school felt they lacked to effectively work with students with disabilities. This study provides school districts with valuable information to pursue similar information across many schools to aid in the development of targeted and worthwhile professional development opportunities for educators.

Additionally, exploring more in-depth opinions from teachers regarding which topics are most helpful as in-person professional developments would be worthwhile. These conversations could include the teachers' perceived efficacy of videos, and others could explore which topics would be helpful as an infographic or other printed source. Although the infographics in this study were often of similar lengths, the teacher ratings were inconsistent. This discrepancy could be due to the topic not being well suited for an infographic or other factors I did not further explore.

Concluding Remarks

This ISDiP examined what aspects teachers felt they were unprepared for in regard to working with students with disabilities in full-inclusion models. I provided teachers with targeted information using infographics and videos in an attempt to determine if these methods are more effective and appreciated compared to traditional professional development opportunities. It is common for school district administrators to adopt new, data-driven approaches to educating students; however, when reshaping a model such as SPED and putting more educational responsibility onto classroom teachers, training needs to be required to best serve those students. Approximately 15% of the nation's school-aged children have an IEP (Camp, 2023), which means there are a significant number of students being underserved by staff who are not trained on their unique needs.

If Bend-La Pine school district leaders continue to dismiss the needs of classroom teachers in regard to preparing them to work with students with disabilities, there is a risk that additional teachers will leave the profession for good. Lack of support and continued education is a significant cause of teacher turnover and is a problem that needs to be addressed in Bend-La Pine schools. Taking these actions will have a positive impact on the education and well-being of

all students and educators. Participant 20 left a highly impactful comment to conclude their time in my study. They shared:

This work was incredibly important for a few reasons. One is because our district does not support these kiddos with enough adult supervision, therefore, classroom teachers need as many tools as possible to relate to/occupy/and engage with these students who will be in the classroom a lot. . . . As the [number of] students who have these needs increases, and the demands on classroom teachers to engage and manage these high-needs students grows, the methods of delivering information will need to be much more efficient and easy to use.

With more efficient and effective methods for delivering targeted information to teachers, full inclusion can be positive and impactful for *all* students.

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APPENDIX A
CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Confidentiality Statement

The La Pine Elementary (LPE) community is committed to the success and wellbeing of all students and staff. Inclusion is a newer initiative in Bend-La Pine Schools (BLPS) and has left many teachers feeling unprepared to effectively engage with and teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. This research study is designed to determine the types of information as well as delivery methods that general education teachers believe are helpful in increasing perceptions of preparation in teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms in regards to newly implemented inclusion models.

As an active member of the LPE Inclusion Networked Improvement Community (NIC), and as a pivotal part of this study, you will be a participant in conversations relating to staff perceptions of inclusion and will have access to potentially identifiable information of teachers. The confidentiality of staff information is of extreme importance. While staff participants will not be required to provide their name on any surveys, in the attempt to protect them, all discussions, data, and information shared within the group must not be disclosed beyond the capacity of NIC group meetings.

Please sign the confidentiality statement below if you are in agreement.

I, _____, understand that by participating in in LPE Inclusion NIC, that all discussions, data, and information shared during any NIC meeting shall remain confidential.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Prospective Research Subject: Read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Principal Researcher: Kaitlyn Lemos

ISDiP Director of Projects (DoP): Dr. Dane Christian Joseph, Professor of Education, George Fox University

Purpose:

You are being asked to participate in a research study designed to determine the types of information as well as the delivery that general education teachers believe is helpful in increasing perceptions of preparation in teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms in regards to newly implemented inclusion models.

Procedures:

Following the signing of this Informed Consent form, general education teachers in grades Kindergarten through 5th grade, as well as all specials teachers (PE, Art, Library), will complete the Beginning of Year survey. This survey asks teachers a variety of questions around perceptions of preparedness in various aspects of inclusion and working with students with disabilities in their classrooms. Data will also be collected on variables such as years of classroom experience, age range, and grade taught. Once baseline data is collected, the Networked Improvement Community (NIC) will analyze the data and plan what content will be delivered to teachers and the method for each delivery. Examples of types of information are accommodations vs. modifications, effectively using fidgets, or building relationships with students with autism. Examples of types of delivery are short professional developments (PD's), videos, or short blurbs sent via email or in their mailbox. The day following the delivery of information, teachers will be sent the link to a Post Informational Feedback Google that will seek to gain insight regarding perceptions of the efficacy of the delivery as well as how the information increased their knowledge of inclusion aspects previously identified as areas of weakness. Informational pieces will be delivered to teachers once per week (tentatively) and surveys will be collected following each delivery. Following the conclusion of the study, teachers will be given the Beginning of Year survey again to assess any changes in their perceptions of preparedness in various aspects of inclusion.

This research study will run from September 13 - December 13, 2022.

Possible Risks, Benefits, and Confidentiality:

Risks in this study are low. Confidentiality and anonymity will be prioritized throughout the study. Confidentiality will be achieved by not requesting names on surveys and prioritizing the explicit anonymity of all participants, but anonymity may not be completely feasible due to the small sample size and school demographics. Participants will be assigned a number that will be known only to the participant and the primary researcher. The results of the study, including

survey data of any kind, may be published for educational purposes, but will not give your name or include any identifiable references to you.

There is no financial compensation for participation in this study. You will be helping to contribute to educational research that may positively influence future professional development of teachers and educational stake-holders.

Withdrawal

You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study and may withdraw at any point. You will be provided with any significant new findings developed during the course of this study that may relate to or influence your willingness to continue participation.

Voluntary Consent

I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. Please contact either the principal researcher, Kaitlyn Lemos, or the dissertation chair, Dr. Dane Joseph with any questions.

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

Principal Researcher:

Kaitlyn Lemos

xxxxxxx@georgefoxedu

ISDiP DoP Chair:

Dr. Dane Christian Joseph

xxxxxxx@georgefox.edu

APPENDIX C

BEGINNING OF YEAR/END OF CYCLE TEACHER SURVEY

BEGINNING OF YEAR/END OF CYCLE TEACHER SURVEY

Participant Information

Number: _____

Grade Taught: _____

Years of Teaching Experience: _____

Age range (circle 1): 22-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60-69+

Thank you for your completion of this inclusion survey. The purpose of this survey is for the primary researcher, Kaitlyn Lemos, to gain deeper insight into the challenges that general education teachers have in inclusion classrooms and their work with students with disabilities. The survey will ask you to respond to your comfort and knowledge with various aspects of an inclusion classroom. Following the survey, there will be an opportunity for you to share anything important that you feel was not addressed on this survey.

For each question, rate yourself on a 1-3 scale:

1 = I have very little to no knowledge about this. This is something I need to learn more about to become a more highly effective inclusion teacher.

2 = I know about this from my experience with some students in the past, but haven't had anyone actually teach me about this. I still have some questions and areas that are confusing to me. I can and have had these students in my class and/or implemented these strategies but definitely could use more resources or information.

3 = I have a lot of knowledge about this. I have experience working with these students/this topic for many years either at school or in my personal life. I have read up on this and feel that I could educate a family member or friend. I am highly effective at working with these students or implementing this skill in my classroom.

SPECIFIC IMPACTFUL DISABILITIES PRIMARILY REPRESENTED AT LPE

How do you perceive your *ability* to identify the observable characteristics of:

1. Autism Spectrum Disorder _____
2. Specific Learning Disabilities (reading/math) _____
3. Developmental Delay _____
4. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) _____
5. Emotional and Behavior Disorders (EBD) _____

6. Intellectual disability (ID) _____

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS (IEP'S)

How do you perceive your *comfort* regarding:

7. Reading and interpreting student IEP's _____

8. Modifications vs. accommodations _____

9. IEP vs. 504 _____

10. Standards based grading for students on IEP's _____

11. Delivering service minutes in the general education classroom _____

12. Teaching and appropriately modifying writing _____

13. Teaching and appropriately modifying math _____

14. Teaching and appropriately modifying reading _____

15. Teaching and modifying other subjects _____

BEGINNING OF YEAR

How do you perceive your *comfort* regarding:

16. Teaching beginning of year routines to students with disabilities _____

17. Forming relationships with students with disabilities _____

18. Student relationships between disabled students and their typical peers _____

19. Discussing student disabilities with typical classmates _____

TOOLS & RESOURCES

How do you perceive your *comfort* regarding how to most effectively:

20. Use educational assistants (EA's) in your classroom _____

21. Use Learning Specialists in your classroom _____

22. Communicate concerns with Learning Specialists _____

23. Use students' visual schedules and Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS)_____

24. Introduce and implement fidgets _____

25. Determine if a student would benefit from fidgets/flexible seating _____

26. Determine what types of fidgets/flexible seating would benefit a student _____

The following questions seek to understand which specific aspects of certain disabilities present as most challenging in your classroom.

27. Circle the aspects of Autism Spectrum Disorder that are most difficult for you to address in your classroom setting.

Impulse control	Aggression/Outbursts	Difficult to redirect
Rigidity	Teacher/student relationship	Communication with peers
Teaching routines	Other (please describe below)	None

28. Circle the aspects of Emotional Behavior Disorders that are most difficult for you to address in your classroom setting.

Impulse control	Aggression	Taking responsibility
Emotional dysregulation	Teacher/student relationship	Student/student relationships
Task refusal/defiance	Other (please describe below)	None

29. Circle the aspects of Intellectual Disabilities and Specific Learning Disabilities that are most difficult for you to address in your classroom setting.

Impulse control	Appropriately directed motivation	Peer relationships
Emotional dysregulation	Giving appropriate work demands	Negative self-talk
Task completion	Other (please describe below)	None

30. Circle the aspects of ADHD that are most difficult for you to address in your classroom setting.

Impulse control	Appropriately directed motivation	Finding effective accommodations
Emotional dysregulation	Movement/sensory needs	Lack of focus
Task completion	Other (please describe below)	None

Thank you for completing this survey. If there is anything that you feel was excluded in this survey that is important for the NIC and primary researcher to know, please use the space below and/or on the back of this page to elaborate.

APPENDIX D
POST-INFORMATION SURVEY 1

POST-INFORMATION SURVEY #1

This survey is to be completed following your viewing of the information provided on (date) about (topic). The purpose of this survey is to gain insight into your perception of the level of helpfulness and applicability that the information had on your work with students with disabilities. It also aims to assess the method in which the information was delivered, and if that added to, or detracted from, the information's overall efficacy in improving your inclusion practice. Please answer the following questions truthfully according to your experience.

1. Teacher Number (assigned to you during the Beginning of Year survey. Please contact Katy Lemos if you need a reminder of your number).

2. How do you perceive your comfort regarding reading and interpreting IEP's? (This question will change each week to correlate directly with the question from the BOY survey being addressed). Choose one answer.

1 - I have very little to no knowledge or comfort regarding this.

2- I still have quite a few questions and parts that are confusing to me.

3- I feel very confident in this area and can implement this knowledge in my classroom.

3. Did the information provided help inform your work with students with disabilities?
Choose one answer.

Yes! It provided me with helpful and/or new information that informs my practice.

Neutral- It wasn't bad but wasn't particularly helpful.

No. It didn't offer me information that I can use to inform my practice.

4. Did you find the format the information was delivered in to be helpful? Choose one answer.

Yes! I liked the way the information was delivered to me.

Neutral- It wasn't great but wasn't bad.

No. This isn't how I like to be taught things and/or it was confusing to me.

5. Do you feel as though this delivery method honored your time as a busy teacher? Choose one answer.

Yes

No

6. If you felt strongly about your answer to the above 2 questions, please leave a comment below for the primary researcher and NIC team.

APPENDIX E

OPTIONAL RESEARCH PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK FORM

Thank you for your participation in Katy Lemos' ISDiP Research. The aim of this research was to determine the types of information as well as the delivery that general education teachers believe is helpful in increasing perceptions of preparation in teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms in regards to inclusion models.

You were provided 6 informative pieces from October 19, 2022 to January 11, 2023. The topics for each piece was determined by indicated areas of need on the Beginning of Year survey administered to participants on September 2, 2022.

The topics and methods of delivery were as follows:

1. Reading and Interpreting IEP's - Video
2. The ADHD Iceberg - Infographic
3. The Post-Recess Insanity - Video
4. Chunking Tasks to Limit Refusal & Avoidance - Infographic
5. Sensory Needs - Video
6. Maximizing Learning Specialists/EA's in Your Classroom - Infographic

1. Teacher Number (assigned to you during the Beginning of Year survey. Please contact Katy Lemos if you need a reminder of your number).

2. Did you prefer the alternate information delivery formats (video or infographic) to traditional professional developments? Choose one option.

Yes, I would rather view an infographic or video than attend an in-person professional development.

No, I would rather attend an in-person professional development to learn new information.

3. As you reflect...

-How well do you feel our district/school prepares classroom teachers for working with students with disabilities.

-What things you liked, or not, about the alternate ways of presenting teacher's with "need to know" information that is not a traditional professional development.

-How you feel about the efficacy of traditional professional developments compared to alternate methods (if you tend to prefer traditional professional developments, maybe indicate why, or in which circumstances you prefer them).

-Any other thoughts about the information provided, how it was provided, etc.

APPENDIX F

TOPIC 1 – READING AND INTERPRETING IEPS

Name Smith, Bob	Date of Birth	Student Number	Document Date 02/08/2022
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C. SUMMARY OF PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Strengths of Student (Academic, Functional, Behavior, Learning characteristics, etc.)

Bob is a funny, sweet and energetic boy. He likes music, loves to dance, and enjoys opportunities for movement when he is learning. He likes sensory play and recess. Bob has really been enjoying science and experiments. Bob is very fun!

Concerns of the parent(s) for enhancing the education of the student

Bob had some struggles at the beginning but a lot of those things have solved themselves. Dad mentioned the changes to the program and didn't feel like they knew what was going on. Dad knows that Bob has been doing better (haven't gotten any calls) but haven't got any information about the changes.

Present level of academic performance, including the student's most recent performance on state or district-wide assessments

Additional Present Levels

Recovery Services: On 2/8/22, the IEP team, including parents, considered the student's need for recovery services. It was determined that Student does not require recovery services. The student has made progress in all goal areas as compared to pre-COVID levels.

READING: Bob can identify 16 lowercase letter sounds 24 lowercase letter names. Bob can identify the 1st sound in CVC words. When presented with VC and CVC words, Bob was unable to read the words but did say the sounds in the words. Bob has great concepts of print and could identify matching words in a paragraph, the front/back cover of a book, spaces between the words, and title of a book.

WRITING: Bob is able to write all 26 upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. Tracing is not a task he prefers and would much rather just write the letters independently. Bob no longer grasps his pencil with his fist but does not typically use a tripod grasp and uses a partial, five finger grasp. Bob has overall good line adherence when writing familiar words like his name, but he will continue to practice handwriting in a daily Handwriting without Tears group. Bob has moved from having an adult write in highlighter for him to trace, to dictating to an adult and

APPENDIX G

TOPIC 2 – THE ADHD ICEBERG

Explaining ADHD to Teachers

Share this infographic, created by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy and Alex Zeigler, with your teacher (artwork adapted by ADDitude magazine).

The Tip of the Iceberg:

The Obvious ADHD Behaviors

Hyperactivity

- > Can't sit still
- > Fidgets
- > Talks a lot
- > Runs or climbs a lot
- > Always on the go

Impulsivity

- > Lacks self control
- > Difficulty awaiting turn
- > Blurts out
- > Interrupts
- > Intrudes

- > Talks back
- > Loses temper

Inattention

- > Disorganized
- > Doesn't follow through

- > Doesn't pay attention
- > Is forgetful
- > Doesn't seem to listen
- > Loses things
- > Late homework

Hidden Beneath the Surface:

The Not-So-Obvious Behaviors (2/3 have at least one other condition)

Neurotransmitter Deficits Impact Behavior

- > Insufficient levels of neurotransmitters, dopamine and norepinephrine, results in reduced brain activity.

Weak Executive Functioning

- > Working memory and recall
- > Getting started, effort
- > Internalizing language
- > Controlling emotions
- > Problem solving

Impaired Sense of Time

- > Doesn't judge passage of time accurately
- > Loses track of time
- > Often late
- > Forgets long-term

- projects or is late
- > Difficulty planning for future
- > Impatient
- > Hates waiting
- > Time creeps
- > Avoids doing homework

Sleep Disturbance (56%)

- > Impacts memory
- > Doesn't get restful sleep
- > Can't fall asleep
- > Can't wake up
- > Late for school
- > Irritable
- > Morning battles

3-Year Delayed Brain Maturation

- > Less mature
- > Less responsible
- > 18-year-old acts like 15

Not Learning Easily from Rewards and Punishment

- > Repeats misbehavior
- > Maybe difficult to discipline

THE ADHD IceBERg

Only 1/8 of an iceberg is visible. Most of it is hidden beneath the surface.

- > Less likely to follow rules
- > Difficulty managing his own behavior
- > Doesn't study past behavior
- > Acts without sense of hindsight
- > Must have immediate rewards
- > Long-term rewards don't work
- > Doesn't examine his own behavior
- > Difficulty changing his behavior

Co-Existing Conditions

- > Anxiety (34%)
- > Depression (29%)

- > Bipolar (12%)
- > Tourette Syndrome (11%)
- > Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (4%)
- > Oppositional Defiant Disorder (54-67%)

Serious Learning Problems

- > Specific Learning Disability (25-50%)
- > Poor working memory
- > Can't memorize easily
- > Forget teacher and parent requests
- > Slow math calculation
- > Spelling problems
- > Poor written expression
- > Difficulty writing essays
- > Slow retrieval of information

- > Poor listening and reading comprehension
- > Difficulty describing the world in words
- > Disorganization
- > Slow cognitive processing speed
- > Poor handwriting
- > Inattention
- > Impulsive learning style

Low Frustration Tolerance

- > Difficulty controlling emotions
- > Short fuse
- > Emotionally reactive
- > Loses temper easily
- > May give up more easily
- > Doesn't stick with things
- > Speaks or acts before thinking
- > Difficulty seeing others' perspective
- > May be self-centered

ADHD is often more complex than most people realize! Like icebergs, many problems related to ADHD are not visible. ADHD may be mild, moderate, or severe, is likely to coexist with other conditions, and may be a disability for some students.

You can order the original color ADHD Iceberg poster at chrisdendy.com.

APPENDIX H

TOPIC 3 – THE POST-RECESS INSANITY

Last one!

Grounding Activities

Imagine going from something very fun and exciting to being expected to sit quietly and listen. It's a difficult thing to do! And, just like us, it's challenging for students to go from running around and playing outside to being perfectly quiet in class. Their bodies often need an extra step to take them from a level 10 down to a level 3.

- Yoga poses – downward dog, tree pose, warrior, or even wall push-ups can give students some deep pressure and input to help calm them and get them ready for learning, or sometimes even be ready for a calming video or activity.

APPENDIX I

TOPIC 4 – CHUNKING TASKS TO LIMIT REFUSAL AND AVOIDANCE



Chunking Tasks to Limit Refusal & Avoidance

Let's dive in by discussing some strategies for Time Chunking and Task Chunking.



Time Chunking vs. Task Chunking



- **Time Chunking:** Includes working for a specific period of time, followed by a break.
- **Task Chunking:** Includes dividing a task into manageable chunks, then taking a break once the task is complete.

Background



The paralyzation of feeling that they have too much to get done can stop students in their tracks. They feel unable to act or don't know where to start, to make progress on what they need to do. They may move forward timidly or be tempted to multitask. Focus and executive functions suffer, and they are less productive.

Benefits



- Builds momentum (often times, once they get started and are encouraged by the smaller chunks, they will want to keep going).
- Makes tasks more manageable and less intimidating.
- Can give students control over how much they will do or how long they will work before taking a break.
- Allows time for the brain to focus on a task.
- Encourages students to complete small parts of larger tasks rather than sitting on a large task for long periods without accomplishing much.

Tips for Chunking



- Make a list of what needs to be done down to the **smallest steps**. As students begin to think about the small steps, it becomes more manageable. For example, if the students are being asked to write a 3-paragraph essay about an important person in history, that can feel very overwhelming. He or she then to break down the steps into small steps, then identify which steps they can get done in 20 minutes (or longer, depending on the age/ability of the student.) You can also have students use sticky notes to show the small steps!
- Physically fold or cut the assignment/paper to show less problems or tasks. Reveal more as students keep working.
- Give students three colors. "First, have them circle the tasks/problems that they know they can complete by themselves. Have them do those. Then, circle in a different color the ones they are unsure about. Complete those. Then, circle the ones they know they are going to need help with/cannot do independently."
- When reading texts longer than a page, chunk the reading into smaller bits and have students say or write a one sentence summary of that chunk before moving on to the next chunk.
- Graphic organizers are natural "chunkers." Students can pick one area to write about from their graphic organizer. Sometimes it helps to physically cover the other areas so as not to distract.
- If a student is still resisting or refusing, try decreasing the size of the chunk.
- Chunk lessons with breaks or talk times for students to process learning. We often stretch lessons for longer than we think or intend to. Try setting times to pause, give students opportunities to process, then continue.

APPENDIX J

TOPIC 5 – SENSORY NEEDS

WEARING SENSORY SPECTACLES

- You can often tell when a student is struggling but can't always quite put your finger on what the specific need is. Asking yourself these three questions can help you, as well as the Special Education team, in adding/modifying accommodations to help students be more successful. It's also great information to pass onto the Occupational Therapist should a OT eval become necessary.
 1. What sensations do they avoid? (unexpected touch, tags, alarms, lights)
 2. What sensations do they actively seek? (swinging, jumping, fidgeting, chewing)
 3. What sensations calm & organize them? (jogging, hugging, tight spaces)

APPENDIX K

TOPIC 6 – THE GENERAL EDUCATION & SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

The General Education & Special Education Partnership

Inclusion and Using SPED Staff in Your Classroom



LPE's Inclusion Model

- Students have IEP goal minutes for various subjects
- Those minutes can be met by learning specialists, the Title program, EA's, or the general education teacher.
- We are considered a push-in inclusion model. Some inclusion programs have a full-time special education teacher in the classroom and all IEP students are in one classroom per grade. This is what I did when I taught Kindergarten inclusion as a general education teacher! Ask me about it sometime if you're interested!



How are IEP Minutes Met?

- If a student is getting minutes met through groups, push-in support will not occur (most of the time).
- Sometimes students have reading and math minutes but are too high or low for a group. This is often when you will see an EA or learning specialist push-in to support the curriculum or work with the student on more appropriate material for their level.



Work in Class

Learning specialists will often create work for students at their level in folders that students can access when the grade level work is too challenging. The learning specialist often provides this initially or gives ideas to the general education teacher but work folders can be maintained by the general education teacher.



Classroom Teacher Instruction Counts, too!

- Especially in younger grades, SDI from the general education teacher can meet IEP minutes (since goals typically aren't too far off grade-level standards)
- ALL goal-related work in class counts toward minutes. For example, if a Kindergarten student has a reading goal to know all their letter names and sounds, most work that happens naturally in the day counts toward their IEP minutes since it's a Kindergarten standard.



Inclusion's Emphasis on Accessing the Core

It's very important for students of all levels to have access to core curriculum. That is why we don't often remove students from their class during core and rather find ways to modify the work so it is accessible to them. This is where work folders can come in!



Communication is Key

The time that we (EA's/Learning Specialists) spend in classrooms is best utilized by effective communication between the general education teacher and the SPED team. This could be a quick check-in when we enter the classroom, an email, or your weekly 30-minute meeting with us (or inviting us to planning meetings).



Highly Effective Support

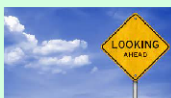
It helps us to know what is coming up in class so we can plan on how to best support our students with whatever it is during our time in your class. This additional support could look like:

- pulling them to a back table to administer a whole class assessment with appropriate modifications/accommodations
- planning to bring the appropriate materials to modify/accommodate a writing assignment, such as a specific graphic organizer or writing tools.



Remember...

- If we come in and the subject we are targeting is not taking place, it can be challenging to "wing it" and support in areas we haven't prepared for.
- (EA's specifically) are coming in and may be apprehensive as they don't want to step on your toes as the teacher. It's actually very helpful (and not bossy) to let them know the best way they can support at that time as long as they don't have another plan for specific students.



Looking Ahead

Co-Teaching is part of the inclusion model and one that LPE hasn't implemented yet.

- There are 6 models of co-teaching, all of which would have significant positive impact on student engagement and learning.
- One that is particularly impactful (I've done it as a general education teacher!) is Parallel teaching, which allows the EA/Sped teacher and general education teacher to split the class in two groups and teach differentiated versions of the same lesson. It's AWESOME!
- Here's the website that goes over the co-teaching models more: <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/6-models-of-co-teaching>

APPENDIX L
IRB APPROVAL

2221005

1. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

2. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

3. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

4. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

5. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

6. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

7. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

8. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

9. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

10. The Board of Directors has reviewed the proposed resolution and has approved it.

before not approved.



Chair or designated member



Date