



National Center and State Collaborative

Tips for Using the NCSC Wiki to Support Your Child's Education:

Series Summary

<https://wiki.ncscpartners.org>

The NCSC curriculum and instructional resources are publicly available for free on the NCSC wiki at <https://wiki.ncscpartners.org>. They were designed to be used together to help educators teach grade-level aligned mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) content to students with significant cognitive disabilities. The resources are based on the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). However, they can also be used in states that are not using the CCSS. Much of the content that is covered on the wiki will also appear in other mathematics and ELA state standards. The examples of each resource posted on the wiki are meant to serve as models and do not cover every mathematics and ELA topic that is taught.

To help parents understand how these resources can be used to support their child's education, NCSC developed a series of short papers, each of which covers a different curriculum or instructional resource. This series of papers can be accessed from the main page of the wiki. Using the NCSC curriculum and instructional resources at home and talking about the wiki with your child's teacher(s) are great ways to increase parent-teacher collaboration.

This "Series Summary" provides a quick look at each resource and explains how they work together as a system. You will learn many more details about how to use a particular resource when you read the short paper dedicated to that resource. If you need help navigating the NCSC wiki, you can access a one page navigation tool and a more detailed navigation guide, designed for parents, from the main page of the wiki.

Curriculum Resources

The NCSC curriculum resources are reference materials created to reinforce educators' understanding of curriculum content; they focus on "what to teach." Two of these resources, the Content Modules and the Instructional Families, are highlighted in this series of short papers.

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Content Modules

NCSC developed Content Modules for various mathematics and ELA topics. Each module provides explanations and examples of the concepts that may be difficult to teach or unfamiliar to special education teachers, and includes information and strategies that parents may find helpful. Each Content Module contains key vocabulary, a Universal Design for Learning (UDL)¹ table with possible adaptations and modifications to address a variety of student needs, and ideas for linking academic activities to real-world uses and college and career ready skills.

Instructional Families

The Instructional Families charts focus on groupings (families) of related skills within many mathematics, reading, and writing topics. They show how the skills in these families develop and interact across all the grades, across a grade band (e.g., grades 6-8) and within a single grade. You can see why the foundational skills in early grades for each Instructional Family are so important and which skills are coming up as your child progresses to the next grade(s). This information can help with the development of a standards-based Individualized Education Program for your child.

Instructional Resources

The NCSC Instructional Resources are reference materials created to support classroom teaching; they focus on “how to teach.”

Element Cards

The Element Cards are designed to be used with the Instructional Families resource, described above. They can assist educators in planning instruction that promotes UDL and includes students with a wide range of abilities. There are multiple Element Cards on the wiki for each of the mathematics and ELA topics represented. For each of these topics you will see links to websites that parents may find useful to use at home. Each Element Card focuses on an individual skill or a combination of related skills. It provides key information, including the “essential understandings” for the skill(s), suggested instructional strategies, and supports and scaffolds to move students progressively toward deeper understanding.

Curriculum Resource (CR) Guides

CR Guides are available for a number of mathematics and ELA topics. Each one offers examples of how the content is taught in general education lessons (essential knowledge, common misunderstandings, prior knowledge/skills needed, and activities), ideas for real life use, tasks to measure performance, a UDL table, and ways to promote college and career readiness. There is some overlap between the types of information you will find in the Content Modules and the CR Guides. However, the Content Modules and the CR Guides cover different mathematics and ELA topics, with a few exceptions.

¹ See www.udlcenter.com for background information on UDL

UDL Instructional Units and Lessons

The UDL Instructional Units are based on general education lessons that are universally designed to be accessible for all students. They walk the educator through the process of adapting materials and providing accommodations that assist emerging readers and emerging communicators in the classroom. Each unit is made up of several lessons and a “culminating” activity that ties them together, all of which provide examples for meeting the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities. There is one model mathematics unit and one model ELA unit for each grade span (elementary school, middle school, and high school). The strategies embedded in the lessons, and the resources and materials that accompany each lesson, are valuable tools for parents to use at home.

Instructional Resource (IR) Guide

The NCSC IR Guide provides a discussion of various response modes to help identify the best way for each student to show what he or she knows in each lesson. The IR Guide also provides specific information about using evidenced based prompting and other instructional strategies that have been proven effective in teaching specific skills and/or concepts to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Some of the strategies in the IR Guide may be appropriate for your child. Learning about them will help you be better prepared to communicate effectively with your child’s teacher(s) and ensure that the instructional strategies used at school and at home are as consistent as possible.

Mathematics Activities with Scripted Systematic Instruction (MASSIs) and Language Arts Activities with Scripted Systematic Instruction (LASSIs)

Systematic instruction has been proven effective for students with significant cognitive disabilities, although it may not be needed for every skill or every student. MASSIs and LASSIs provide teachers with scripts using carefully planned steps for targeting specific skills, which may be helpful for some teachers. However, the lessons can be individualized as long as the systematic instruction is delivered consistently. There are MASSIs and LASSIs for certain topics across elementary, middle, and high school. These activities can be used in any educational setting, including general education classes. If your child is receiving after school or weekend education services or tutoring, the LASSIs and MASSIs can be a potential resource in those settings as well. In addition, each MASSI and LASSI has printable materials that can help you work with your child at home.