

EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES OF TENNESSEE'S RESPONSE TO INSTRUCTION
AND INTERVENTION IMPLEMENTATION SPECIFIC TO INCLUSION
CLASSROOMS

by

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I dedicate this research to my father, Steve Harris, the greatest educator I know.

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ABSTRACT

The federal government-supported Response to Intervention Program (RTI) is an initiative to serve students with gaps in their education. This initiative was developed to strive for all students performing at or above grade level. Understanding the impact of these initiatives on students has been a recent topic of investigation in professional literature. Tennessee adopted the RTI program in 2013 and revised it to include instructional practices for all students in the general education classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of the state of Tennessee's mandated Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) regarding their Tier I inclusion classrooms. These students were previously enrolled in the extended resource program and now participate in a general education inclusion classroom. RTI² exposed students to a standards based curriculum, a larger class size, and a more rigorous set of academic expectations. General education teachers and special education caseworkers working with these students were surveyed on their knowledge of strategies or appropriate modifications and accommodations used when working with special education students. From those surveys a common understanding was created for a teacher and case manager focus group regarding their perceptions of the academic functioning of those students in the classroom. Finally, interviews were conducted with a subset of the focus group members to gain further insight regarding the perceived students' academic success in the general education classroom setting. The outcome of the study proved how much both teachers and students (as perceived by the teachers) are struggling with this new Tier I inclusion classroom in regard to this change in the learning environment.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Tenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States by implication leaves educational decisions to the individual states; however, in the past few decades, Congress has created education initiatives for states to follow (United States Department of Education, 2007). Congress enacted the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 as a part of a War on Poverty (New America Project, 2014). This initiative provided federal funds to school districts that serve poor students in an attempt to level the educational playing field. This Act was reauthorized in 1994, placing standards and a level of accountability for the federal funds given to districts serving students in poverty (New America Project, 2014). In 2001, Congress modified the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which requires that schools demonstrate Annual Yearly Progress for each individual student by monitoring standardized test scores (New America Project, 2014).

With the mandates from NCLB, the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) focused on aligning IDEA with NCLB (United State Department of Education, 2004). IDEA is a federal law that addresses the education, placement, and interventions of children who receive special education services. Children identified as requiring special education support will receive interventions in their specific deficiency area. The least restrictive environment component of IDEA requires that students with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible, be educated in classrooms alongside students without disabilities. When disability prevents a student

from being educated in the general education program, a separate classroom or school will be made available (Patterson, 2005).

In 2009, Congress enacted the Educate to Innovate initiative in an effort to prepare American students to compete with the top students in the world (United States Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics, 2015). This initiative builds relationships among public schools, companies, and engineering firms to ensure students receive an advanced education in the fields of math and science—specifically, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In July 2009, President Obama announced a second school initiative entitled Race to the Top (United States Department of Education, 2014). This initiative provides funds to schools to make reforms in four areas: (1) standards and assessments, (2) student progress data, (3) effective leadership, and (4) interventions for low performing schools (United States Department of Education, 2014). NCLB was reauthorized in 2004 to allow for more specific information about alternative assessments for students with disabilities. This act makes both performance goals and indicators mandatory, as well as reporting data for students who receive special education services (United States Department of Education, 2007).

Response to Intervention

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (United States Department of Education, 2004) specifies that students with disabilities receive interventions, have progress monitoring, and include the collection of data with a specific focus on future educational decisions. The need for a system of research-based educational interventions has led to the development of the Response to Intervention (RTI) initiative. RTI

establishes a three-tiered systematic approach of interventions available to all students (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012). RTI unites all students, general education students as well as special education students, in the intervention process. RTI focuses not only on instructional interventions but also on behavioral interventions. The three-tiered pyramid approach is a system of interventions. Tier I involves core instruction for all students in general education classrooms. This tier is based on grade level standards. Prior to RTI, all students had not been educated together in the general education classroom. Students who were identified as extended resource students were educated in an extended resource classroom or a pull-out classroom taught by a special education teacher. Instruction in the extended resource classrooms was based on the skills students lacked rather than by state curriculum standards. Tier II provides basic interventions for students who have been identified by a standardized assessment as needing extra help in filling educational gaps. Tier III requires intensive interventions for students who have been identified as being in the bottom ten percent on the nationally normed screener. Students are regularly monitored and given research-based interventions, based on their individual needs, to help them progress (Duffy, 2007).

Response to Instruction and Intervention

The Tennessee Department of Education adopted RTI in 2013 but revised it to include instructional practices and a mandatory participation for every school. The Tennessee version of RTI became Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²). RTI² gives each student the support needed to succeed in his or her educational career (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.). The Tennessee version of RTI also consists of a three-tiered approach: Tier I core instruction, Tier II basic interventions, and Tier III

intensive interventions. RTI² relies heavily on interventions, student involvement, and progress monitoring.

A requirement of RTI² is ongoing assessment. Individual Districts may choose the type of assessment they will administer and the number of times they will administer that assessment over the academic school year. A progress monitoring assessment will help define the learning needs of students and provide guidance as to the type of support needed per the RTI system of instruction. A student's scores are then compared to all students in the same grade level nation-wide who have taken the progress monitoring assessment, making this a nationally normed referenced assessment. Students are given this assessment three times in each school year: fall, winter, and spring. This assessment was first administered in the 2014-2015 school year. The progress monitoring assessment determines whether a student qualifies for RTI² Tier II or Tier III support.

RTI² places all students in the general education program for Tier I instruction. To meet individual educational plans, students that received special education services prior to RTI were educated in a special education resource classroom for math and English language arts. Once RTI² was implemented and students moved/relocated into Tier I general education inclusion classroom, those students formerly receiving special education services began to face a faster pace, increased rigor, and higher expectations.

RTI² aims to help students succeed in their education career through a grade level appropriate curriculum. All students participate in Tier I standards-based instruction within general education classrooms. This includes the students previously educated in an extended resource classroom. An extended resource classroom is a smaller setting, gets taught by a special education teacher, and has a curriculum based on

each student's education level. The curriculum, including textbooks, differs drastically in the general education classroom than from the extended resource classroom.

Prior to RTI², students were placed in an extended resource program based on the discrepancy model. The discrepancy model consists of testing students for special education when their standardized test scores are two standard deviations lower than their intelligence test scores. Students who required testing for special education were then given an intelligence test to determine the grade level appropriate for their cognitive level. If the student scored one to three grade levels behind their typical peers, then they were placed in inclusion classrooms and provided with instructional support as determined by their individual education plan. These special education students were placed in general education classrooms with a special education teacher in the room for assistance, if needed. If the student was classified as more than three grade levels behind, he/she was placed in the extended resource program. This is a special education pullout classroom for math and English language arts. The class size is much smaller, and the curriculum is specifically designed for each student. The curriculum in the extended resource classroom is designed around the skills each student is capable of performing, whereas the curriculum taught in the general education classroom is based on grade appropriate state standards.

Current Study

The 2016 academic year began the transition from separate extended resource special education classrooms to general education classrooms with special education inclusion support. The extended resource classrooms have been eliminated since the new RTI² initiative specifies that all students must receive Tier I instruction on grade level in

general education classrooms. The special education students who were enrolled in the special education extended resource classrooms and are now in general education classrooms have never experienced learning in a general education classroom. Therefore, this study has the opportunity to capture a unique moment that sets it apart from all the studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Previously, no study has been done of RTI² regarding its implementation in a middle school while focusing on students who have been educated in a resource classroom and are now mainstreamed into the general education classroom with inclusion support.

In order to capture how the transition impacts teachers and how teachers perceive the transition-affecting students, multiple forms of qualitative data were collected. The primary data collection investigated how teachers perceived the extended resource students and how teachers saw RTI² affecting those students. Whereas several of the aforementioned studies utilized quantitative and qualitative forms of data to address RTI (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012; Raviv, 2010), none used a survey combined with focus groups and individual interviews to gain insights from teachers to understand how the students fared in the inclusion classrooms. The current study utilized a qualitative approach in the form of survey, focus groups, and interviews from current English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, and writing teachers who instructed the general education classrooms that now include students formally educated in an extended resource special education program. The study also included a survey as well as focus groups and interviews from special education caseworkers for students formerly enrolled in extended resource classes. The

questions guiding the research focused on teacher and special education caseworkers perspectives and experiences working through the transitions to RTI².

Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the RTI² inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed, since the school-wide transition from Response to Intervention to Response to Instruction and Intervention?
3. What instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom do all participating teachers and case managers use when working with special education students?
4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?
5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?
6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in science?

7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

Chapter Summary

RTI² was implemented across the state of Tennessee by the Tennessee Department of Education in 2013. It was modified from the United States Department of Education initiative RTI to include an instructional piece. In the three-tiered RTI² initiative Tier I is standards based instruction given to all students in general education classrooms. Students who receive special education services and prior to RTI² were educated in the pullout extended resource classrooms experienced a change in their educational setting. The class size was much smaller in the extended resource classroom and the curriculum was specific to each student's skill level.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The state of Tennessee adopted the Response to Intervention (RTI) program in 2013, changed the program to include instruction, and renamed it Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²). The RTI² program contains three tiers of interventions for all students. Tier I is a grade level standard based instruction for all students scoring in the bottom twentieth percentile on a nationally normed screener, Tier II is a skills based intervention for the students scoring in the bottom twentieth percentile, and Tier III is an intensive skills based intervention for the students scoring in the bottom tenth percentile. All students take the nationally normed screener three times a year—once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring.

This study focuses on the Tier I standards based general education inclusion classes. Prior to RTI² students who received special education services and who were behind their age appropriate peers by multiple grade levels /participated? in an extended resource classroom with a special education teacher. After the implementation of RTI², students no longer had the extended resource classroom available and therefore began enrolling in the general education Tier I inclusion classroom.

The literature provided in Chapter 2 is organized by topic: implementing change, response to intervention implementation, inclusive classrooms, scaffolding, differentiated instruction, accommodations, embedded curriculum, teacher perceptions of inclusive classrooms, student perceptions of inclusive classrooms, academic outcomes of inclusive classrooms versus pullout resource classrooms. The chapter closes with a summary of research indicating how the current study will add to the

literature regarding the implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention and teacher perceptions regarding the new inclusion classrooms.

Implementing Change

Implementing an instructional and logistical change of this nature takes time. According to Fullan (1993), instructional changes are the hardest changes to make. Furthermore, no one clear answer exists on how a change of this magnitude can take place effectively without any issues (Fullan, 2008). Fullan, however, provided several ingredients that can help build a successful change process: creating a shared vision, expanding professional development, making change both organizational and systemic, managing and maintaining that change over time, and providing the opportunity for continuous professional development (Fullan, 1993, 60-61). “One could argue that the professional development support associated with the whole school reform model does just that—give educators the wherewithal to make a difference” (Fullan, 2003, 56).

Lezotte and Snyder (2011) also agreed that change does not happen quickly; it is an ongoing process that takes time. Changing schools requires commitment by all stakeholders, students included. Commitment enables the change to be sustainable and ongoing. According to Lezotte and Snyder six factors of the change process must be included to produce an effective school: (1) results-oriented; (2) research-based; (3) data-driven; (4) focused on both quality and equity; (5) collaborative in form and; (6) ongoing and self-renewing. Once these factors are in place, the school can then provide evidence regarding how the change or implementation of a new program has created an environment where all children can learn.

Response to Intervention Implementation

Sawyer, Holland, and Detgen (2008) have investigated the implementation of Response to Intervention in schools across the southeastern United States. The data consists of a collection of policies and procedures relating to RTI, as well as interviews with educational leaders in each state. The interviews indicate six challenges to RTI: lack of funding, lack of information, the approach of RTI, disorganized implementation, language, and teacher preparation. This study's examination of RTI implementation across various schools is useful because the present study also revolves around RTI implementation, and specifically teacher perceived student learning.

Duffy (2007) presents a descriptive study exploring how the RTI model looks in K-8 schools and the implications of what the RTI model should look like in high schools. This study focused on implementation and implications of RTI. The implementation phase described in the study was a unique moment since implementation only occurs once and, upon investigation of how RTI was implemented in the high schools, several issues were discovered. They included identifying the correct progress monitoring tools for high schools, identifying intervention models that work across subject areas, examining the changing roles of general education and special education teachers, support and professional development for teachers, and parent communication. The current study, like Duffy (2007), focuses on the initial implementation phase of RTI.

Inclusive Classrooms

Zigmond (2003) reviewed several research studies that span three decades and reviews regarding placement for special education students in the educational

environment. Whereas some special education students struggle in an inclusive classroom, other special education students flourish (the exact percentage is unknown). The environment that best meets the educational needs of each student must be addressed on a student-by-student basis. Interviews were conducted with special education students to determine their preferred learning environment. The participants in the study stated that, while the pull-out classroom environment is better for learning, inclusion classrooms are better socially (Zigmond, 2003). The results of the Zigmond study directly relate to the questions asked in the current study for its focus groups and interviews. The questions related to the correct educational setting for students who receive special education support, what accommodations are appropriate and successful, and teacher perceptions of the academic success for students who receive special education support in their inclusion classrooms. The academic achievement of students going from a pull-out classroom learning environment to an inclusion classroom learning environment directly correlates to RTI².

Idol (2006) conducted a program evaluation of schools on multiple schools concerning the implementation of inclusion classrooms. Elementary, middle, and high school special education programs in one district were reviewed through test scores and interviews with faculty and staff. Idol discovered positive results from both assessments. Not only did student test scores improve, but the faculty members participating in the interviews also exhibited a positive mindset concerning the complete inclusion/mainstreaming being implemented across the district.

Maccini and Gagnon (2006) conducted a study with the purpose of investigating what instructional practices and accommodations special and general education teachers

use for students with learning, emotional, or behavioral disabilities during math computation or problem solving lessons. One hundred and one special education teachers and 78 general education teachers participated in the survey, which covered three areas: (1) teacher background information; (2) teacher perceived knowledge of secondary math topics; (3) specific instructional practices and accommodations used by teachers for students with a learning, emotional, or behavioral disability during math instruction and assessment. The results indicated that the general education math teachers were more familiar with the secondary math curriculum than the special education teachers, but that the special education teachers used significantly more recommended math instructional practices than the general education teachers.

Whereas the data from the Idol (2006) study were positive, it did not provide in-depth information on any one particular school. The data came from several different educational institutions: four elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. It took staff perceptions on special education inclusion programs implementation into account as well as the program specifics for each school and the performance of all students. The Idol study showed very positive results regarding the academic achievement and the faculty attitudes about implementing inclusion classes. However, it was never specified if the students in the inclusion classes receiving special education services were diagnosed with a much lower cognitive level than their grade level peers. The current study specifically investigates students with much lower cognitive levels than their grade level peers and examines their academic achievement in the general education inclusion classroom.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a term used in general education classes to assist the special education students. Scaffolding provides assistance to students on tasks by breaking them down into parts for better understanding. Not every student receives scaffolding; it is only used for individual students when needed. Vygotsky (1978) developed the theory zone of proximal development. Students are able to perform a certain amount of tasks on their own due to difficulty level; they are also able to perform a certain amount more with assistance from an adult, but they are not capable of performing more difficult tasks. Adult assistance is referred to as “scaffolding.”

Differentiated Instruction

Tomlinson (2001) has written multiple books and conducted research on best practices how to differentiate instruction. She stated that differentiating instruction in the classroom is student-centered, organic, and provides multiple approaches, as well as being qualitative—rather than quantitative—and is rooted in assessment. Differentiating does not mean giving the advanced students more work than average and below average students. Rather than simply the amount of work given, differentiating means permitting students to use different ways to show that they have learned the relevant concepts.

Kosko & Wilkins (2009) conducted a study with the purpose of answering the way in which the amount of training and experience relates to general education teachers' self-perceived skills in adapting instruction for students in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The researches asked 1,126 teachers four questions regarding their self-perceived ability to adapt instruction for students in IEPs. The

results indicated that teachers want more professional development hours for adapting instruction for students with IEPs. Such professional development predicted the improved perceptions of teacher ability regarding students in IEPs better than did total years of experience.

Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, and Reid (2005) recommend planning responsive lessons that differentiate instruction for all students at the beginning, instead of modifying one specifically for a student with a disability. Differentiated instruction should be used for all students because all students in the classroom are different; they have different experiences, interests, and levels of ability. To differentiate instruction, the first thing the teacher must do is examine his or her current practices. Expecting everyone in the inclusion class to be on the same level provokes some of students with disabilities into not engaging with the learning experience. To effectively differentiate instruction the teacher must constantly assess students' understandings, teaching responsively and enabling students to demonstrate competence in varied, meaningful ways.

Accommodations

Shriner and Ganguly (2007) conducted a study summarizing the knowledge base related to participation and accommodation issues for students with disabilities in large-scale assessment and accountability systems. Observations of Individualized Education Program meetings were conducted in a high-need middle school serving around 900 students in the sixth through eighth grades. During this case study, as observations were made, Shriner and Ganguly found that teachers created implications and action steps to address key needs. The key needs were as follows: (1) Individualized Education

Program development decisions were no longer relevant for state testing; (2) accommodation decisions were made without data or research support; (3) accommodations tended to underrepresent testing accommodations; (4) accommodations intensified the testing environments; (5) an increase in social-behavioral accommodations and supports for assessments. Conclusions from this study indicated that better training for teachers and other IEP team members is necessary for developing an appropriate amount and type of accommodations for each student who receives special education support.

Salend (2008) put together guidelines and resources for IEP teams to use when identifying, selecting, implementing, and evaluating appropriate testing accommodations for students receiving special education support. Salend recommends maintaining the validity of a test while utilizing accommodations for a study, the accommodation should not change the test's content, although it can alter presentation, timing, scheduling, setting, or linguistics. When testing accommodations are implemented effectively and appropriately, they should level the playing field for all students being assessed. Testing accommodations must not give the students who receive them any advantage over other students.

Embedded Curriculum

Johnson, McDonnell, Holzwarth, and Hunter (2004) conducted a study to extend the research on embedded instruction as a strategy for meeting the educational needs of students with developmental disabilities in general education classes. They specifically examined the effectiveness of embedded instruction in promoting the acquisition of academic or development skills by students in general education classes. They also

examined the ability of professionals supporting students in general education classes to successfully implement embedded instruction within typical instructional activities. Finally they examined the perceptions of these professionals about the utility of embedded instruction in meeting the educational needs of students with moderate and severe disabilities in their classes. “In embedded instruction, students are taught skills within the ongoing routines of the performance setting” (Johnson et al., 2004, 215). The participants in this study included three students with developmental disabilities, two general education teachers, and one special education paraprofessional. Three baseline probes were used for each student prior to the implementation of the embedded curriculum. The teachers and the paraprofessional received two thirty-minute trainings prior to implementing the embedded curriculum. The implementations of all the embedded curriculum trials were done in the general education classroom. The researchers observed the trials and took ratings regarding correct implementation of the embedded curriculum and the percentage correct on the assessment, after which the teachers performed an acceptability and utility rating regarding the implementation of the embedded curriculum. The results indicated positive results, which included how embedded instruction can incorporate teaching procedures to lead to enhanced learning for students as well as accommodate the unique learning needs of the students, and these procedures also allow students to receive consistent opportunities to learn specific skills within the general education classroom.

Teacher Perceptions of Inclusive Classes

LeDoux, Graves, and Burt (2012) identified the challenges presented by special education students to general education teachers in the inclusion classroom, as well as

the needs of the teachers accommodating such students and how administration could support such students. General education elementary school teachers who work with special education students participated in an electronic questionnaire and a multi-grade level focus group in order to determine how special education students functioned academically in inclusion classrooms. Three major themes emerged from the focus group: communication, collaboration, and professional development. General education teachers indicated frustration with the implementation of inclusion practices. The inability of special education students to keep up with the rigorous inclusion classrooms posed the biggest challenge. The differences in curriculum proved difficult for the students with disabilities, and teaching the curriculum to students with disabilities proved difficult for the general education teachers.

Raviv (2010) conducted a research study in Israel about teachers' attitudes towards students who receive special education support in their inclusion classrooms. Three hundred and twelve teachers were chosen from both Jewish and Muslim sectors in Israel to participate in a thirty-one question, closed question survey. The survey was developed using a five point Likert Scale. A sample group of forty-one teachers were selected to participate in a partially structured interview consisting of fourteen questions regarding disabled students in their inclusion classrooms. It found that, while teachers in both sectors of Israel have some positive attitudes towards all students in their inclusion classrooms, the teachers lack the training to be highly effective. Teachers who had received some sort of professional training regarding effectively educating students with disabilities enrolled in their inclusion classrooms experienced a more positive attitude toward educating all students. The results of the Raviv study imply that the lack of

professional training leads to low academic performance by students receiving special education support in inclusion classes.

DeSimone and Parmar (2006) conducted a descriptive study with the purpose of investigating middle school general education mathematics teachers' beliefs and the perceptions of their own knowledge regarding teaching students with learning disabilities in the inclusion classrooms. DeSimone and Parmar also investigated the teachers' beliefs regarding administrative support and higher education teacher preparation programs. They mailed a survey to 228 middle school general education math teachers from nineteen states. The survey was divided into three parts. Part I consisted of descriptive data about the participants and their schools, their perceptions of administrative support, and the resources available to them. Part II investigated the participants' beliefs regarding inclusive math classes, their prior preparation to teach inclusive classrooms, and students with learning disabilities. Part III questioned the participants' level of comfort in regards to their ability to adapt their math instruction to students with learning disabilities. The follow-up telephone interviews clarified and elaborated on the data collected from the survey answers. The data presented three results: (1) teachers had a limited understanding of the mathematics learning needs of students with a learning disability; (2) teacher collaboration was judged to be the most beneficial and available resource by general educators who teach inclusion classes; (3) the teachers did not feel that teacher education programs at the pre-service level or at professional development programs adequately prepared them for teaching the inclusion classes.

Student Perceptions of Inclusive Classes

Klingner, Vaugh, Schumm, Cohen, and Forgan (1998) conducted a study with the purpose of understanding students' perceptions and preferences regarding inclusion or pull-out educational settings. Thirty-two fourth and sixth grade students were individually interviewed after experiencing one of the educational settings for one year. Sixteen of the students had been previously diagnosed with a learning disability. The students generally considered the pull-out educational setting preferable to the inclusion setting. Students stated that the work was too hard in the inclusion classroom; also, as per the previous studies, the inclusion classrooms often did not meet their academic needs.

Academic Outcomes of Inclusive Classes Versus Pull-out Resource Classes

Fuchs et al. (2015) examined the achievement gaps on fractions for students with disabilities as a function of whether they received inclusive fraction instruction or specialized fraction intervention. For three consecutive years, 203 fourth through sixth graders were randomly assigned one of two different math instruction classes. The students were selected based on their scores from three randomized control trials; the students scored at or below the tenth percentile. One class focused on traditional inclusion classroom instruction; the other focused on specialized instruction practices designed to address students' individual cognitive needs. The results showed marked improvement in math academic achievement for the students educated in the specialized instruction classrooms as compared to the students educated in the traditional inclusion classrooms.

In *Simplifying Response to Intervention* by Buffum, Mattos, and Weber (2012), the three tiers are described for the purpose of implementation of RTI in schools. Tier I consists of educating all students in the general education classroom with inclusion support. The results indicate that pull-out educational settings are preferable in terms of academic achievement. However, students often had skewed perceptions when asked about their preference; the study noted that some students had difficulty answering the question without thinking about the social aspects of an inclusion classroom.

RTI Tier I consists of educating all students in the general education classroom with inclusion support (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2012). Utilizing surveys and interviews, teachers expressed their perceptions of the student make-up of inclusion classrooms. LeDoux, Graves & Burt (2012) and Raviv (2010), discussed previously in this section, indicated a common problem: the lack of teacher training for instructional methods, behavioral management, and legal documentation for the changes taking place during the implementation of the inclusion classroom. Both studies indicate that professional development and communication are vital for the success of Tier I inclusion classrooms.

Prior to RTI², students with low incidence disabilities were educated in pull-out resource classrooms where the curriculum was based on each student's cognitive abilities and needs. Since all students now receive Tier I instruction in the general education classrooms due to the implementation of RTI², the pull-out resource classrooms have been eliminated.

Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, and Elbaum (1998) conducted a study to determine how new programs, initiated in classrooms, are taught to a variety of students

at various academic levels. The study investigated the different academic achievement levels of students of different ethnicities and socio economic statuses in elementary school settings. Based on individual reading gains on standardized tests, students were divided into three groups: high achieving, average achieving, and students with learning disabilities. General and special education teachers were placed in a yearlong professional development focused on how to educate all students in their classrooms. After the year was over, the authors compared the achievement gains on a standardized test made by students receiving special education support to the achievement gains on a standardized test made by students in the general education program. Results indicated that teachers in the general education classroom successfully learned how to educate different groups; however, the student groups did not include those students requiring special education assistance. Furthermore, the authors noted that the students with learning disabilities in this study did not have the lowest level of achievement at this school. The students with the lowest cognitive levels were educated in a pullout resource classroom, so they did not participate in this study.

Rea, McLaughlin, and Walther-Thomas (2002) conducted a mixed method study to explore the relationship between the placement of students with a learning disability and certain facets of school performance. Eighth grade students in two middle schools were evaluated in three areas: achievement, behavior, and attendance. Student data were compared with other students in the same cognitive group. Students in inclusion classes scored far better in the following assessments areas than did the students with disabilities receiving special education support but were not educated in inclusion

classes: course grades, higher scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, attendance, and discipline suspensions.

Chapter Summary

IDEA specifies that students who receive special education support will be monitored in a system of interventions. Studies have been provided from high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, all of which either employ RTI or have implemented inclusive classrooms (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Klingner, Vaughn, Hughes, Schumm, & Elbaum, 1998; Fuchs, Fuchs, Compton, Webby, Schumacher, Gersten, & Jordan, 2015; Klingner, Vaughn, Schumm, Cohen, & Forgan, 1998; LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012; Raviv, 2010; Idol, 2006; Zigmond, 2003; Duffy, 2007; Sawyer, Holland, & Detgen, 2008). These studies use a wide range of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches. However, there was a need for additional information from a single, site-specific school that goes in-depth on how teachers perceive students who, once in an extended resource classroom, now perform inside a Tier I general education classroom. Utilizing a qualitative data study, I collected the perceptions of teachers and special education case managers who witnessed first-hand the classroom dynamics of the new inclusion classrooms in a single middle school setting.

The current study will provide a contribution to the research literature regarding RTI² implementation in two ways. (1) Focus is on middle school students who were previously in special education classes. They did not receive their education in the general education classrooms prior to the implementation of RTI². (2) Teacher perspectives were collected to provide deep and rich information about what is going on

in their general education inclusion classrooms and how that relates to the success of the students who were formally educated in the special education extended resource classroom.

The current study will add to the research literature regarding RTI² implementation in several ways, e.g. focusing on a specific age range of student and the specific group of students. Both the middle school age range and the specific group of students examined in this study will lead to meaningful additions to the research literature by providing teacher perspectives of how the implementation of RTI² affects this specific group of students. Middle school students range from ten to fifteen years old and are in grades six, seven, or eight. The middle school students that are the focus of the current study receive special education support and had been previously enrolled in a separate extended resource special education classroom.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The 2016 academic year began the transition from separate extended resource special education classrooms to general education classrooms with special education inclusion support. The extended resource classrooms have been eliminated since the new RTI² initiative specifies that all students must receive Tier I instruction on grade level in general education classrooms. The special education students who were enrolled in the special education extended resource classrooms and are now in general education classrooms have never experienced learning in a general education classroom. Therefore, this study has the opportunity to capture a unique moment that sets it apart from all the studies reviewed in Chapter 2. Previously, no study has been done of RTI² regarding its implementation in a middle school while focusing on students who have been educated in a resource classroom and are now mainstreamed into the general education classroom with inclusion support.

In order to capture how the transition impacts teachers and how teachers perceive the transition-affecting students, multiple forms of qualitative data were collected. The primary data collection investigated how teachers perceived the extended resource students and how teachers saw RTI² affecting those students. Whereas several of the aforementioned studies utilized quantitative and qualitative forms of data to address RTI (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; LeDoux, Graves, & Burt, 2012; Raviv, 2010), none used a survey combined with focus groups and individual interviews to gain insights from teachers to understand how the students fared in the inclusion classrooms. The current study utilized a qualitative approach in the form of survey, focus groups,

and interviews from current English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, and writing teachers who instructed the general education classrooms that now include students formally educated in an extended resource special education program. The study also included a survey as well as focus groups and interviews from special education caseworkers for students formerly enrolled in extended resource classes. The questions guiding the research focused on teacher and special education caseworkers perspectives and experiences working through the transitions to RTI².

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the RTI² inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed, since the school-wide transition from Response to Intervention to Response to Instruction and Intervention?
3. What instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom do all participating teachers and case managers use when working with special education students?
4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?
5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?

6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in science?
7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

Narrative Inquiry Utilizing Survey, Focus Group, and Interview

Grounded theory was used to frame the methodology of this study, in an attempt to generate theories to explain the events related to RTI² (Hays & Singh, 2012). The event in this study is the movement of students' academic setting from an extended resource classroom to a general education classroom. The grounded theory approach could be used to understand a particular phenomenon that might not presently be grounded in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This phenomenon could also be viewed as the movement of the educational setting for students. Grounded theory emphasizes the collection of large amounts of data to produce results (Hays & Singh, 2012; Strauss, 1990). The data that was collected included teacher and caseworker responses to an online survey, focus group data, and one-on-one interviews.

Setting. One middle school in the southeastern United States hosted this study. The middle school had 1,500 students in its population— approximately 260 sixth graders, 410 seventh graders, and 380 eighth graders. Due to the economic status of their families, approximately 400 students received a free lunch; an additional 70 students received a reduced lunch rate. The ethnic composition of the student body is as follows: 30 Asian, 270 African American, 10 Native American, 5 Pacific Islander, and 750

Caucasian. The school has approximately 10 special education teachers and 190 students supported by special education: 80 eighth graders, 70 seventh graders, and 30 sixth graders. Prior to Response to Instruction and Intervention, the extended resource program served 30 students. After RTI² was implemented there were 0 students in the extended resource program.

RTI² is incorporated into the daily schedule to allow maximum impact on student learning. Tiers I, II, and III are utilized for all students not on the portfolio tract who are given the state mandated assessment at the end of the year. Tier I is a grade level appropriate, standards based instruction for all students in general education classrooms. Tier II is a thirty-minute daily intervention for students who score in the bottom twentieth percent on a nationally normed Aimes Web assessment (Pearson, Inc., 2015). This intervention time is in the schedule as a class period, and students who qualify have this on their individual student schedules. Tier III is a fifty-five minute daily intervention for students who score in the bottom ten percent on Aimes Web (Pearson, Inc., 2015). This is also in the schedule as a class period and also appears on individual student schedules.

Table 1

Mock daily student schedule

Period	Minutes	Topic
1	55	English Language Arts
2	30	Remediation and Enrichment
3	55	Math
4	55	Physical Education
5	55	Science
6	55	RTI ² - Math
7	55	Social Studies

The middle school utilizes a seven period day. The second period is a school-wide thirty-minute study hall, where students make up missing work, receive extra grade level help, or read. Tier II and Tier III classes are scheduled throughout the day, starting with third period and ending with seventh period. All Tier II classes have a maximum class load of twelve students, whereas the most intensive intervention, Tier III classes, have a maximum class load of six students.

The special education students who qualify for RTI² Tier II or Tier III classes report for Tier I instruction to their core classes in the general education classrooms. Those general education classrooms offer special education inclusion support via an educational assistant or a special education teacher present in the room with the general education teacher. The four core classes are math, English, science, and social studies. Every student at this middle school also has an exploratory class such as music, physical education, art, etc. The last class added to each student's schedule is either the RTI² class for Tier II or Tier III, if they qualify, or an enrichment writing class if they do not qualify.

Participants

Teacher Participants. 25 teachers, were recruited on the basis of subject and grade level taught. The 25 teachers were purposefully selected for this study to reflect the experiences of teachers working with the target student population across 7th and 8th grade core content areas, a range of experience, and background (Patton, 2015). All twenty-five teachers work daily with one or multiple students who had been enrolled in the extended resource program prior to the 2014/2015 school year. Six of the educators teach math, three in seventh grade and three in eighth grade. Another six teach English

Language Arts, three in seventh grade and three in eighth grade. Six more teach science, three in seventh grade and three in eighth grade, and the final six educators teach social studies, three in seventh grade and three in eighth grade. One educator teaches seventh grade writing. The teachers range in age from early twenties to early fifties, and their years of experience range from two to twenty-six years. Table 2 shows the detailed description of the teacher participants (see Table 2). All teachers were assigned a number throughout the focus group and interview process to keep their identity anonymous.

Teacher Recruitment Process.

Step 1: Teachers were identified for research if they were a general education teacher who had taught one of the eleven student participants during the 2015 school year.

Step 2: Based on the criteria, twenty-five possible teacher participants were eligible.

Step 3: Teacher consent was to be obtained before participating in the study.

Step 4: Based on the criteria established by the Human Subject Regulations Decision Charts, the review was exempt and approved by the Middle Tennessee State University Department of Human Subject Studies (see Appendix A).

Step 5: Upon IRB approval, consent forms were sent out to all teacher participants.

Step 6: All consent forms were received by the participants within four days of Sending them out.

Step 7: The researcher collected all consent forms from teacher participants.

Table 2

Teacher participants

Participants	Age	Years of Teaching	Experience in Years at School in Current Study	Subject	Grade Level
Teacher 1	34	10	3	Math	8
Teacher 2	25	3	3	Math	8
Teacher 3	26	4	4	Math	8
Teacher 4	43	16	6	Math	7
Teacher 5	43	12	3	Math	7
Teacher 6	63	26	2	Math	7
Teacher 7	56	11	6	English Language Arts	8
Teacher 8	50	13	6	English Language Arts	8
Teacher 9	54	17	6	English Language Arts	8
Teacher 10	43	17	6	English Language Arts	7
Teacher 11	30	4	4	English Language Arts	7
Teacher 12	45	23	6	English Language Arts	7
Teacher 13	31	2	2	Science	8
Teacher 14	50	16	6	Science	8
Teacher 15	42	3	6	Science	8
Teacher 16	35	9	6	Science	7
Teacher 17	45	20	6	Science	7
Teacher 18	39	2	2	Science	7
Teacher 19	29	6	6	Social Studies	8
Teacher 20	38	4	4	Social Studies	8
Teacher 21	35	11	3	Social Studies	8
Teacher 22	51	14	6	Social Studies	7
Teacher 23	50	11	6	Social Studies	7
Teacher 24	37	4	3	Social Studies	7
Teacher 25	28	4	4	Writing	7

Case Manager Participants. Based on caseload and their relationship to the students who moved from extended resource pull out classrooms to general education classrooms, four special education case managers were purposefully selected. Three of the case managers teach math intervention classes; one teaches reading intervention

classes. The case managers also manage grade specific special education files. Two of the case managers manage seventh grade special education files, and two of the case managers manage eighth grade special education files. The case managers also range in age from late twenties to mid-fifties, and they range in years of experience from four to six years. Table 3 shows the detailed description of the case manager participants. All case managers were assigned a number throughout the focus group and interview process to keep their identity anonymous.

Table 3

Case manager participants

Participants	Age	Years Experience	Experience in Years at School in Current Study	Subject	Grade Level
Case Manager 1	55	27	4	Math	8
Case Manager 2	32	6	4	Math	8
Case Manager 3	28	3	3	Math	7
Case Manager 4	55	32	6	Reading	7

Case Manager Recruitment Process.

Step 1: Case Managers were identified for research if they are a special education case manager who has worked with the seventh or eight grade students receiving special education services during the 2015 school year.

Step 2: Based on the criteria, four case manager participants are eligible.

Step 3: Case Manager consent had to be obtained before participating in the study.

Step 4: Based on the criteria established by the Human Subject Regulations Decision Charts, the review was exempt and approved by the Middle

Tennessee State University Department of Human Subject Studies (see Appendix A).

Step 5: Upon IRB approval, consent forms were sent to all case manager participants.

Step 6: All consent forms were received by the participants within four days of sending them out.

Step 7: The researcher collected all consent forms from case manager participants.

Data Collection Methods

Survey Procedures.

The twenty-five teachers and four case managers were sent an electronic survey through Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). The survey consisted of seven open-ended questions regarding instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom and technical vocabulary used in special education (See Appendix B). The survey focused on questions relating to the strategies or appropriate modifications and adaptations known to the teachers and case managers that related to special education students, and this survey was used specifically to answer the third research question: what instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom do all participating teachers and case managers have familiarity with in regards to special education students? The survey was intended to form a common understanding of the specific instruction strategies utilized throughout this study. While the drawbacks of open-ended questions include the difficulty of coding and the increased time needed for coding, they nevertheless provided valuable and necessary data about a subject (Salant & Dillman, 1994).

Focus Group Procedures.

The purpose of the focus groups was to gather data and insight from the teachers' perspectives regarding the new inclusion classrooms. There were two focus groups for this study. Each focus group consisted of four teachers and two case managers. The focus groups had a semi-structured approach with the moderator stepping in only to offer questions for the group to consider. The focus groups were audio recorded and the moderator took notes of any body language or facial expressions throughout the sessions. The focus group ended when there was an extended period of silence. At which point the moderator would ask if anyone wanted to say anything else, if not then the focus group concluded.

A third party individual (CITI-IRB Human Subjects training certified) facilitated all focus groups and interviews in order to reduce the bias associated with the research's prior and ongoing relationships with the participants. The third party individual does not work at the school that is the setting for this study and was unknown by all of the participants. This was necessary to reduce the limitation, the researcher has a position of authority over all of the participants involved in the study and did not want them answering questions with that in mind.

The questions were designed to elicit academic expectations for students in each of the core subject areas. They also incorporated the general education teachers' perceptions of the special education students' participation in class, as well as the teachers' perceptions of how the special education students' IEP goals were being met. These questions addressed research questions one, two, four, five, six, and seven.

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the RTI² inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed, since the school-wide transition from Response to Intervention to Response to Instruction and Intervention?
4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?
5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?
6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in science?
7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

Each focus group took thirty to forty minutes. The researcher prior to the interviews transcribed the focus group data. The transcription for each focus group was sent to the appropriate participants for a member check. Once each participant had the opportunity to change anything that did not convey what was intended the transcriptions were coded.

Interview Procedures.

Follow-up interviews were conducted with: 2 Math teachers in 8th grade, 1 English Language Arts teacher in 8th grade, and 1 math case manager in 8th grade. The follow-up participants were purposefully chosen after the focus group data had been collected to provide greater insight into the teacher perceptions regarding their inclusion classes (Patton, 2015).

The interviews for the general education teachers and special education case manager consisted of five questions focused around the rigor of the curriculum and the classroom expectations, as well as teacher perceptions about how students with lower cognitive levels who received special education services meet those classroom expectations.

1. How are the special education students coping with the expectations in your classroom?
2. How are the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?
3. How are you accommodating the special education students in order for them to be academically successful in your classroom?
4. What are some things you notice your special education students struggling with in your classroom?
5. How has RTI² changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?

The follow-up interviews addressed research questions one, two, four, five, six, and seven.

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the RTI² inclusion process is

- promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed, since the school-wide transition from Response to Intervention to Response to Instruction and Intervention?
 4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?
 5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?
 6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in science?
 7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

All of the interviews took place at the middle school in the conference room. All interviews took place one-on-one at 3:15 p.m., deemed the most convenient time for participants. The interviews were audio recorded and the moderator took notes of any body language or facial expressions throughout the sessions. The interviews ended when there was an extended period of silence. At that point the moderator would ask if the participant wanted to say anything else. If not, then the interview concluded.

The researcher transcribed the interview data. The transcription for each interview was sent to the appropriate participant for a member check. Once each participant had the opportunity to change anything that did not convey what was intended the transcriptions were coded.

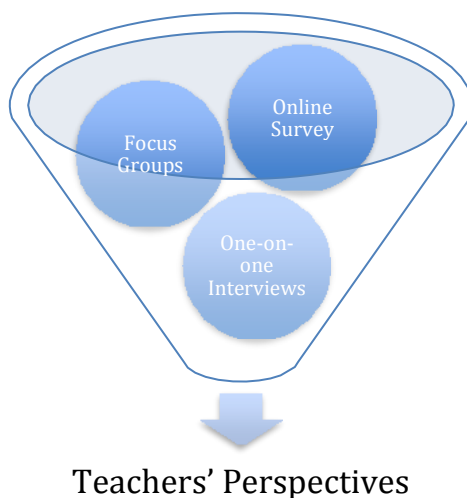


Figure 1

Research method for data collection to elicit teacher perspectives

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gather teacher perspectives regarding the implementation of RTI² and its impact on their inclusion classrooms. The study included 25 teacher participants and 4 special education case manager participants. Data collection for this study included an electronic survey sent to all participants, 2 focus groups each consisting of 4 teachers and 2 case managers, and 4 follow up one-on-one interview with 3 teachers and 1 case manager. The following chapter will present

the data collected, the themes that emerged from the codes and categories, and closing with answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The following chapter is composed of five sections: summary of setting, introduction of participants, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results and summary. The results section is divided based on the themes that emerged during coding. These themes are discussed in the data analysis section.

The purpose of this qualitative research study utilizing survey, focus groups, and interviews through the grounded theory approach was to investigate teacher perceptions in regards to the state of Tennessee's mandated Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) and how this mandate effected students who have been served by the special education program in an extended resource classroom in a suburban middle school. These students, previously enrolled in the extended resource program, now participate in the general education inclusion classroom. RTI² exposed these students to a new standards based curriculum, a larger class size, and more rigorous academic expectations. The goal of the study was to investigate teacher perceptions on how students who were formerly enrolled in the extended resource special education program now perform in the general education classroom.

Teacher perceptions were gathered using three methods: (1) one online survey; (2) two focus groups; (3) four one-to-one interviews. Twenty-five teachers and four case managers were selected for the online survey based on their previous and current teaching assignments were inclusion classes in addition to teaching the core subject areas as well as teaching either seventh or eighth grade students. Once the twenty-five teachers and four case managers signed the consent form, they received the survey via email from surveymonkey.com. The survey answers were anonymous.

Teachers were selected from the twenty-five participants for the focus groups based on their relationship with several students in transition. Eight teachers participated, as well as all four case managers. The focus groups were structured to consist of four teachers and two case managers. All participants signed a consent form before the focus group started and could leave at any time. The four interview participants were purposefully selected based on their dialogue during the focus group sessions. Purposeful sampling was used to gather large amounts of information that would be used in a greater capacity by the researcher (Patton, 2015).

The information from the survey, focus groups, and interviews was analyzed for data relevant to the following seven research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the RTI² inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed, since the school-wide transition from Response to Intervention to Response to Instruction and Intervention?
3. What instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom do all participating teachers and case managers use when working with special education students?
4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?

5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?
6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in science?
7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in grade and content specific academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

Setting

This study was conducted in a middle school in the southeastern United States that has a student population of 1,050. 190 of the student population are supported by special education. RTI² was implemented in this school in 2014. RTI² is for all general education and special education students. Please refer to Chapter 3 for a more detail account of the setting.

Introduction of the Participants

In this grounded theory study, the teachers and case managers provide the data based on their experience directly involved in the implementation of RTI². Therefore, knowing more about each group helps further understanding of the data. Since the participants should remain anonymous throughout the study, each participant was assigned a number to correspond to their data.

Table 4

Average years teaching

Subject	Grade Level	Number of Teachers	Average Number of Years of Experience	Average experience in years at school in current study
Math	8	3	5.67	3.33
Math	7	3	18	3.67
English Language Arts	8	3	13.67	6
English Language Arts	7	3	14.67	5.33
Science	8	3	7	4.67
Science	7	3	10.33	4.67
Social Studies	8	3	7	4.33
Social Studies	7	3	9.67	5
Writing	7	1	4	4

For the following discussion please refer back to Table 2 in Chapter 3 for individual teacher information. Teacher 6 has the most education experience at 26 years, and he or she is also the oldest teacher participant. Two participants, Teacher 13 and Teacher 18, share the least amount of experience at only two years apiece. Both of these educators teach science, but they are not the two youngest participants. The youngest participant is Teacher 2 at twenty-five years old. Although Teacher 6 has the most overall experience, however, this teacher as well as Teachers 13 and 18 share the least amount of experience at the particular middle school involved in this study.

English Language Arts seventh and eighth grade were the two groups with the highest average experience at the school in this study. All three eighth grade English Language Arts teachers have been at the school in this study since it opened in 2010. The seventh and eighth grade math teachers have the least experience on average teaching at the school in this study.

Table 5

Summary of case manager participants

Subject	Grade Level	Number of Case Managers	Average Number of Years of Experience	Average experience in years at school in current study
Math	8	2	16.5	4
Math	7	1	3	3
English Language Arts	7	1	32	6

The average age for case manager participants is 43, whereas the two youngest are 28 years old and 32 years old. The two oldest are both 55 years old. Case Manager 4 is not only one of the two oldest participants, but has the most educational experience and is the only participant in this study who has been at the school since it opened in 2010.

Data Collection

Survey Data Collection. The twenty-five teachers and four case managers were sent an electronic survey through Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com). The survey consisted of seven open-ended questions regarding instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom. The survey questions have been attached in (Appendix B). Twenty-five of the 29 participants completed the survey (86% completion). The survey data was collected through surveymonkey.com and analyzed before the focus groups and interviews by the researcher utilizing six coding methods described by Saldoña (2016), in vivo coding, process coding, initial coding, focus coding, axis coding, and theoretical coding.

The survey data was coded in two rounds. Round One consisted of in vivo codes, process codes, and initial codes. Round Two consisted of focus codes, axis codes, and theoretical codes. Emerging themes were developed after Round One of coding. The survey data was joined with the data from the focus groups and the interviews after Round Two of coding to strengthen the themes that were emerging from all the data.

While some participants identified what content they taught, no conclusions can be made specific to content because respondents did not identify their content in the survey.

Focus Group 1 Data Collection. The focus group discussion questions were centered on academic expectations in each of the core subject areas: English Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. They also incorporated the general education teachers' perceptions of the special education students' participation in class, as well as how the special education students' IEP goals are being met (See Appendix C). The consent forms were given to each of the four teachers and two case manager participants prior to the focus group starting. The four teacher participants consisted of an English Language Arts teacher, a social studies teacher, a writing teacher, and a math teacher. The two special education case managers consisted of a math inclusion teacher and a reading interventionist. The focus group lasted thirty minutes and fifty-three seconds. The researcher used 2 digital voice recorders to record all voices during the focus group. The facilitator also took notes related to non-verbals during the discussion. During the focus group the moderator asked the first question and then allowed the participants to discuss once an extended period of silence was present the moderator would ask the next question. Once all the questions had been addressed the moderator waited for an extended period of silence and then asked if anyone had anything they would like to add.

If the participants remained quiet the focus group was concluded. If they wished to add something it was recorded. All data was transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using six of Saldoña's (2016) coding methods, in two separate rounds. Round One of coding consisted of: (1) in vivo coding; (2) process coding; (3) initial coding. Round two of coding consisted of: (4) focus coding; (5) axis coding; (6) theoretical coding.

Table 6

Focus group 1 participation frequency

Participant	Subject	Grade Level	Talking Points
Teacher 3	Math	8	31
Teacher 11	English Language Arts	7	45
Teacher 22	Social Studies	7	26
Teacher 25	Writing	7	36
Case Manager 3	Math	7	5
Case Manager 4	Reading	7	32

Focus Group 2 Data Collection. The consent forms were given to each of the four teachers and two case manager participants prior to the focus group starting. The four teacher participants consisted of a social studies teacher, an English Language Arts teacher, and two math teachers. The special education case managers consisted of two math interventionists. The focus group lasted forty-eight minutes and thirty-four seconds. The researcher used 2 digital voice recorders to record all voices during the focus group. The facilitator also took notes related to non-verbals during the discussion. During the focus group the moderator asked the first question and then allowed the participants to discuss once an extended period of silence was present the moderator would ask the next question. Once all the questions had been addressed the moderator waited for an extended period of silence and then asked if anyone had anything they

would like to add. If the participants remained quiet the focus group was concluded, if they wished to add something it was recorded. All of the data was transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using six of Saldoña's (2016) coding methods, which breaks down coding into two separate rounds. Round one of coding consisted of: (1) in vivo coding; (2) process coding;(3) initial coding. Round two of coding consisted of: (4) focus coding; (5) axis coding; (6) theoretical coding.

Table 7

Focus group 2 participation frequency

Participant	Subject	Grade Level	Talking Points
Teacher 2	Math	8	30
Teacher 4	Math	7	29
Teacher 7	English Language Arts	7	71
Teacher 23	Social Studies	7	80
Case Manager 1	Math	8	42
Case Manager 2	Math	8	11

The focus group data was coded in two rounds. Round One consisted of in vivo codes, process codes, and initial codes. Round Two consisted of focus codes, axis codes, and theoretical codes. Emergent themes were developed after Round One of coding. The focus group data was joined with the interviews for both rounds of coding (See Appendix C).

During the first focus group, the participants offered a total of 174 responses. Teacher 11 spoke the most with 45 responses, and Case Manager 3 spoke the least with 5 responses. During the second focus group, participants offered a total of 234 responses. Teacher 23 spoke the most with 80 responses, and Case Manager 2 spoke the least with 11 responses. During the first focus group the two most talkative participants

were the seventh grade writing teacher and the seventh grade English Language Arts teacher. The participant who participated the most out of both focus groups was teacher 23, a seventh grade social studies teacher.

Interview Data Collection. The interviews for the general education teachers and special education case managers consisted of five questions focused around the rigor of the curriculum, the classroom expectations, and educator perceptions about how students who receive special education services with lower cognitive levels meet those expectations (Appendix D).

The researcher used 2 digital voice recorders to record all data during the interview. The facilitator also took notes related to any non-verbals during the discussion. During the interview the moderator asked the first question and then allowed the participant to answer once an extended period of silence was present the moderator would ask the next question. Once all the questions had been addressed the moderator waited for an extended period of silence and then asked if the participant had anything they would like to add. If the participant remained quiet the interview was concluded, if he/she wished to add something it was recorded. All of the data was later transcribed by the researcher and analyzed using 6 coding methods described by Saldoña (2016).

Interview 1. The participant signed the consent form for the interview before the interview took place. Case Manager 3 was the participant in the first interview. The interview lasted six minutes and thirty-one seconds.

Interview 2. The participant signed the consent form for the interview before the interview took place. Teacher 3 was the participant in the second interview. The interview lasted nine minutes and fifty-seven seconds.

Interview 3. The participant signed the consent form for the interview before the interview took place. Teacher 2 was the participant in the third interview. The interview lasted twenty-seven minutes and forty-seven seconds.

Interview 4. The participant signed the consent form for the interview before the interview took place. Teacher 7 was the participant in the fourth interview. The interview lasted six minutes and forty-five seconds.

The interview data was coded in two rounds. Round One consisted of in vivo codes, process codes, and initial codes. Round Two consisted of focus codes, axis codes, and theoretical codes. Emerging themes were developed after Round One of coding. The interview data was joined with the focus group data for both rounds of coding (See Appendix D).

Data Results

The data results will be presented in the following section broken up by survey results, coding round 1, theoretical codes, and the research questions. Survey results are presented organized by the specific research question. Coding round 1 is dedicated to both focus group data and the four interview data. The theoretical codes that came about during the second round of coding are included in a figure for better clarity. Finally, all aspects of the data were utilized to answer the research questions for this study. The data is organized following each research question.

Survey Data Results. Question 1: What is an embedded curriculum? How do you see this being used in your classroom setting?

Four categories emerged from the codes regarding question one: assessment, team building, life lessons, and the underlying foundation that supports learning. In

Figure 2 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

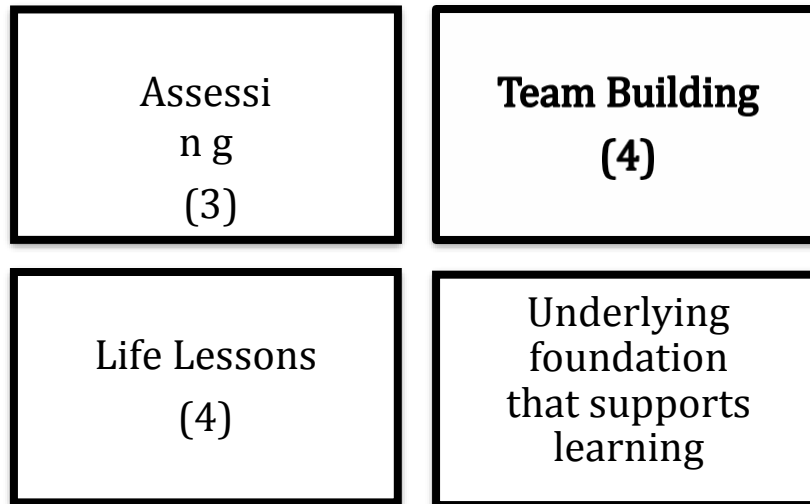


Figure 2. Survey question 1 categories and frequency

Question 2: Provide a list of descriptors associated with differentiated instruction. What does differentiated instruction look like in your class?

Two categories emerged from the codes regarding question two: multiple ways of instruction and basing instruction on the ability level of individual students. The first category, multiple ways of instruction, emerged from the following codes: hitting as many learning styles as possible (4), teaching a topic many ways (5), and using different computer programs for instruction. The category of basing instruction on individual student's ability level emerged from the following codes: deciding what the individual student needs (3), differentiating based on IEP or ability level, and meeting students in their learning environment (2). In Figure 3 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

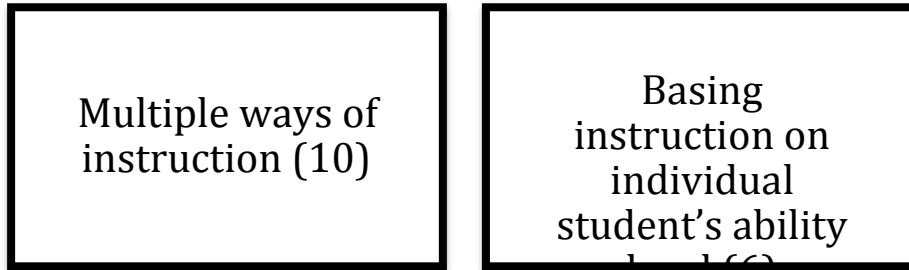


Figure 3. Survey question 2 categories and frequency

Question 3: What are some of the specific accommodations you utilize most frequently for the special education students in your classroom?

Four categories emerged from the codes regarding question three: assessment, assignment, instruction, and grading. Assessment emerged from the codes regarding differentiated assessment. Assignment emerged from the following codes: modified assignments (2) and abbreviated tasks. Instruction emerged from the following codes: modified instructions, distinct directions, repeating directions, and extra directions. Grading emerged from the codes regarding modified grades (2). In Figure 4 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

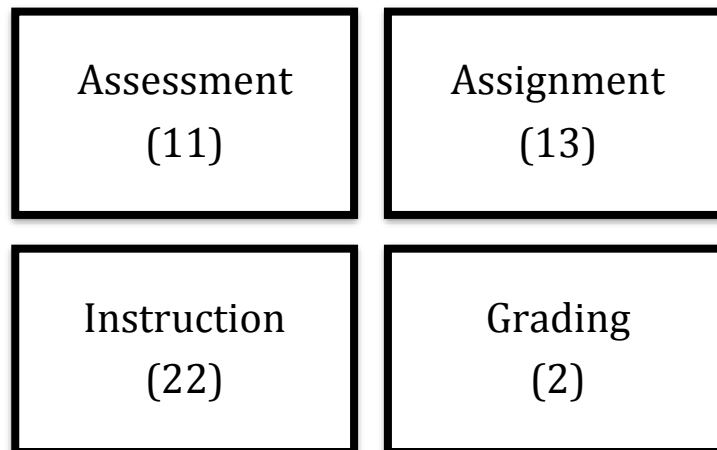


Figure 4. Survey question 3 categories and frequency

Question 4: Some current inclusion students were enrolled in an extended resource program prior to the implementation of RTI². What do you know about the extended resource program?

Four categories emerged from the codes regarding question four: help with current course work, specialized education, basic reading and math skills, and self-contained classrooms. Help with current course work emerged from the following codes: providing help with current course work (2) and giving students an extension of the regular general education curriculum through small groups (2). Specialized education emerged from the following codes: giving students specialized service to continue learning, offering a number of specialized instructional supports for students in need (2), giving students easier access to the curriculum with different standards, and providing the students with individualized instruction in behavior, social skills, and academics, as well as teaching students very specific skills to achieve growth. Basic reading and math skills emerged from the following codes: focus on basic reading and math on the students' ability level, teaching students who really struggle in math and or reading, and

pulling students for math and/or reading by a special education teacher. Self-contained classroom emerged for the following codes: teaching students with severe disabilities in a self-contained classroom (2), giving students more intense intervention, and pulling students out of general education class for more focus. In Figure 5 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

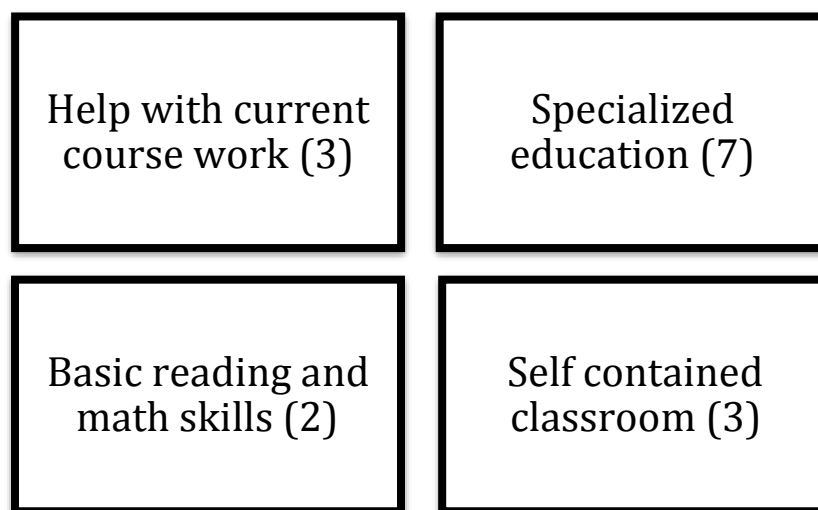


Figure 5. Survey question 4 categories and frequency

Question 5: How do you modify the curriculum in your classroom to meet the needs of your special education students?

Four categories emerged from the codes regarding question five: assessment, time, instruction, and assignments. Assessment emerged from the following codes: assessments are shortened, modified tests with fewer questions (3); alternative testing; questioning is different. Time emerged from the code regarding extra time (6). Instruction emerged from the following codes: one on one instruction (2), extra attention and time during R&E, small groups, and peer tutoring. Assignments emerged from the

following codes: shortened assignments based on a student's individual needs (11), modify worksheets (3), assignments broken down into various segments, and requiring lower Lexile reading assignments. In Figure 6 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

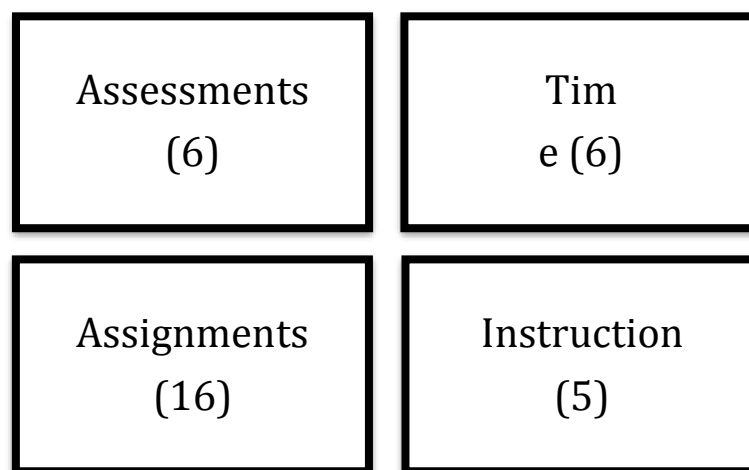


Figure 6. Survey question 5 categories and frequency

Question 6: What does the term “least restrictive environment” mean?

Four categories emerged from the codes regarding question six: individual student, learning with nondisabled peers, mainstreaming, and as each student's disability will allow. Basing a child's learning environment on the individual student emerged from the codes base a child's education on their individual needs, knowing what type of learning environment best fits each student, educating students (varies from student to student), understanding the greatest extent of what's appropriate for each student, and teaching students in the best place for them to perform well and learn standards. Learning with nondisabled peers emerged from the following codes: providing the opportunity to learn with nondisabled peers (4), allow students with deficits to

participate in regular classes, educating students in the general education classroom as much as possible, giving students the same access to general education given to all students (2), and teaching everyone on an equal playing field. Mainstreaming emerged from its own code: mainstreaming (2). Basing a student's education environment on what each student's disability will allow emerged from the following codes: requiring as regular an environment with their peers as each child's disability will allow (2) and meeting a student's unique needs in the general education classroom as much as possible. In Figure 7 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

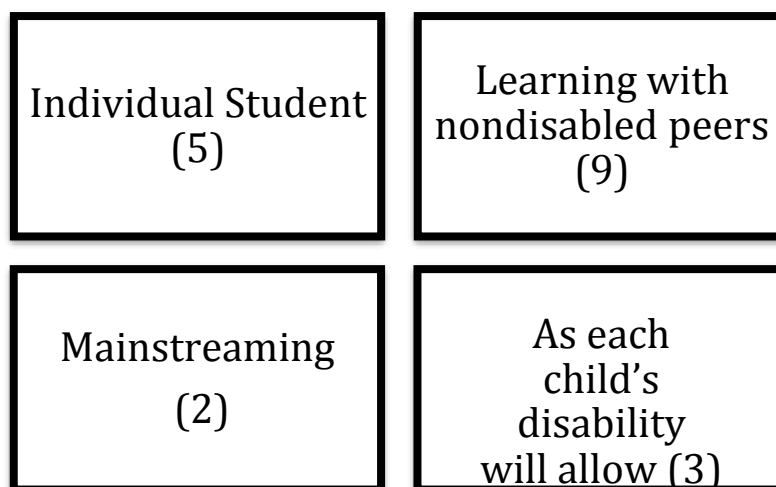


Figure 7. Survey question 6 categories and frequency

Question 7: What are the subject specific instructional strategies you have found to be helpful for special education students to succeed in your classroom?

Four categories emerged from codes regarding question seven: peer tutors, hands on activities, visuals, and modified texts. Peer tutors emerged from the following codes:

collective learning activities that vary learning abilities and allow peers to support each other, work with someone to understand information more quickly, collaborative learning, group/peer work, peer tutoring between special education students and general education students, peer tutors, small groups/classroom buddies, and small group (2). Hands-on activities emerged from the codes: manipulatives, hands-on stations, hands-on activities (2), connecting movement or action, hands-on, and manipulatives (2). Visuals emerged from the following codes: KWL charts, visuals/pictures/graphics, using charts and graphs, T Charts and other graphic organizers, visual aids, and visuals/maps. Modified text emerged from the following codes: chunking information, adjusting the difficulty of the text, and smaller texts. In Figure 8 the answers are categorized with the number of answers that fell into those categories.

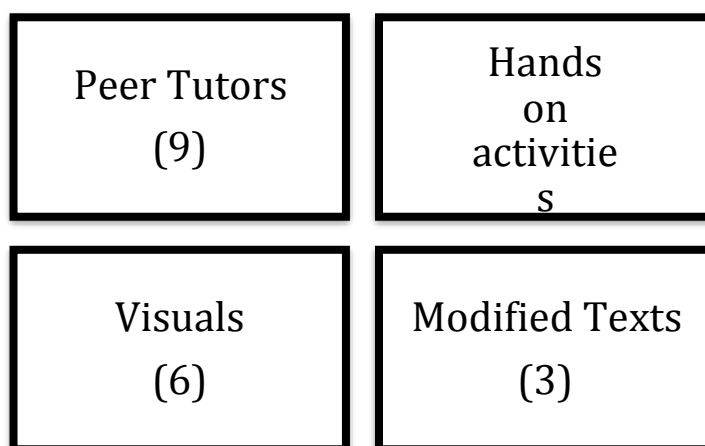


Figure 8. Survey question 7 categories and frequency

Focus Group 1, Focus Group 2, and Interviews Coding Round 1. Five themes emerged from the focus group and interview data after the first round of coding: (1) accommodations, (2) changes in policy, (3) teacher struggle, (4) class struggle, and (5)

teacher preserved student struggles. The focus groups and interviews data will be presented by the themes that emerged.

Table 8

Theme 1: Accommodations

Codes	Subcategories	Categories	Theme
Moving Students around the room and allowing them to work with a classmate	Seating	Accommodations	Accommodations
→	→	→	
Movement Music Lots of examples Hands on Providing copies of notes	Instruction	Accommodations	Accommodations
→	→	→	
Smaller groups	Peers	Accommodations	Accommodations
→	→	→	
Color Coding Providing extra time Alternative and shortened assignments Lowering assignments	Assignments/ assessments	Accommodations	Accommodations
→	→	→	

Theme 1: Accommodations. Students who receive special education services through their individualized education plan are given a list of accommodations. The accommodations are there to help ensure their academic success. The theme “accommodations” emerged from the accommodations category. See Table 8 above for the breakdown of the accommodations theme. The subcategories are seating, instruction, peers, and assignments/assessments. Moving students around the room and allowing them to work with a classmate added to other codes to produce the subcategory seating. The subcategory instruction emerged from the following codes: movement, music, lots of examples, hands-on, and providing copies of notes. Teacher 7 stated during Focus

Group 2 “well I’ve got to do more along with normal delivery more active things I try to do more kinesthetic things”. Smaller groups added to other codes to produce the subcategory of peers. Teacher 3 stated during Focus Group 1 “ we pull out for small groups or we halved the room and taught half and half to make it a little bit smaller so they would ask more questions”. The subcategory assignments/assessments emerged from the following codes: color coding, providing extra time, alternative and shortened assignments, and lowering assignments.

Table 9

Theme 2: Changes in policy

Codes	Sub Categories	Categories	Themes
RTI is for basic skills not grade level curriculum help and that’s what kids want Reorganizing the gap between core classes and RTI classes Grade level is different material than RTI class RTI is failing our dual deficit kids RTI is only helping a few Students falling through cracks due to dual deficits →	Gap between RTI and core classes Students falling through cracks →	Response to Intervention →	Changes in Policy
New criteria for read aloud No read aloud Race to the top not understanding kids Higher vocabulary on state tests Not holding kids back →	Read aloud Race to the top →	Policy and law →	Changes in Policy
Class size is really big Small group setting Wasting students time in general education Need a fundamental class Removing extended resource class detriment to special education students Missing pull out classes Getting rid of extended resource changed inclusion classes →	Need small setting Missing extended resource →	Classes →	Changes in Policy

Theme 2: Changes in Policy. As discussed in Chapter 1 there are several educational initiatives that have been implemented such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 (New America Project, 2014), the No Child Left

Behind Act in 2001 (New America Project, 2014), and Response to Instruction and Intervention in 2013 (Tennessee Department of Education, n.d.). This study centers around the implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention which included many new policies schools had to adjust to fulfill. The theme “changes in policy” emerged from the following categories: response to intervention, policy and law, and classes. See Table 9 for the breakdown of the changes in policy theme. Response to intervention emerged from two subcategories: the gap between RTI² and core classes as well as students falling through cracks. The gap between RTI² and core classes emerged from the following codes: RTI² is for basic skills, not grade level curriculum help, and that’s what kids want; reorganizing the gap between core classes and RTI² classes; grade level is different material than RTI² class. The subcategory of students falling through cracks emerged from the following codes: RTI² is failing our dual deficit kids; RTI² is only helping a few; students falling through cracks due to dual deficits.

Teacher 23: Its are they pulled for reading, no they are only being pulled for math because that is the lower one right now so I’m sure there are some that are lower in reading right now that are being helped with reading that are falling through the math crack right now cause they could use the extra help in math.

Policy and law is broken down into two subcategories: read aloud and race to the top. Read aloud emerged from codes including the following: new criteria for read aloud and no read aloud. Race to the top emerged from codes including the following: Race to the Top not understanding kids; higher vocabulary on state tests; not holding kids back. Classes are broken down into two subcategories: need small setting and missing extended resource. Need small setting emerged from the following codes: class size is

really big; small group setting; wasting students' time in general education. The teachers missing extended resource classes emerged from codes including: need a fundamental class; removing extended resource class detrimental to special education students; missing pull out classes; getting rid of extended resource changed inclusion classes.

Table 10

Theme 3: Teacher struggles

Codes	Sub Categories	Categories	Themes
Dramatic differences			
Students aware of differences	Dramatic Differences		
Some students will never have ability		Student ability differences	Teacher Struggles
Groups-not know what to do with them			
Differentiating what students can handle in the standards	Hard to Differentiate		
Too many levels in one class			
→	→	→	
Failing students			
Special education students are not able to be pulled up to grade level using grade level material	Core teachers not able to give sped kids what they need	Teachers	Teacher Struggles
Core teachers unable to give special education kids what they need			
Developmentally appropriate			
Math teachers need help cause students not getting	Teachers need help with grade level material not RTI		
Teachers need help with grade level material not RTI			
→	→	→	
Not allowing time for basic skills	No time for basic skills		
Lacking time during school day for background skills			
Not enough time for basic skills due to amount of standards		Time	Teacher Struggles
Time does not allow for one on one	Not enough time for remediation		
Try to pull kids during R&E to help with the dual deficit but difficult			
→	→	→	

Theme 3: Teacher Struggles. The theme “teacher struggles” emerged from the three categories: student ability differences, teachers, and time. See Table 10 below for the breakdown of the teacher struggle theme. The category of student ability differences emerged from two subcategories: dramatic differences and hard to differentiate. Dramatic differences emerged from codes including the following: dramatic differences, students aware of differences, and some students will never have the ability. Hard to

differentiate emerged from codes including the following: groups not knowing what to do with them, differentiating what students can handle in regards to the standards, and too many levels in one class.

Teacher 7: Its larger and the difference between the lowest student and the highest student is more dramatic, which makes the lowest student feel more inadequate than they probably should no matter how you try to accommodate them they still stick out and there's enough students that low that it really is a problem I mean there are so many that it's kind of a problem too. And it makes it hard to teach that top student too make sure they are getting the enrichment they need. I don't want to sound whiney. I mean it's just hard, it's a lot harder to differentiate when you have got super low and super high I have no idea how to deal with that.

The category of teachers emerged from two subcategories: core teachers unable to give special kids what they need and teachers need help with grade level material, not RTI².

The subcategory of core teachers not able to give special kids what they need emerged from the following codes: failing students, special education students unable to be pulled up to grade level using grade level material, core teachers unable to give special education kids what they need, and developmentally appropriate. The category of time emerged from two subcategories: no time for basic skills and not enough time for remediation. The subcategory of no time for basic skills emerged for codes including the following: not allowing time for basic skills, lacking time during school day for background skills, and not enough time for basic skills due to amount of standards. The subcategory of not enough time for remediation emerged from codes including the following: time does not allow for one-on-one and the difficulty of trying to pull kids

during R&E to help with the dual deficit. R&E stands for remediation & enrichment—a thirty-minute period during every school day where teachers can pull certain students to work with them on standards related skills in a small group.

Table 11

Theme 4: Class struggle

Codes	Sub-Categories	Categories	Themes
Class size is really big	Class size is really big	Class size	Class Struggle
Too many levels in one class	Too many levels in one class		
→	→	→	
Based on individual child Pushing the students on an individual basis Evaluating needs based on individual child	Pushing the students on an individual basis	Expectations	Class Struggle
Some sped students are rising and some are struggling Special education students lower expectations Students giving up on stuff due to expectations	Students giving up on stuff due to expectations		
→	→	→	
Fast pace	Fast pace	Pacing	Class Struggle
Pacing of standards Flying through the standards	Flying through the standards		
→	→		

Theme 4: Class Struggle. The theme “class struggle” emerged from three categories: class size, expectations, and pacing. See Table 11 for the breakdown of the class struggle theme. The category of class size is broken down into two subcategories: class sizes are really big and too many levels in one class. The subcategory of class size is really big emerged from its own code: class sizes are really big. The subcategory of too many levels in one class emerged from its own code: too many levels in one class. Teacher 25 stated during Focus Group 1 “class sizes are really big especially the inclusion classes are huge so that like mine last year got up to 34 kids plus yourself and another adult that’s 36 bodies some of them were basketball players so that was like having a grown man in my class”. The category expectations are broken down into two

subcategories: pushing the students on an individual basis and students giving up on stuff due to expectations. Pushing the students on an individual basis emerged from codes including the following: based on individual child, pushing the students on an individual basis, and evaluating needs based on individual child. Students giving up on stuff due to expectations emerged from codes including the following: some special education students are rising and some are struggling, the lower expectation of special education students, and students giving up on stuff due to expectations. Teacher 23 stated during Focus Group 2 “I think it all ties together because we have our expectations but if it’s too rigorous for them they are still struggling with the first foundation of knowledge”. The category of pacing is broken down into two subcategories: fast pace and flying through the standards. The subcategory of fast pace emerged from its own code: fast pace. The subcategory of flying through the standards emerged from codes including the following: pacing of standards and flying through the standards.

Table 12

Theme 5: Teacher perceived student struggle

Codes	Subcategories	Categories	Themes
Rigor is too hard Adding rigorous connections with students who do not have the ability to do that Due to students struggle can't add rigor	Rigor		
Watching students struggle in class Can't do the content Struggling with workload Students struggling with analyzing math problems	Content	Struggling	Student Struggle
→	→	→	
Gap between basic skills and core Students are not getting the skills they need Students are lacking in math fundamentals Don't understand process	Gap between basic skills and core	Doesn't understand	Student Struggle
Not understanding the vocabulary	Vocabulary		
→	→	→	
Shutting down due to rigor Quit paying attention Giving up due to not understanding material Students have become complacent Shutting down – refuse to do it	Losing students during instruction	Shutting down	Student Struggle
Students shutting down due to vocabulary Students shutting down due to vocabulary and wording	Shutting down due to vocabulary		
→	→	→	
No transition period No transition from special education to general education	No transition period No transition from special education to general education	Transition	Student Struggle
→	→	→	
Not confident Failure mindset Inadequate feelings Students feel defeated in class	Failure mindset	Teacher perceptions of student feelings	Student Struggle
Fear being wrong or making mistake Students panicking about not understanding Special education students not comfortable giving opinion	Panic about not understanding		
→	→	→	

Theme 5: Teacher Perceived Student Struggle. The theme “student struggle as perceived by teachers emerged from five categories derived from teachers’ perceptions:

struggling, doesn't understand, shutting down, lack of transition, and student feelings. See Table 12 for the breakdown of the theme of student struggles as perceived by teachers. The category of struggling is broken down into two subcategories: rigor and content. Rigor emerged from codes including the following: too rigorous, adding rigorous connections with students who do not have the ability to do that, and cannot add rigor due to students who struggle. Content emerged from codes including the following: watching students struggle in classes, can't do the content, struggling with workload, and students struggling with analyzing math problems. When asked how the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom during the one-on-one interview Teacher 3 had some information on breaking down the rigor.

Teacher 3: About the same cause the rigor is hard and even if I break it down cause the rigor for a regular class or an advanced class is not going to be the same as an inclusion class so even if I break down the rigor for...which is rigorous for them they have already shut down just from the material alone that the rigor they don't look it and even attempt to read it most of the time, getting them to get out the paper and work is a struggle.

The category of doesn't understand is broken down into two subcategories: firstly, the gap between basic skills and core and, secondly, vocabulary. The gap between basic skills and core emerged from codes including the following: gap between basic skills and core, students not getting the skills they need, students lacking in math fundamentals, and don't understand process. Vocabulary emerged from the code of not understanding the vocabulary. The category of shutting down is broken down into two subcategories losing students during instruction and shutting down due to vocabulary.

Teacher 2: I think they try to, at least for me, they want to learn the vocabulary but then they end up confusing themselves more because I'll say what's whatever and they will start throwing out random words and I'm like think about what you are doing before you just start throwing out random words.

Losing students during instruction emerged from codes including the following: shutting down due to rigor, quit paying attention, giving up due to not understanding material, students becoming complacent, and shutting down or refusing to do it. Shutting down due to vocabulary emerged from the following codes: students shutting down due to vocabulary and students shutting down due to vocabulary and wording. The category of transition is broken down into two subcategories: no transition period and no transition from special education to general education. No transition period emerged from its own code: no transition period. No transition from special education to general education emerged from its own code as well: no transition from special education to general education. Teacher 3 stated during the Focus Group 1 “and when it is thrown down from the state of from whoever and they are like do it now, those kids don't have any type of adjustment period”. The category of teacher perceptions of student feelings is broken down into two subcategories: failure mindset and a panic about not understanding. Failure mindset emerged from codes including the following: not confident, failure mindset, inadequate feelings, and students feel defeated in class. Panic about not understanding emerged from codes including the following: fear of being wrong or making a mistake, students panicking about not understanding, and special education students are not comfortable giving opinion.

Focus Group 1, Focus Group 2, and Interviews Coding Round 2. The second round of coding included taking the codes from Round One and developing focus codes, axis codes, and theoretical codes. The axis codes that emerged are in the Figure 9.

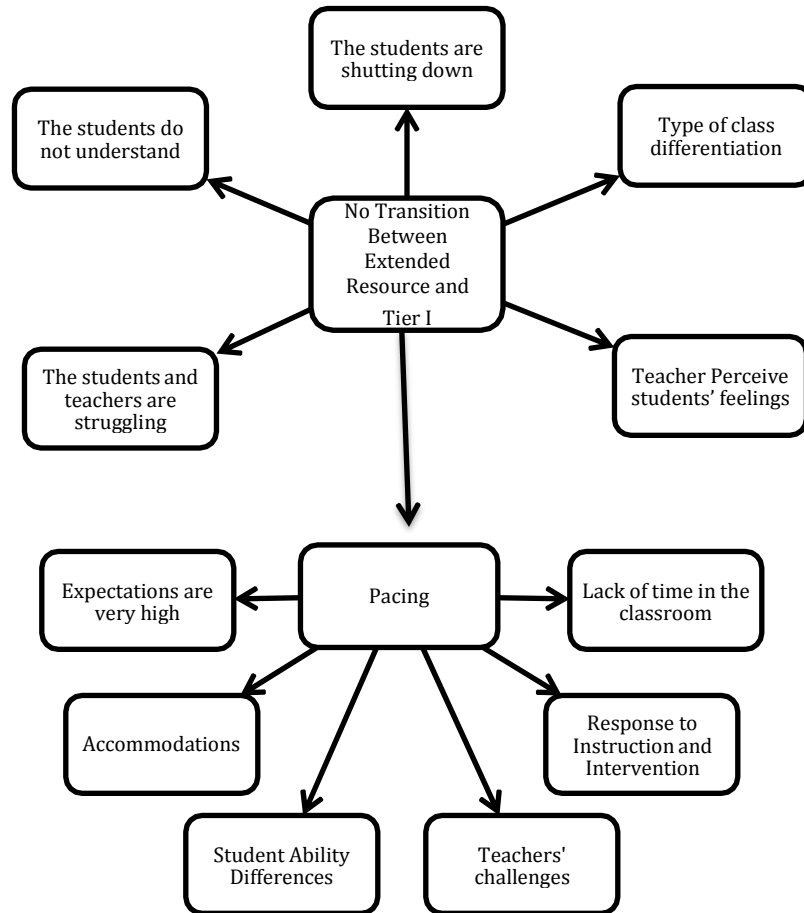


Figure 9. Axis codes

Focus Group 1, Focus Group 2, and Interviews Axis Codes. The focus codes led the researcher to the two axis codes: (1) no transition between extended resource and Tier I instruction; (2) pacing. The two axis codes are joined due to the fact that the pacing axis is a focus code branching off from code of no transition between extended

resource instruction and Tier I instruction. As revealed during the focus groups and interviews data, the pacing of the instruction and state expectations were a cause of perceived struggle for students and teachers alike. The lack of transition for students from the extended resource special education classroom to the general education inclusion classroom led to that dramatic difference in pacing for both parties. A lack of transition from the extended resource program to the general education inclusion classroom is also a reason why students struggle in their new learning environment and why the teachers, eventually, see what they perceive as a failure mindset and students shutting down in class. The teachers perceive that the students do not understand the dramatic difference in classes from their previous extended resource class to the new inclusion classroom. That lack of transition has led students to struggle greatly.

The teachers and case managers expressed the pacing must be fast to accommodate the standards that must be taught in the inclusion classroom, which causes teachers to struggle greatly as well. The differences in student ability in the classroom room are so vast that there is not enough time in the day to work with the new inclusion students. The expectations are at grade level, and the students who were placed in their classes due to RTI² cannot meet those expectations, even with accommodations, in the time allotted.

Combining all the information coded in the first and second round from interviews, focus groups, and survey answers, Figure 10 was developed.

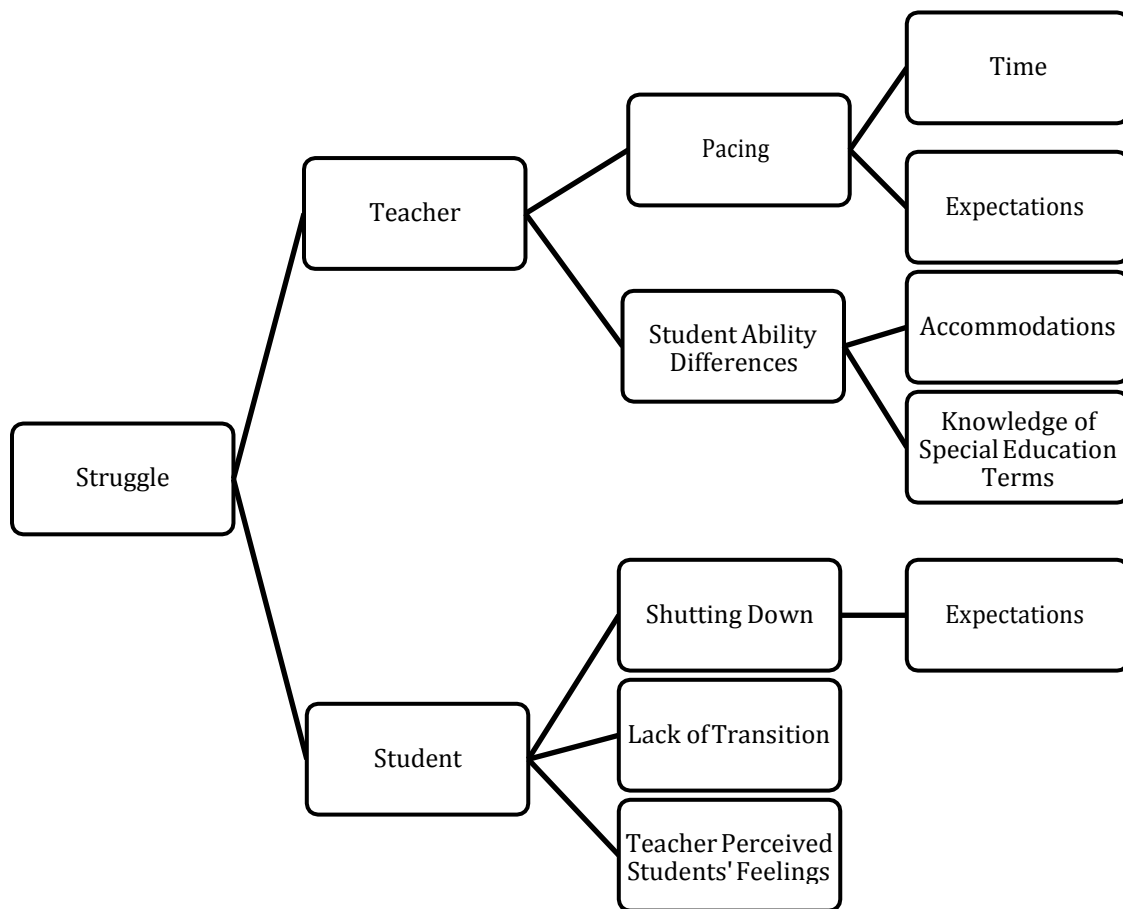


Figure 10. Theoretical coding

Survey Answers, Focus Group 1, Focus Group 2, and Interviews Theoretical Coding. Both teachers and teachers' perceptions of students revealed struggles with the implementation of new inclusion classes aligned with RTI². The top portion of the figure presents the items either contributing to or producing the outcome of the teacher struggle: pacing and ability differences in the classroom. Pacing is broken down further into time and expectations, which have developed the pacing struggle that teachers face. The ability differences in the classroom are broken down further into accommodations and knowledge of special education terms. Teachers perceive students are still struggling with the accommodations in the inclusion classroom, and teachers are struggling with

the accommodations because some have too many students, others too few, while others need read aloud but are not given the opportunity. Knowledge of special education terms is imperative in this new inclusion classroom. The teachers will not understand the parts of each students' Individualized Education Plan if they do not understand the vocabulary.

The bottom of Figure 10 references the items mentioned by teachers that cause students to struggle or are outcomes of their struggle. Teachers perceive that students shut down due to the expectations in the inclusion classroom. They are now expected to master current grade level standards, while during their extended resource class they were expected to work on basic skills at their individual level. Teachers perceive that the lack of transition from the extended resource program into the general education resource classroom is a struggle for the students. The teachers that participated in the current study perceived their new inclusion students as lacking confidence and having a failure mentality in the classrooms.

Research Questions and Responses from Research

Table 13

Research question and data collection matrix and table

Research Question	Survey Item	Focus Group Questions	Interview Questions
1. What are the teachers' perceptions of how the inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?		4	1, 2, 4 & 5
2. How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed since the school-wide implementation of Response to Intervention to accommodate for RTI ² ?		2	3 & 5
3. What instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom are all participating teachers and case managers familiar with in regards to special education students?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7		
4. What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?	3, 5 & 7	2 & 3	3
5. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?	3, 5 & 7	2 & 3	3
6. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age level peers in science?	3, 5 & 7	2 & 3	3
7. What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?	3, 5 & 7	2 & 3	3

Research Question 1: What are the teachers' perceptions of how the inclusion process is promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?

Response. According to information gathered in the focus groups and the interviews, the inclusion process due to the implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention is impeding instruction for special education students. The material is too difficult, the students' frustration level is escalating, and they are shutting down. As Teacher 3 notes in Focus Group 1, "For some of them it is purely material it's too difficult they can't do it."

CASE MANAGER 4:
(Focus Group) I'm just going to step out there.....I think when they removed the extended resource class it was very detrimental to special ed students that are between CDC and being able to go into the regular curriculum a lot of them can't go into the general education classroom even with the modifications and accommodations on their IEP they need that lower level to be taught to get that bottom information or they do not have that ability to do the classroom material. They don't have the ability and to me even with the accommodations and everything some of them are not going to be able to do that.

Teachers indicated that the teaching pace and the need to remediate and reteach the special education students has become difficult. The drastic difference between the ability levels of the students in each class also impedes the instruction of the special education students.

TEACHER 3:
(Interview) I definitely have more lower students like I've always had an inclusion class or two and that's usually standard, but having some of those that are

so low that I mean I see them over there counting to five on their hand and I'm like and that is also a big difference. . . . Before we could split the class so the class would be a little smaller instruction we would co-teach, we have done where we split the class and each teach on each side or we have done groups where we meet with those around the room but the low ones they get so lost that it is like literally someone has to be right there with them. It's harder to do the pull out groups or the co-teaching.

Research Question 2: How have the goals and objectives of Individualized Education Programs for the students currently being served by special education changed since the school-wide implementation of Response to Intervention to accommodate for RTI²?

Response. According to the focus groups, interviews, and survey responses, none of the goals and objectives have changed, but the accommodations and setting for instruction have changed. During focus groups 1 and 2, data emerged that showed teachers as perceiving the lack of the read aloud accommodation as really hurting some of the special education students.

TEACHER 23:
(Focus Group) I have students who are reading on a grade one level maybe grade three some of them and I have some who I know read aloud that aren't getting read aloud and that breaks my heart because I have one kid who can pass the test if I read it aloud to him but he has not scored above a 30 on any test including retakes this year. And I think he needs read aloud but he can't get it. He doesn't qualify.

Research Question 3: What instructional strategies specific to the inclusive classroom are all participating teachers and case managers familiar with in regards to special education students?

Response. According to the survey results, teachers report they are utilizing instructional strategies such as extra time, different methods of instruction, modified assignments, and modified assessments for all special education students. Questions 3, 5, and 7 of the survey produced results to answer this research question. One participant stated, “Pacing is different; we may spend more time on fewer activities.” Another participant stated, “I will try to teach it multiple ways and simplify it as much as possible.” Teachers are providing distinct directions for special education students and repeat them often. One participant stated “more one-on-one instruction, more distinct directions more often, modified assignments and assessments.”

Research Question 4: What accommodations are included in the lesson plan development for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in math?

Response. According to the survey results, math teachers utilize several accommodations to assist special education students master the curriculum. Survey Questions 5 and 7 provided answers for Research Question 4. One participant stated in response to Survey Question 5, “I always include past problems in daily work. I want to make sure they are maintaining the skills that they have learned in the past.” Another participant responded by advocating for “less practice problems.” Survey Question 7 produced lists of subject specific accommodations from the participants.

ANONYMOUS:
(Survey Response)

Math: flash cards, fraction strips, research based activities and games, number lines, vocabulary wall, hands on activities, group activities, real world situations, computer, steps written down on how to

solve problems, examples, students working on the board—not on paper, thumbs up/thumbs down, think-pair-share, show me the answer, collaborative thinking.

Another participant stated in response to Survey Question 7, “Breaking things down into steps so they understand the process of how to solve a problem. Questioning that leads to the discovery of the answer.”

Research Question 5: What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age appropriate peers in English Language Arts?

Response. According to the survey results, teachers are utilizing several accommodations to assist the special education students experience success in the English Language Arts essential learnings academic expectations such as survey questions 5 and 7 provided answers for Research Question 5. The consistent result regarding English Language Arts accommodations for special education students concerns changing the reading level of the material.

Anonymous: I modify the rubric I use to grade writing, and I
(Survey Response) sometimes require a lower Lexile reading assignment to enable students to learn the skill without the confusion of more difficult texts.”

Survey Question 7 elicited a more varied response regarding accommodations used in English Language Arts classes, including reading text aloud, adjusting the difficulty of the text, and using graphic organizers. One of the anonymous survey participants responded to Survey Question 7 by stating, “I use KWL (Know, Wonder, and Learn) charts, T charts and other graphic organizers. I teach pre-reading and pre-writing

strategies and embed basic reading strategies and skills in the curriculum.” The KWL charts are used when starting new units or lessons in order to discover what students already know about the topic and what they are wondering about the topic. They are used again at the end of the unit or lesson for students to fill in what they have learned about the topic.

Research Question 6: What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age level peers in science?

Response. According to the survey results, several accommodations assist special education students experience success with the science essential learnings academic expectations such as survey question 7 provided answers for Research Question 6. One anonymous participant notes that “more visuals, pictures, and graphics have been found to be helpful for my science students who receive special education services.” During Focus Group 1, science was discussed as requiring math and reading skills. Therefore, one could derive that math and English Language Arts accommodations are also needed in science classes to help special education students experience success.

Research Question 7: What accommodations are included for the special education students to excel in the same grade and content specific professional learning committee created essential learnings academic expectations of their age level peers in social studies?

Response. According to the survey results, social studies teachers are utilizing several accommodations to assist the special education students experience success on

the social studies essential learnings academic expectations. Survey Questions 3 and 7 provided answers for Research Question 7. Social studies accommodations are very similar to English Language Arts accommodations due to the social studies curriculum and the amount of reading required of the students.

ANONYMOUS: Due to the Social Studies curriculum, we mostly utilize reading accommodations. Anytime we use text it is read aloud either by me (teacher) or shared among all of the students. We also take particular effort to break apart texts to find main ideas, key concepts, and other literary tactics to help the students better understand the text. I believe these tools aid, not only the special education students, but my general education students as well.

Social studies teachers are also utilizing maps and other visuals to help their special education students understand the events that took place in history. One participant stated in response to Survey Question 7 that “fill-in the blank notes, and using charts and graphs to allow the students to see the connections of events from one to another.”

Chapter Summary

The goal of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions on how students, once formerly enrolled in the extended resource special education program, now perform in the general education classroom. Even though the teachers report they utilize several subject specific accommodations and modifying their instruction, the teachers perceive the formerly extended resource students are struggling in the new inclusion classrooms. This was made evident by their responses to the three parts of the study. There were three parts to this qualitative study: electronic survey, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews. Twenty-five teachers and four special education case managers were asked to participate in the survey; 88% completed the survey. Each of the two focus

groups had a different six participants: four teachers and two special education case managers. The one-on-one interviews consisted of three purposefully selected teachers and one purposefully selected special education case manager.

Survey Questions 3, 5, and 7 all aided in answering Research Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 with general and subject specific instructional strategies and accommodations. The teachers are utilizing these instructional strategies and accommodations in their classrooms to help the special education students experience academic success. Those strategies and accommodations include modified instruction, modified assessments, modified assignments, extra time on assignments and tests, and repetitive directions. Although all these accommodations and instructional strategies are being used, the teachers are struggling in the new inclusion classrooms and perceive the students to be struggling as well.

The focus groups and interviews produced findings regarding Research Question 1. The new inclusion classes are impeding the education of the special education students previously educated in the extended resource special education setting. The teachers in this research perceive that the students are struggling with the lack of transition and expectations. The teachers in this research are also struggling with the vast differences in students' ability levels in the classroom, the expectations, and lack of time to help these struggling students.

Chapter Four restated the purpose of the study and summarized the descriptions of the participants. This chapter also presented the data found during the survey, focus groups, and interviews. The themes that emerged were discussed and presented with the research questions. Chapter Five will present an interpretation of the findings,

limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications/recommendations for positive change.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative research study utilizing the grounded theory approach was to investigate teacher perceptions in regards to how factors that impact students who were formerly enrolled in the special education extended resource program now perform in the general education Tier I inclusion classroom. Tennessee adopted the RTI program in 2013, and adapted it to include instruction, and renamed it RTI². All students receive Tier I standards based instruction in the inclusion classroom. The students who were the focus of this study were formerly enrolled in the extended resource program and are now being served in the general education inclusion classroom. RTI² exposed students to a standards based grade level curriculum, a larger class size, and a more rigorous set of academic expectations.

Five themes regarding teacher perceptions emerged from the focus group and interview data after the first round of coding: (1) accommodations, (2) changes in policy, (3) teacher struggle, (4) class struggle, and (5) student struggle as perceived by the teachers. Tables 8 through 12 below indicate how the themes emerged from the categories, subcategories, and codes. The first round of coding consisted of three (Saldoña, 2016) coding procedures: (1) In Vivo coding, (2) Process coding, (3) Initial coding.

The second round of coding consisted of three of Saldoña's (2016) coding procedures: (1) Focus coding, (2) Axis coding, (3) Theoretical coding. The focus groups and interviews data sets will be presented by the themes that emerged. After the second round of coding it was apparent that teacher struggles and teachers' perceptions of student struggles were at the root of the data. Teacher perceptions of student struggles

all spur from how they perceive student feelings, the lack of transition, and students shutting down. Pacing and student ability differences spur from the teacher struggles. Figures 9 and 10 below display the focus codes that developed into the axis codes and the theoretical codes.

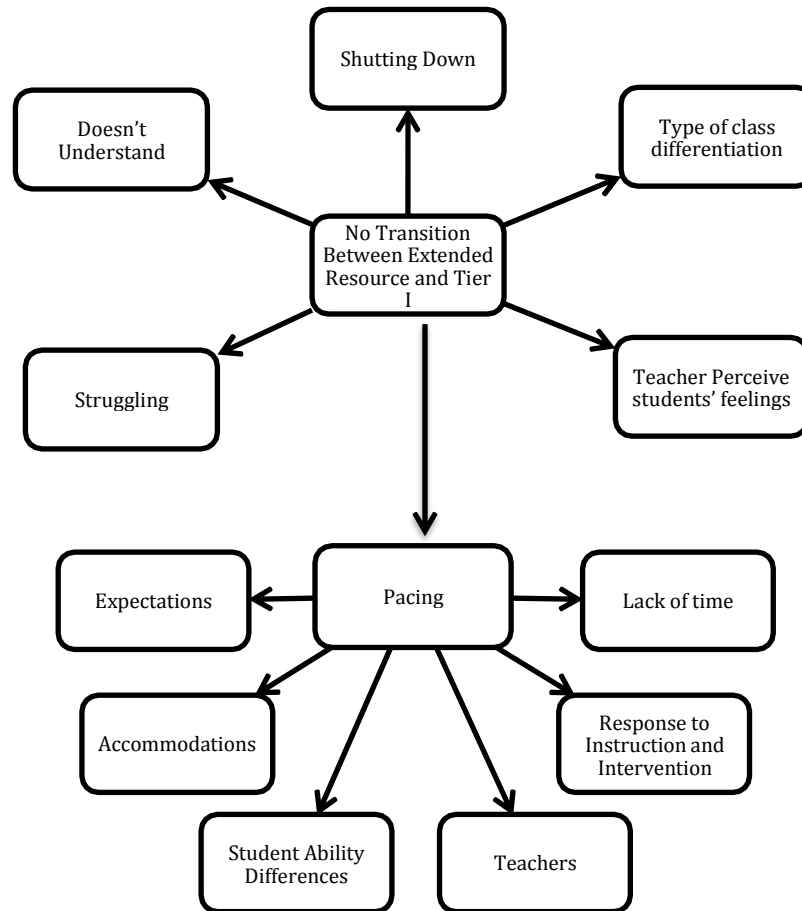


Figure 9. Axis codes

Interpretation of the Findings

Descriptor: Struggle. Struggle was placed as the overarching idea of the data due to the fact that all facets of the study involve or derive from the struggle. Many of the facets of the new inclusion class are either a struggle for the teacher or for the

students (as perceived by the teachers). There were one hundred thirty-six codes that fell in the struggle category. Out of those 136 codes, 49 referenced the struggle felt by the teachers and 87 referenced the teacher perceptions of the struggle felt by the students.

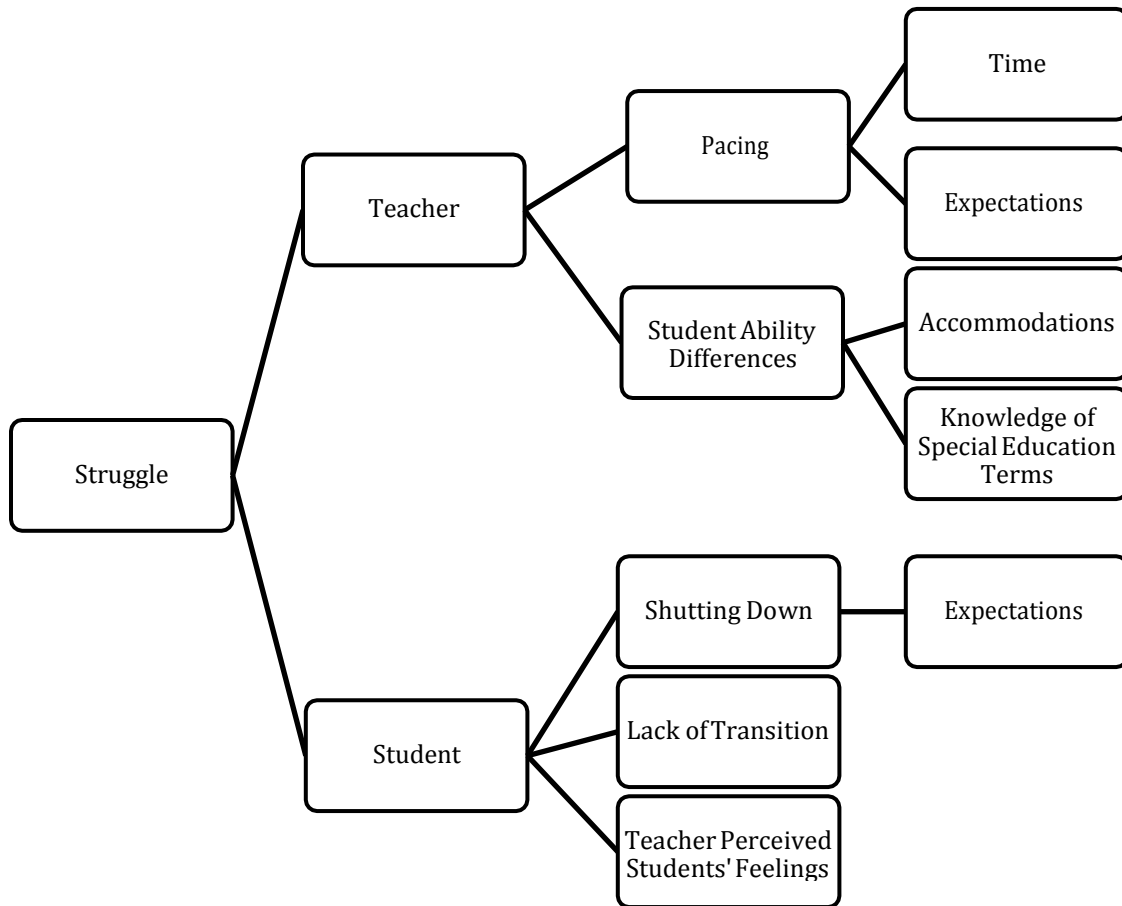


Figure 10. Theoretical coding

Teachers and students are both struggling with the implementation of RTI² at the school involved in this study. While challenges with any new program can be expected, the implementation of RTI² may be causing teachers to not educate all the students in their classrooms and students, as seen by the teachers, to shut down. The new Tier I inclusion classes are presenting different challenges to both groups of individuals. The

addition of the students formally served by special education in the extended resource program into the Tier I inclusion classroom presented several instructional difficulties for the teachers. The Tier I inclusion classroom is working on grade level state mandated standards whereas the extended resource program was working on the fundamental skills the students were lacking. Therefore the students are having trouble understanding what is expected of them, and the pace with which the teachers must teach the standards is much faster than they can grasp.

Teacher Struggle. Participants noted during the (a) interviews, (b) focus groups, and on the (c) survey answers that they experienced difficulties due to the implementation of the RTI² tiers. The teachers struggled with several different aspects of the implementation of RTI² and the new makeup of their inclusion classes. The pacing of the standards is extremely fast, and the teachers observed that the new inclusion students needed more time to learn the material. The amount time that the new inclusion students need in regards to understanding the grade level material is not available. The magnitude of the student ability differences in the inclusion classroom is daunting teachers. The teachers are also struggling with the large amount of accommodations for students who, prior to RTI², were educated in the extended resource class. Finally, teachers struggle due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of special education terms.

Two themes emerged: (a) pacing; and (b) student ability differences. The theme of pacing was further broken down into the category expectations and the category time. The high expectations and lack of time to teach the grade level curriculum to the students led to a very fast instructional pace. The teachers perceived the fast pace as a

struggle for students previously educated in the extended resource program. The curriculum was at grade level whereas they were working on basic skills below grade level in the extended resource classroom at the pace their special education teacher deemed appropriate for each student. The curriculum in the inclusion classroom required more prior knowledge and connection to prior knowledge than what they were accustomed to, which led to a need for more time from the teacher to help scaffold the material for them.

TEACHER 3: With the scope and sequence jammed the way it is we don't have time and that's all subjects they just expect they have gotten 100% of every other grade they have been through and especially these Special Ed. students that have missed so much and have been babied and coddled and it's like BAM here you are its hard.

Scaffolding is difficult when so many different ability levels exist together in one class (Teacher 6, during interview). Some of the students, who had been receiving services in the extended resource program, are drastically below grade level. A student only has so much capability to learn on his or her own, and then only so much more they can do with assistance from an adult or peer (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, scaffolding can only elevate children to a certain level. If they start off much lower than the expectation, the scaffolding might not be able to help them successfully meet those lofty expectations that teachers expressed. The magnitude of the difference in ability levels in the inclusion classroom requires many different layers of support, which is a struggle for one teacher and perhaps an educational assistant to achieve.

TEACHER 3: They are definitely aware of their differences more than I would think. I can't think of anything else. It's changed how we can co-teach as well. Before we could split the class so the

class would be a little smaller instruction we would co-teach, we have done where we split the class and each teach on each side or we have done groups where we meet with those around the room but the low ones they get so lost that it is like literally someone has to be right there with them. It's harder to do the pull out groups or the co-teaching it's just and there really is I'd say three to four in my class but still I can't just let them not do anything. I can't just sit there. And I know that sometime they can't get the curriculum but I don't know what to do, it kills me.

The different layers of support needed in each inclusion classroom may require a variety of accommodations. Teachers must be aware of and have the ability to handle all of the different accommodations each new inclusion student must receive. Although, as some of the teachers noted in the focus groups, several students are still shutting down even with accommodations and are not able to do the work. The teachers also must understand what each accommodation means on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Educating the teachers on these different accommodations and how to utilize them is key to the success of the IEP. However, there is no accommodation for lack of background knowledge. While the students were receiving skills based instruction in the extended resource program, they were not receiving grade level standards based instruction. Therefore the students are being asked to perform at grade level but may have not learned the background knowledge to aid them in the learning the grade level standards based curriculum.

Not only is there a lack of education for the teachers about the different accommodations, but also a lack of knowledge on different special education terms. The new special education laws and terms are often not relayed to the general education

teachers; therefore, they may be oblivious to them. Prior to the implementation of RTI², the teachers were not educated in how to handle the new onset of very low performing students now attending their classes. They did not understand the amount of accommodations that would be needed, nor did they understand all the vocabulary associated with special education. The survey answers included two teachers whose answers were some variation of “I don’t know what that is” in regards to embedded curriculum, eight teachers whose answers were some variation of “I do not know” in regards to the extended resource program, and one teacher whose answer was “I don’t know” in regards to the least restrictive environment.

Teacher Perceived Student Struggle. Students struggled with several different aspects of the implementation of RTI². They struggled with the expectations of the new inclusion classrooms they are enrolled in and the lack of transition from the special education extended resource classroom to the general education inclusion classroom. The struggle is so great for some students that they shut down in class. The teachers perceive the students as feeling a lack of confidence, having their mind set on the fact that they will fail, and an overall feeling that they cannot do it (focus group and interview data).

The inclusion classes are set up with state mandated standards that are grade level curriculum based. The students that were educated in an extended resource special education setting are not accustomed to the grade level standards and the expectations that come with those standards. The extended resource program educated students based on their current skill level or basic skills. The expectations in the inclusion classes are leading students to experience great struggle and to eventually shut down. They are not

able to reach the expectations that the class, teachers, or state has set for them. In the one-on-one interview, Teacher 7 observed an increase in the students' frustration level with the expectations, which led to more stress and manifested itself in poor performance.

TEACHER 7: There is a lot of struggle a lot of deer in headlight expressions and the frustration level is, is, you can see it in their work, in their anxiety um I mean we try to help them as much as possible but they're stressed. And it's now manifesting itself in just not doing it, that stubborn attitude.

Their ability level is not at the level where meeting those expectations is in their zone of proximal development (Vygostsky, 1978). The expectations are set by the state mandated content standards, which are on grade level and reflect the Tennessee Department of Education's push to increase rigor. The students were not learning state mandated grade level standards in their extended resource classes, so this is a drastic change. Teachers perceive that the students are struggling with the content involved in the standards, the rigorous nature of the standards, and the quick pace they must be taught in the classroom. Teacher 3 stated during focus group 1 that "when you have to test you have to review you have to remediate they just get lost in all of this and they just shut down."

The students who received special education services who, prior to RTI², were enrolled in the extended resource program and are in the classrooms of the participants in the study have never been educated in a general education inclusion classroom. They have spent their entire educational career in the extended resource classrooms. The extended resource program is not only a different curriculum but proceeds at a slower

pace with a smaller class size. From the students' perspective, they left in May being educated in an extended resource classroom. Three months later the students entered school in August to step into a general education classroom. This was a substantive change for the students, and they did not receive any support to bridge from the extended resource classroom to the general education classroom. The students struggle with the size of the classes and do not wish to make themselves vulnerable by asking questions in front of so many peers. Teacher 2 noted in the one-on-one interview the following about students' lack of asking questions, which leads to not understanding and shutting down.

TEACHER 2: If they don't reach the expectation they just shut down so that's a hard thing to deal with as a teacher cause you want to still push them but when they are not asking questions they need to ask to understand the information or they are not taking notes like they should be to get the information or anything like that so they just shut down and quit paying attention.

Students are also struggling with the expectations, rigor, and pace of the general education inclusion classroom. The perception of the teachers is that students are developing a failure mindset fueled by the knowledge that they will just be passed along to the next grade due to No Child Left Behind, the law reauthorized in 2004 by the federal government of the United States of America. Teacher 11 noted this failure mindset during focus group 1 meeting.

TEACHER 11: It's like they have given up so much because they already they have in their mind they are already going to fail they have in their mind just let me fail I'm not going to be held back and I'm not going to take summer school, who cares.

Theory Development.

Two theories were developed from the codes, categories, and themes that emerged from the data. (1) The students who were in extended resource classrooms were not cognitively prepared to handle the rigor of the RTI² Tier I inclusion classroom. (2) Due to the lack of training, the teachers are not prepared to handle the makeup of their new RTI² Tier I inclusion classrooms with the addition of the special education students who are performing at lower academic levels than the students who receive special education services they are accustomed to teach.

Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development states that a student can only do so much on his or her own, and then only so much more with assistance. There is a limit to what learning can take place for each student. Each student's zone of proximal development is different. Therefore the students, previously in extended resource, that were tested prior to being enrolled in extended resource produced drastically lower results than their same age peers in regards to their ability levels. Those students are not prepared to handle the expectations, rigor, pacing, and larger class size of the general education Tier I inclusion classroom.

The general education teachers, during their time at the school in this study, have always had one inclusion class. This class consisted of advanced students, average students, low students, and students who receive special education support. Prior to RTI², the students who received special education support while enrolled in their inclusion classes could experience grade level appropriate academic success with a small amount of accommodations. After the implementation of RTI², the inclusion classes consist of advanced students, average students, low students, students who receive

special education support while always being in inclusion classes, and students who receive special education support while being educated in a special education extended resource classroom. The addition of the students who receive special education support who have been educated based on their low ability level in a special education extended resource classroom has changed the makeup of the inclusion classroom drastically. These students were taught a basic skills curriculum in the extended resource classroom, unlike the inclusion classroom where the teachers employ grade level appropriate standards based curriculum. Therefore, the students do not have any background knowledge, their accommodations are more intense, and their ability levels are so much lower than the other students that differentiating the instruction has proven to be difficult for teachers. The teachers have not been equipped with the proper tools to assist these students and maintain a high level of rigor for the other students in the classroom.

Recommendations for Further Study

Some of the factors included in this study but not examined in detail are student feelings toward the new inclusion classes, modified assessments, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction in the new inclusion classrooms.

Recommendation 1. To study student perceptions regarding the new Tier I inclusion classroom setting where they are receiving their education. In the present study, teacher perceptions of student feelings were investigated but not student perceptions of their own feelings themselves. Student participants who explained their feelings toward the new inclusion classrooms and their feelings upon leaving an extended resource classroom for the expectations, rigor, and pace of a Tier I inclusion

classroom would provide insight into the students' true feelings regarding this new initiative.

Recommendation 2. To interview students to gain their perspective regarding the modified assessments in their inclusion classrooms. In the current study, the researcher investigated different methods used by teachers to accommodate the special education students in their inclusion classrooms. The accommodations were used to enable special education students to reach the academic goals for all students in their grade level. One of the ways teachers accommodate special education students in their inclusion classrooms is through modified assessments. Examining those modified assessments from the students' perception, do they feel the assessment modifications help them or hinder them from showing what they know about the curriculum standards?

Recommendation 3. To investigate different modified assessments for different subject area classes and their effectiveness in the academic success of special education student would provide insight into what each subject area, and more specifically each teacher, classifies as a modification. In the current study, the researcher investigated different methods for accommodating special education students in the classroom. One way teachers accommodated students receiving special education services is through modified assessments. Modified assessment is a broad and sometimes overused term. While examining the different modified assessments, noting the relationship (if any) between type modification and students' academic success, would provide insight into which modifications are successful and which modifications are unsuccessful.

Recommendation 4. In the current study, the researcher investigated different methods used by teachers to accommodate special education students in their inclusion classrooms. The accommodations enabled special education students to reach the academic goals set for all students in their grade level. Another way teachers enabled special education students to experience success is through scaffolding or differentiated instruction. The vast difference in ability levels of the students in the Tier I inclusion classroom and the information from the focus groups and interviews, however, leads one to believe that differentiated instruction would look quite different than it did prior to RTI². The recommendation for further study would note any changes to the differentiated instruction methods, the effectiveness of those changes to the differentiated instruction methods, and student feelings toward those differentiated instruction methods.

Recommendation 5. To perform the same study across rural, urban, and suburban areas across the range of diversity within Tennessee. If the entire state implemented RTI², the study could also note any similarities and differences in the implementation method. This study could lead to further implications for future action in the current school setting.

Recommendations for Practice

The purpose of this research was to gather teacher perceptions of the new inclusion Tier I classrooms. Response to Instruction and Intervention removed the extended resource classes for special education students who are cognitively lower than their peers. Based on the skills specified in the Individualized Education Programs for each student, the extended resource teachers worked specifically on skills needed by the

student instead of on grade level curriculum. When RTI² was implemented, those students were placed in a regular education inclusion classroom that focuses on grade level curriculum. The current study produced several implications. They are as follows:

Recommendation 1. Implementing a new program for students that involves changing their educational environment needs to be done gradually. Time and attention must be paid in the transition to the new program. Teachers neither understood nor were prepared for the new inclusion classes. Most of the participants stated late in the focus groups that, if RTI² was given more time to transition, it might work better and be more successful for students academically.

Recommendation 2. The survey led me to believe more educator training must take place. Setting up professional development for the teachers by special education professionals seems necessary so all educators can apply the terminology and the new laws correctly.

Recommendation 3. During this study, teachers consistently mentioned that they differentiated instruction but still had trouble understanding how to do so in the new inclusion classroom. Due to vast differences in student ability levels in the new inclusion classes, it is imperative that teachers understand different ways to differentiate instruction effectively. An interactive or hands-on professional development series is in order for all of our core subject area teachers. The recommended professional development would give those teachers some direction and some strategies proven to work in similar situations.

Recommendation 4. Finally, administrative programs in universities must adapt to include information regarding the new inclusion classroom. The new inclusion classes

contain students with a much wider variety of needs and cognitive levels than the teachers are accustomed to teaching. Therefore, differentiated instruction must be taught with that new inclusion class in mind.

Limitations of the Study

Reactive assessment is a threat to the external validity of this research (Kazdin, 1982). Reactive assessment poses a threat because the researcher currently holds a position of power over the teacher and case manager participants. Therefore, to reduce the threat, a nonbiased individual interviewed the teachers and case managers and facilitated the focus groups. The third party individual is a teacher at an elementary school in the same county where the research takes place. The third party individual was unknown to all of the participants. She has never been in a position or authority of power over any of the participants. Another third party individual, due to a scheduling conflict with the first interviewer, conducted one interview. The second interviewer conducted the interview of Teacher 2. The second interviewer is a teacher at a high school in the same county where the current study took place. None of the participants knew the second interviewer. He has never been in a position of power or authority over any of the participants.

The most noticeable limitation is that, due to the researcher's familiarity with the participants, there might be an element of bias. However, the researcher strived to minimize this bias by assigning the participants a number in order to protect anonymity during the data transcription, coding, and the data interpretation.

Delimitations of the Study

A potential delimitation for the current study was accurately transcribing the data. The researcher manually transcribed the data from both focus groups and all four interviews. The data was transcribed exactly as spoken; therefore, any slang or unfinished thoughts are true to what was spoken in the focus groups and/or the interviews. The researcher strived to minimize this limitation by doing a member check. The participants were all assigned a number prior to the start of the study. The researcher had access to the participants' identities in order to perform the member check. The identities were kept confidential until all the data was transcribed and coded. To perform the member check the focus group transcription was sent to every member of the focus group through email with the request to read and email the researcher back if any changes needed to be made. No changes needed to be made to the focus group data. The interview transcription was sent to the specific participant of each interview through email with the request to read and email the researcher back if any changes needed to be made. No changes needed to be made to the interview data.

The design of the study provided a view of 29 participants from one suburban middle school. The study investigated the implementation of RTI² on one group of students in one school. There were 29 students enrolled in the special education extended resource program at the school in this study before the implementation of RTI². Prior to RTI RTI², Tennessee was one of the few states still utilizing the extended resource program. Therefore, not every school will have the same difficulties with implementation.

Chapter Summary

Response to Instruction and Intervention is an innovative new program for the state. It has the potential to help students be more successful in the core curriculum classrooms. However, the lack of transition to the new RTI² Tier I inclusion classroom is a struggle for the teachers, and the teachers perceived that the students who were formally educated in the extended resource program are struggling as well. The teachers face their own challenges every day in their new inclusion classes, and they face the challenge of watching their students struggle and eventually shut down. As Teacher 3 in Focus Group 1 stated, “It’s like common core, just like the standards, when they have had enough time to adjust and grow with it, but these 7th and 8th graders that have had seven or eight years of completely different school then we are just like bam. And some of my kids are like Miss, why is it all so different this year?”

Epilogue

The present study gave the participants the opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions regarding special education, the implementation of RTI², and their new inclusion classes. Because this study investigated the perceptions of teachers, getting them to answer as honestly as possible was an imperative. Since the researcher is in a position of power over the teachers, it was therefore a great cause of concern as to whether they would be as honest as they should be in their survey answers, focus group discussions, and interview responses. One of the great surprises of this study was the amount of honesty and vulnerability with which the teachers approached each question

and response. They disclosed more information than needed at times and strove to make the study the most honest representation possible. Due to that honesty and vulnerability, the researcher obtained a large amount of data.

The research suggests that the removal of the extended resource classes at this specific middle school was a detriment to students' academic success. As Case Manager 4 stated in Focus Group 1, "I think when they removed the extended resource class it was very detrimental to special ed students that are between CDC and being able to go into the regular curriculum, a lot of them can't go into the general education classroom even with the modifications and accommodations." Due to the students' struggle and eventual shut down the teachers also struggled through how to teach those students. The teachers struggled with how do they keep the rigor, high expectations, and fast pace required to teach all the standards with the new inclusion students.

It is our job as educators and administrators to help these teachers understand the new dynamics of their classrooms and how to teach all students the age appropriate state standards. All students need to experience success. Going forward, it is imperative to implement new programs slowly, allowing for transition. The transition helps students and teachers both. That transition time needs to be a time of educating teachers on what to expect and what can be done to continue with students' academic success. "Change takes time and must be viewed as a process, not an event" (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011, p. 24).

In the study school, since implementation of RTI² has already taken place and the new inclusion classes are already moving forward, two initiatives must be put in place to allow teachers and students to experience success in their new learning

environments. Professional development opportunities need to be provided for the teachers in regards to differentiation methods that specifically work with the dramatic difference of ability levels in their classrooms. Small group study sessions must be worked into the logistics of the school schedule for the students to have the opportunity to develop the standards based background knowledge that is essential for them to be successful in the Tier I inclusion classrooms.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board – Exempt Approval Notice

IRB

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Office of Research
Compliance, 010A Sam
Ingram Building, 2269
Middle Tennessee Blvd
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



EXEMPT APPROVAL NOTICE

2/11/2016

Investigator(s): Anna Ralston & Rick
Vanosdall Department: College of Education

Investigator(s) Email:
amh3e@mtmail.mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "Educator Perspectives of Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention Implementation Specific to Inclusion Classrooms "

Protocol ID: 16-

1145 Dear

Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above and this study has been designated to be EXEMPT.. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) **Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations**

The following changes to this protocol must be reported prior to implementation:

- Addition of new subject population or exclusion of currently approved demographics
- Addition/removal of investigators
- Addition of new procedures
- Other changes that may make this study to be no longer be considered exempt

The following changes do not have to be reported:

- Editorial/administrative revisions to the consent of other study documents
- Changes to the number of subjects from the original proposal

All research materials must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board
Middle Tennessee State University

NOTE: All necessary forms can be obtained from www.mtsu.edu/irb.

**APPENDIX B: Survey
Questions**

1. What is an embedded curriculum? How do you see this being used in your classroom setting?

2. Provide a list of descriptors associated with differentiated instruction. What does differentiated instruction look like in your class?

3. What are some of the specific accommodations you utilize most frequently for the special education students in your classroom?

4. Some current inclusion students were enrolled in an extended resource program prior to the implementation of RTI². What do you know about the extended resource program?

5. How do you modify the curriculum in your classroom to meet the needs of your special education students?

6. What does the term least restrictive environment mean?

7. What are the subject specific instructional strategies you have found to be helpful for the special education students to succeed in your classroom?

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Questions

1. What is your perception of how the special education students are performing on class work activities in your classroom? Are they struggling with the material, expectations, or rigor?

2. What are some accommodations that were common in your classroom before the implementation of RTI² that are not utilized now?

3. How are accommodations being included in lessons to allow for all students to experience success in the general education classrooms?

4. From your perspective, since the school wide implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention how is the inclusion process that is in place promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?

APPENDIX D: Interview Questions

1. How are the special education students coping with the expectations in your classroom?
2. How are the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?
3. How are you accommodating the special education students in order for them to be academically successful in your classroom?
4. What are some things you notice your special education students struggling with in your classroom?
5. How has RTI² changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?

**APPENDIX E: Survey Data
Analysis**

Survey Data	In Vivo Codes	Process Code	Initial Codes
Question 1 What is an embedded curriculum? How do you see this being used in your classroom setting?	n/a	n/a	n/a
I don't know what that is.	Do not know	Not knowing	Do not know
I believe an embedded curriculum deals with assessing students as they are learning. This type of curriculum would evaluate my students' progress closely and more often.	Assessing students as they are learning	Assessing students	Assessing students as they are learning
The embedded curriculum is necessary for the programs we use at school and it will be successful for them after they leave school. It's things we use on a daily basis that is not necessarily written down in our curriculum. It goes beyond academic. Examples are team building, socializing and listening skills. I use embedded curriculum in my class daily. My students work in small groups. They listen and then I have them explain how to work a problem in their own words. I have them use real world problems to learn from. They work together and find something they have in common to work out problems. I keep the students moving so that they learn different ways to work out the same problem.	Not necessarily written down in our curriculum	Using team building daily in class	Not necessarily written down in our curriculum
embedded curriculum is curriculum that includes your assessment within your teaching instruction. This can be used in my classroom setting by including several mini assessments for the curriculum that I'm teaching during the course of a lesson plan or overall and series of lessons pertaining to standards that overlap	mini assessments	Assessing students	mini assessments

To me embedded curriculum refers to "lessons" within the standards based lessons. I plan my lessons based on my standards, however for the students to participate in the

Lessons within the standards

Teaching life lessons within the standards

Lessons within the standards

lesson effectively I need to demonstrate and teach them more than just the information. They need to understand expectations for behavior, listening skills, organization skills, study skills, how to participate in scholarly discussions etc.

I believe it would be the lessons that are taught indirectly and not associated to content. I try to teach responsibility a lot because that is a life skill. Work ethic would be another skill that is taught.

Imbedded curriculum is when you teach students lessons that don't fit into the "curriculum" cookie cutter. In my classroom, we incorporate embedded curriculum through class discussions, small group discussions, and relationship building. Sometimes, kids probably think that I am nosey - I'm not, but I do want to help them through middle school, and I know they need more than just academic support.

I see embedded curriculum as a curriculum that is not necessarily defined by the state, standards, or a particular organization or method. An embedded curriculum is also one that can be "graded" but not according to a typical grading scale. A lesson can be planned to cover a certain standard, but the students can gain additional knowledge or learn life skills, things about character, etc. from that same information.

It is a method to assess a student's ability...a way to determine what a student can do and what is appropriate for evaluating that particular student. A variety of assessments can be used. I have used essays, presentation, multiple choice questions, technology and group work.

To me, embedded curriculum is presenting the curriculum

Lessons taught indirectly not content

Don't fit into the curriculum cookie cutter
Relationship building

A curriculum that is not necessarily defined by the state, standards, or a particular organization or method

Method to assess a student's ability

Presenting instruction

Teaching lessons indirectly that are not in the content
Building relationships

Not defining the curriculum by the state

Assessing a student's ability

Presenting

Lessons taught indirectly not content

Don't fit into the curriculum cookie cutter
Relationship building

A curriculum that is not necessarily defined by the state, standards, or a particular organization or method

Method to assess a student's ability

Presenting instruction

with a variety of instruction methods and tools. By using various methods of instruction, you allow the students to participate and learn in a multitude of avenues. Students can better their listening skills, speaking skills, social interaction with their peers, debating and proving their point of views, etc. This type of curriculum increases the awareness and the development of the overall student. In addition, it allows them to be exposed and possess those skills that are necessary to become productive and well-rounded adults in society. This approach to instruction holds their interest and enhances their enthusiasm and the main reasons I use these methods as often as possible.

through different methods

instruction through different methods

through different methods

Embedded curriculum are the general skills(applicable to many content areas and to life) students use and learn while working on and learning the state standards specific to a content area. The more successfully students master the embedded curriculum, the more successful they will be in the classroom setting, and in life. Embedded curriculum must be taught to students day one in the classroom (rules, procedures) even before we begin content. Then, as different learning activities are presented, they will go much more smoothly if appropriate embedded curriculum for the activities is taught in conjunction with the content.

Taught before we begin content – rules and procedures

Teaching rules and procedures

Taught before we begin content – rules and procedures

Embedded Curriculum is the underlying foundation of teaching that supports the students ability to grasp the content of the State standardized curriculum. Examples of this are cooperative learning, organization strategies, and self-advocacy. These are the "tools" that students need to learn the content portion of the curriculum. I typically create lessons that teach embedded curriculum to students in the first 2-3 weeks of school or anytime we bring a new learning experience into the classroom. I've found that it is also useful to go back over the major topics

Underlying foundation of teaching that supports the students ability to grasp the content of the state standardized curriculum
Tools

Teaching the underlying foundation that supports students ability to grasp the content

Underlying foundation of teaching that supports the students ability to grasp the content of the state standardized curriculum
Tools

after returning from an extended break (i.e. Winter Break).

Embedded curriculum is when skills that can be translated over into regular, outside the classroom life are taught within the standards and objectives of a lesson. These are skills such as self expression, team work, and socialization. I use this within my classroom through group activities that take students working cooperatively together to complete, socialization skills during debates over articles we have read and self expression by allowing students to complete creative writing activities that fit their personalities.

Self-expression
Team work
socialization

Teaching self-expression,
team work, and
socialization

Self-expression
Team work
socialization

Embedded curriculum is the teacher uses short teaching episodes within ongoing classroom activities and routines. The teaching episodes focus on a child's individual learning objective or learning target. I continually use embedded curriculum as my instruction is designed around IEP goals.

Using short teaching
episodes
Individual learning
objective

Using short
teaching
episodes for
individual
learning

Using short teaching
episodes
Individual learning
objective

Embedded curriculum is sample work created by students. It is sample work created by students to show their mastery through their life skills. I use this by having students relate what we are learning and have students connect it to everyday life.

Sample work created by
students

Students
creating sample
work

Sample work created by
students

I think of it as teaching students HOW to learn, not merely just teaching them the content and standards. I see this being used in my classroom in those "teachable moments" where something comes up that goes far beyond what the lesson called for, and gives the students a life lesson. I also see this when higher order thinking activities are incorporated which extend the lesson to other applicable areas.

How to learn
Life lessons

Learning life
lessons

How to learn
Life lessons

Honestly, I had to look up the definition as this was not a term I was accustomed to seeing or using. I didn't realize I

Teachable moments
Fluid motion of learning

Taking
advantage of

Teachable moments
Fluid motion of learning

was already doing this in my classroom. I like to utilize those teachable moments and teach organically when possible. I like to incorporate what the students are doing with my instructional goals as natural as possible. I don't want the instruction to feel robotic or awkward, but rather a fluid motion of learning to learning. Also, I try to target and plan my instructional goals so learning can occur rather than by coincidence.

to learning

teachable moments

to learning

Embedded curriculum refers to lessons, values, or other information that is not in the regular curriculum of a particular class but nonetheless makes its way into the class. I often have moments in my class where the discussion ranges outside the actual standards I am covering. I view these times as teachable moments, and even though aren't likely to show up on a standardized test, I believe they have value.

Not regular curriculum
Teachable moments
value

Taking
advantage of the
teachable
moments

Not regular curriculum
Teachable moments
value

Embedded curriculum - the idea that certain things are always taught in a class, mainly "core" subject ideas - basic math, grammar, basic science, etc. and social constructs - how to act in a group to complete an assignment, why you are to act in certain ways based on the situation, and the "don't swing your fist if it hits another's head" idiom. As for use in my classroom - I am always "reinforcing" basic subject ideas just as a habit. I am also always trying to model and explain behaviors that will allow students to function in society.

Core subject areas –
behaviors
Functioning in society

Teaching in
core subject
areas certain
behaviors

Core subject areas –
behaviors
Functioning in society

I'm not sure what embedded curriculum is... Unfortunately, I've never heard the term.

Do not know

Not knowing

Do not know

A curriculum that is not standard based.

Not standards based

Not basing
everything on
the standards

Not standards based

Embedded curriculum is an aspect of curriculum that is not explicitly stated as an objective, such as working well

Not a state objective
Working well with

Teaching along
with the state

Not a state objective
Working well with

with others. In the classroom this may be taught as part of the procedures for different activities, such as cooperative learning groups, or as the lessons or themes within stories or articles students read. In literature and informational text, many socialization and moral lessons can be learned from the content of the text in addition to the state standard being taught.

others
In addition to the state standards

standards

others
In addition to the state standards

An embedded curriculum is one that stays with the student through life and helps them in any situation. The embedded curriculum will serve our students throughout their life more than the academic curriculum. Life/coping/team work skills are just as important as the curriculum itself. I use both academic and embedded curriculum daily in my classroom in projects, team work and games.

Stays with student through life
Life/coping/team work skills

Serving our students through life

Stays with student through life
Life/coping/team work skills

It consists of the skills taught that go beyond academics(ex: teamwork, listening skills). This is present in some way in just about every activity. Listening skills are used in lecture and class readings; social skills and teamwork are used when the students complete tasks in groups, etc.

Go beyond academics
Listening skills
Social skills
Team work

Building listening skills, social skills, and team work

Go beyond academics
Listening skills
Social skills
Team work

"Programs" that are designed to address all tier students. RTI, R and E, enrichment, general academic standards

School/state initiated programs

Taking part in school and/or state initiated programs

School/state initiated programs

Question 2 Provide a list of descriptors associated with differentiated instruction. What does differentiated instruction look like in your class?

n/a

n/a

n/a

The same topic is taught a lot of ways to reach all of the learners.

Same topic taught many ways

Teaching a topic many ways

Same topic taught many ways

The following elements make up differentiated instruction: grouping, specializing, learning styles, unpacking.

Grouping
Specializing

Deciding what is needed for

Grouping
Specializing

Differentiating in my classroom is customizing what is needed for individual learners This is challenging but allows students to be successful in some way.

Descriptors: options, flexibility, adjusting, presentation, modify, vary, adapt. diverse Differentiated instruction in my classroom takes place daily. My class is the Math RTI (Response to Intervention) classroom. I monitor the students daily and decide what it is that is keeping them from understanding. I give them different methods on how to solve problems. They will always find one that works better for them. Their groups change regularly because some students move faster than others. I may be teaching the same skill however, I will give students different methods in which to practice. Some will be given activities (games) to play and others may be given hands on activities to solve. The computer is a good way to give students problems to solve at their level. I have students working on the same skill but at different grade levels all the time. I make sure that I work on the students grade level so that they do not get frustrated and want to quit.

descriptors: auditory, hands-on, visual learners, organization, reading level. There's differentiation instruction by using various methods to get the curriculum across to the students. This would be shown by working on a map. The students may need the map completely filled out with minimal additions from the student to the map but questions would be able to be answered by using the map to guide them in figuring out the answer. Another student might be able to produce the map with minimal instruction on where borders or rivers are placed or the location of cities. Note-taking can also be differentiated with charts and diagrams instead of a steady flow of information

Choice, flexible, and tiered. In my classroom activities

Learning styles
Unpacking
What is needed for the individual
Games
Hands-on
At their level
Working with students on their grade level so they don't get frustrated

Using various methods to get the curriculum across to the students

Choice

the individual student

Working with students on their grade level so they don't get frustrated

Using various methods to get the curriculum across to the students

Providing tiered

Learning styles
Unpacking
What is needed for the individual
Games
Hands-on
At their level
Working with students on their grade level so they don't get frustrated

Using various methods to get the curriculum across to the students

Choice

change often. We will jigsaw or Tic-Tac-Toe. We have flexible grouping. We provide tiered centers. We debate and investigate.

I try to alter some examples but I also verbalize math problems a lot at the same time that I am writing them on the board. It has different colors for visual purposes and I draw arrows to what I am talking about so the students can see that. I also try to break things down in steps.

Small groups Giving kids partners based on their Lexile levels centers working together working along and then collaborating with classmates or as a class We do centers that are based on ability level. Students read various texts that are given to them based on what their Lexile level and then collaborate with people who have common abilities.

Individualized Scaffolding Providing each student with what they need to be successful with the content In my class differentiated instruction might look like: providing students with formulas; helping them set up a problem, guiding them through highlighting/underlining key words or parts of a word problem; providing calculators, copies of notes or partial copies of notes; additional time, resources, or practice

With differentiated instruction then it is a must to understand a variety of learning styles and to understand the students that you are teaching. I use differentiated instruction in my class by giving students some choices on some assignments and by allowing them to work with other students with similar learning styles and with styles that are completely opposite from what the students are familiar with in the classroom. Students are usually comfortable with a certain style and participate more and get involved when that style is used. The students are learning by getting involved and by taking on a leadership

We provide tiered centers

Verbalize math problems a lot at the same time that I am writing them
Different colors

Small groups based on Lexile levels
Based on ability levels

Individual scaffolding
Providing students with formulas
Highlighting /key words or parts of math problem
Copies of notes

Variety of learning styles
Giving students some choices
Similar learning style groups
Meet them where they are in learning

centers

Breaking things down in steps

Basing groups on students ability and/or lexile levels

Individualizing the instruction for students

Giving students choices on assignments
Meeting students where they are learning

We provide tiered centers

Verbalize math problems a lot at the same time that I am writing them
Different colors

Small groups based on Lexile levels
Based on ability levels

Individual scaffolding
Providing students with formulas
Highlighting /key words or parts of math problem
Copies of notes

Variety of learning styles
Giving students some choices
Similar learning style groups
Meet them where they are in learning

role. When a different style is used then the students will sit back, listen, and observe more than if they were comfortable. In this role, the students are learning by watching and listening to other classmates or the teacher. Differentiated instruction in my class changes quite a bit. Once I change/modify a style for some students to meet them where they are in learning, I also use differentiated instruction to help take them to another level academically.

The teacher must differentiate their content in the classroom. The teacher must differentiate the teaching process they use in the classroom. The teacher must also differentiate their assessments used in the classroom. To be truly effective, these descriptors must be used on a continuous basis and not restricted to their lower level learners but also the higher level thinkers. Teachers must also "know their students" for differentiation to be successful. Differentiated instruction is prevalent and crucial in today's classrooms. So many teachers used differentiated classroom techniques long before it was considered a necessity for success. I use differentiated instruction in some way daily. Reassessments are where it is more prevalent.

Differentiated instructions involves many different methods of teaching students to hit all learning styles. In my class we have done peer stations, group work, jigsaw, graphic organizers, a variety of reading material, art activity and technology.

Learning styles, learning inventory, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, musical, linguistic, hands-on, individualized, and engaging. At the beginning of the year, I have each of my students take 2 different learning inventory surveys. I

Truly effective these descriptors must be used on a continuous basis and not restricted to their lower level learners but also to higher level learners

Many different methods of teaching
 Learning styles
 Peer stations
 Group work
 Graphic organizers
 Variety of reading material
 Learning styles
 Learning inventory
 Hands-on
 Seating arrangements

Using descriptors on a continuous basis for all students

Using different methods of teaching based on learning styles

Basing instruction on learning styles

Truly effective these descriptors must be used on a continuous basis and not restricted to their lower level learners but also to higher level learners

Many different methods of teaching
 Learning styles
 Peer stations
 Group work
 Graphic organizers
 Variety of reading material
 Learning styles
 Learning inventory
 Hands-on
 Seating arrangements

use the results of these in a few different ways. First, I create seating assignments based on the students' individual learning style. Visual learners sit in the front and center to limit distractions in their line of sight. Auditory learners sit on the edges of the class to limit sounds to one ear (left or right) and focus their attention. Kinesthetic learners sit in the back of the room since these students are often very active and allows them to help in classroom tasks that require movement around the room. I also structure my lessons to provide opportunities for each major type of learner and set up alternative formats for the most extreme cases. Finally, I implement learning options or menus into larger projects that gives the student the ability to choose which activity to engage in.

Student choice on assignments

Student choice on assignments

Everyone can access the curriculum. Activities are leveled based on ability level. Different activities and lectures are presented with different learning styles in mind. Differentiated instruction within my classroom happens in everything that we do. From reading together for comprehension to working on word roots and vocabulary. Every student in my classroom is considered to be on grade level however they all need varying levels of assistance to complete or understand activities. For each student that looks different such as one may have me sitting right next to him helping him through syllabifying a word but another student may need me to help talk them through an idea that they have but are unable to articulate.

Everyone can access the curriculum
Levels based on ability level
Presentation for different learning styles

Presenting curriculum for different learning styles

Everyone can access the curriculum
Levels based on ability level
Presentation for different learning styles

Descriptors associated with differentiate instruction would include focus on learning styles, grouping students by shared interest, topic, or ability for assignments, assess students' learning using formative assessment, and continually assess and adjust lesson content to meet students' needs. Differentiated instruction in my classroom is based on IEP determined deficit area and ability level.

Would include focus on learning styles
Grouping students
Differentiation based on IEP or ability level

Differentiating based on IEP or ability level

Would include focus on learning styles
Grouping students
Differentiation based on IEP or ability level

In addition to these two factors, I incorporate instruction to reach a variety of learning styles.

Flexible groups, graphic organizers, tiered centers, questioning strategies, interest centers, grouping activities, tiered lessons, ongoing assessments. Stations are used on a regular bases and are on tiered levels, groups are organized according tiered levels, classroom seating is flexible and in a flexible interest group.

Scaffolding Meeting the student where they are Adapting the lesson Knowing your student's abilities and skills, planning for those times or lessons where individual students will need a little more help

That means I give each student what they need. One student may need to work with base ten blocks for two digit subtraction, while another student is working on equations. I have all grades and ability levels in each class period, so I have to be flexible and creative. Differentiated instruction means individualized and specific instruction for each child. In my class, you will see various groups and levels all working on different skills at different times.

I view differentiated instruction as meeting students where they are and teaching them in different ways, so that different types of learners have the same chance to be successful in class. It takes many forms, whether it is offering a visual representation of a concept in addition to explaining it, or offering students a choice of products to demonstrate mastery of a standard.

Descriptors - alternate, modified, enhanced, student focused, ability focused, choice, student created, student designed In my class - 2 to 3 assignments that lead to the same outcome but allow the students the chance to pick

Flexible groups
Graphic organizers
Tiered centers
Tiered groups

Scaffolding
Meeting the student where they are
Knowing your students

That means I give each student what they need
Differentiation

Meeting students where they are
Offering students a choice
Visual representation

Ability focused
Choice
Allow the students the chance to pick how they

Tiering groups or centers for students

Meeting the students where they are

Giving each student what they need

Meeting students where they are

Teaching in multiple ways

Flexible groups
Graphic organizers
Tiered centers
Tiered groups

Scaffolding
Meeting the student where they are
Knowing your students

That means I give each student what they need
Differentiation

Meeting students where they are
Offering students a choice
Visual representation

Ability focused
Choice
Allow the students the chance to pick how they

how they get there, to reinforce subject points I may teach the same standards in 2 or 3 different ways, sometime in my class it changes from period to period based on the needs and abilities of the students

get there
Teaching in multiple ways

get there
Teaching in multiple ways

Meeting needs, modifying, changing, alternate assignments and activities, every student understanding on his/her level; in my class differentiated instruction looks like teacher direct instruction, peer tutoring, visuals and diagrams, technology intervention, group work, altered assignments, creative touch including music and models and drawings so that all students are able to learn the material - also relating everything to real life.

Meeting needs
Every student understanding on his/her level
Visual
Group work
Peer tutoring

Meeting students where they are to reach understanding

Meeting needs
Every student understanding on his/her level
Visual
Group work
Peer tutoring

Differentiated instruction in my classroom consists of hitting as many learning styles as I can throughout the class period. Attempting to hit multiple learning styles such as visual, kinesthetic, musical, verbal, and social allows student to have the opportunity to learn the information given instead of just lecturing hoping they get the information.

Hitting as many learning styles

Hitting as many learning styles as possible

Hitting as many learning styles

Descriptors: Variety, modify, choice, extension, learning style In my class students are given choices on many assignments to improve interest and engagement. I modify the grading rubric to take into account for student levels of readiness. I use different methods of delivery to accommodate different learning styles, and I provide extension activities to challenge the advanced learners.

Choice
Learning styles
Modify the grading rubric
Modify the different methods of delivery

Using different methods of delivery

Choice
Learning styles
Modify the grading rubric
Modify the different methods of delivery

I use MICA , MIST, Ten Marks, and videos. I provide multi-levels of work/stations so that students can move at their own pace.

Multi levels of work/stations
Students move at own pace
Read-alouds
Lecture
Writing exercises

Using different computer programs for instruction
Using multiple formats for teaching

Multi levels of work/stations
Students move at own pace
Read-alouds
Lecture
Writing exercises

Student-led read-alouds, lecture, writing exercises, group collaboration, map making

Differentiated instruction should include: jigsaws taped material anchor activities graphic organizers varied texts, materials literature circles tiered lessons tiered centers tiered products learning contracts grouping activities orbital studies independent studies questioning strategies interest centers interest groups varied homework compacting journal prompts manipulatives I do a lot of peer tutoring and group work. This allows the strong to help the weak and the weak to feel part of the learning process.

Group collaborations
Jigsaws
Taped material
Graphic organizers
Tiered activities and work
Manipulatives
Peer/group work

Allowing the weaker students to feel part of the learning process through peer/group work

Group collaborations
Jigsaws
Taped material
Graphic organizers
Tiered activities and work
Manipulatives
Peer/group work

Question 3 What are some of the specific accommodations you utilize most frequently for the special education students in your classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

Read a loud tests. Individual and small group instruction in r&e. Modified assignments and directions. Extended time.

Read aloud tests
Small group
Modified assignments
Extended time
Modified assignments
Modified grades
Seating
Modified instructions

Read aloud tests
Small group
Modified assignments
Extended time
Modified assignments
Modified grades
Seating
Modified instructions

Accommodations most used within my classroom include modifying assignments and tests, modifying grades, seating arrangements, and repeating and modifying instructions.

Extended time, modify the level, prompting, read aloud, placements in groups (make sure they are with someone that they can teach and learn from), preferential seating.

Extended time
Modify level
Prompting
Read aloud
Groups
Seating
Charts/graphs
Fill in the blank notes
Modified assignments
Seating arrangements
Study partners
Extra time
Redo assignments

Extended time
Modify level
Prompting
Read aloud
Groups
Seating
Charts/graphs
Fill in the blank notes
Modified assignments
Seating arrangements
Study partners
Extra time
Redo assignments

charts and graphs, fill-in the blank notes, reduction of questions on given assignments.

Special seating and study partners are utilized most often. Students also have extra time and can redo assignments.

Short distinct steps, Extra time on an assignment

-focus on directions and making sure they understood the assignment. -talk to them along the way making sure that their progress was in line with what objectives we wanted to achieve -pull them into small groups and reteach (worked well in centers or utilizing the special education teacher)

Additional time, group work (partnering students of varying ability level, or sometimes of more similar ability level), use of a calculator, prompting, preferential seating

1. Modified assignments. They are modified in a variety of ways such as rewording of some questions or the material, few answers, possible context clues, etc. 2. Group work: I mix up groups and allow for students to sometimes work with students on their "level" and some times they work with other students who will challenge them academically. 3. Additional time. Some students receive additional time and do not realize they are receiving additional time. This gives the students an opportunity to think about some questions without feeling rushed. I may have two or three different assessments and students do not realize it while they are taking the assessment. One student may be answering 40 questions while another student is answering 25 questions. All students answer the basic questions, but the additional questions may require more thinking, application, etc.

One of my favorites is to have a "classroom buddy" where the special education student feels comfortable as a partner. It gives them a sense of belonging in the classroom as well as additional instruction and academic assistance. I also like to call on a special education student to demonstrate their knowledge in a situation

Distinct directions
Extra time
Checks for understanding
Small group for re-teaching

Additional time
Group work
Calculator
Prompting
Preferential seating
Modified assignments
Group work
Additional time
Differentiated assessments

Peer tutoring
Confidence building
questioning

Distinct directions
Extra time
Checks for understanding
Small group for re-teaching

Additional time
Group work
Calculator
Prompting
Preferential seating
Modified assignments
Group work
Additional time
Differentiated assessments

Peer tutoring
Confidence building
questioning

where I am confident they will be successful. A sense of belonging and self-confidence are major hurdles a teacher must usually overcome with most Special Ed students.

Peer and group activity, read-aloud text, technology, and assistance from SPED teacher.

Due to the Social Studies curriculum, we mostly utilize reading accommodations. Anytime we use text it is read aloud either by me (teacher) or shared among all of the students. We also take particular effort to break apart texts to find main ideas, key concepts, and other literary tactics to help the students better understand the text. I believe these tools aid, not only the special education students, but my general education students as well.

Writing down notes that are more in depth as the general education teacher is going over the lecture verbally for students to copy or I give them a copy of. Doing small group reteaching on topics. Making step by step notes on the student's homework sheet for the student to follow when they are working on homework later.

The accommodations I use most frequently for special education students in my classroom are repeating directions in a couple of ways, visuals, having the student tell me what they understand the directions to say, and giving the student the opportunity to redo missed items.

Flexible seating, extra time, and redoes are accommodations I utilize most frequently for my special education students. If I can not pull my special education students for R&E then I have a remediation page on my web site that my students can use to help them complete or correct classwork or study for upcoming tests.

Group activities
Peer activities
Read aloud text
Technology
Sped inclusion teacher
Read aloud
Chunking texts

Provide copy of notes
Small group re-teaching

Repeating directions
Visuals
Checks for understanding
Redo missed items

Flexible seating
Extra time
Redo assignments
Remediation page
Small group instruction

Group activities
Peer activities
Read aloud text
Technology
Sped inclusion teacher
Read aloud
Chunking texts

Provide copy of notes
Small group re-teaching

Repeating directions
Visuals
Checks for understanding
Redo missed items

Flexible seating
Extra time
Redo assignments
Remediation page
Small group instruction

Extra directions for assignments R&E time for more one-on-one instruction time Modified assignments (usually just shorten the assignment)

I give lots of one-on-one and small group instruction to my students. I use lots of visuals, technology when appropriate, manipulatives, peer tutoring, prompting, abbreviated tasks, and opportunities for redoing assignments.

The one I probably use most frequently is breaking tasks down into smaller steps and checking for understanding at each. I also modify assignments for length as well as content, and I sometimes modify the grading scale as well.

Extended time, one on one, peer assistance, grouping, preferred seats, study guides, alternate assignments - based on ability and need

Extra time, extra attention, peer tutors

A majority of accommodations that are used in my classroom consist of varied notes, peer tutoring, and decreased assignment.

I change the way instructions or information is presented, such as students may listen to an audio recording of a

Extra directions
One-on-one instruction
Modified assignments

One-on-one
Small group instruction
Visuals
Technology
Manipulatives
Peer tutoring
Prompting
Abbreviated tasks
Redo assignments
Chunking tasks
Checks for understanding
Modify assignments
Modify grading scale

Extended time
One-on-one instruction
Peer assistance
Grouping
Seating arrangements
Study guides
Alternate assignments
Extra time
Peer tutors
Checks for understanding
Varied notes
Peer tutoring
Modified assignments

Presentation of information and

Extra directions
One-on-one instruction
Modified assignments

One-on-one
Small group instruction
Visuals
Technology
Manipulatives
Peer tutoring
Prompting
Abbreviated tasks
Redo assignments
Chunking tasks
Checks for understanding
Modify assignments
Modify grading scale

Extended time
One-on-one instruction
Peer assistance
Grouping
Seating arrangements
Study guides
Alternate assignments
Extra time
Peer tutors
Checks for understanding
Varied notes
Peer tutoring
Modified assignments

Presentation of information and

story. I provide extra time and/or a smaller group setting for certain assignments.

information
Audio stories
Extra time
Small group setting
Extra time
Prompting

information
Audio stories
Extra time
Small group setting
Extra time
Prompting

The most frequent accommodation is more time and prompting.

test modification(fewer multiple choice options, word banks) and one-on-one read-alouds

Test modification
One-on-one read alouds

Test modification
One-on-one read alouds

one-on-one peer tutoring, group activities, group discussions, devils advocate, etc...A lot of the time, my poorest performing students on tests thrive in the discussions and debates. I love it when a child proves me wrong in being able to grasp a skill or concept. "Stump the Teacher" has been my downfall usually by my lowest performing students academically! I love that!

Peer tutoring
Group activities
Discussions/debates

Peer tutoring
Group activities
Discussions/debates

Question 4 Some current inclusion students were enrolled in an extended resource program prior to the implementation of RTI². What do you know about the extended resource program?

n/a

n/a

n/a

Nothing.

Nothing

n/a

Nothing

I do not know much about the extended resource program. I would think it would allow for more concentration on a particular deficit.

Do not know

n/a

Do not know

I know that it was for the students who really struggled in math and or reading. Their scores were not low enough for CDC, but they were not high enough for the inclusion classes. I know they received instruction on their grade level. The plan was to work on their grade level and to move them upward in skills.

For students who really struggled in math and or reading

Teaching students who really struggle in math and/or reading

For students who really struggled in math and or reading

I know that they are able to spend more time getting the

Spend more time getting

Spending more

Spend more time getting

attention they need are their learning skills but a reduced amount of instruction on some other course curriculum	the attention they needed Other course curriculum	time with students getting the attention they need on the curriculum	the attention they needed Other course curriculum
I know very little about this program.	Do not know	n/a	Do not know
I am not familiar with this.	Do not know	n/a	Do not know
They were pulled for Math and Reading/ELA classes and worked with a special ed teacher, rather than being in the general education classroom.	Pulled for math and reading classes and worked with sped teacher	Pulling students for math and/or reading by a sped teacher	Pulled for math and reading classes and worked with sped teacher
Not a lot; RTI was already in place before I arrived at this school. However, I believe the resource program was provided more to help them with the current course work, as opposed to working on basic skill or deficits the student might have like RTI does.	Not a lot, resource program was provided to help with current course work	Providing help with current course work	Not a lot, resource program was provided to help with current course work
I know that sometimes the students were not academically challenged in the way they are challenged with RTI. There was also times in which progress was monitored, but it was not focused as much on the individual as the entire group. With RTI it takes each child and monitors his/her work and progress and moves them to the next level accordingly.	Students were not academically challenged in the way they are with RTI. Focuses on the whole group not the individual		Students were not academically challenged in the way they are with RTI. Focuses on the whole group not the individual
This program was in place before my employment began. I know that it is working. Students are getting specialized service in areas that are limiting their advancement. As students make progress, they become less frustrated and have a desire to continue learning in all areas.	Do not know Students are getting specialized service in areas that are limiting their advancement	n/a Giving students specialized service to continue learning	Do not know Students are getting specialized service in areas that are limiting their advancement
While I do not know much about this program at OMS, I understand extended resource programs offer a number of specialized instructional supports for students in need. These can be academic or social/behavioral supports and	Offer a number of specialized instructional supports for students in need	Offering a number of specialized instructional	Offer a number of specialized instructional supports for students in need

knowing the staff at OMS, I am sure they offered all of these.

I know that the program did not always teach the same standards that the general education classroom taught. The program made access to the curriculum easier for some students while for others the program made them more of an outsider to the rest of the school population.

The extended resource program focused on basic reading and math skills taught on each students' ability level.

Extended Resource Programs are designed to provide students with individualized instruction in behavior, social skills, and academics. These programs are excellent for struggling students because it helps give students the self confidence the need to help them in the classroom.

It was a self-contained classroom for students with more severe disabilities. These students were instructed in content, but not on the same level of intensity as the regular classroom.

For several students at our school, the Extended Resource Program was perfect for them. We have several students that don't fit into the sped (RTI) classrooms with the rigor and demands of RTI. Some students need even more intense intervention that even I can provide in my SPED/RTI class. So, for those students, they are slipping between the cracks so to speak. I understand the trend and model is going away from extended resource, but special education is supposed to be specialized, not one size fits all. I know that the majority of those students who

supports for students in need

Not same standards that the general education classroom taught. Access curriculum easier

Focused on basic reading and math on students' ability level

Provide students with individualized instruction in behavior, social, skills, and academics. For struggling students

Self-contained classroom for more severe disabilities

Several students that don't fit into the sped classrooms with the rigor and demands of RTI. Some students need even more intense intervention than even I can provide in my SPED/RTI

Giving the students easier access to the curriculum with different standards

Focusing on basic reading and math on the students' ability level

Providing the students with individualized instruction in behavior, social, skills, and academics.

Teaching students with sever disabilities in a self contained classroom

Giving students more intense intervention

Not same standards that the general education classroom taught. Access curriculum easier

Focused on basic reading and math on students' ability level

Provide students with individualized instruction in behavior, social, skills, and academics. For struggling students

Self-contained classroom for more severe disabilities

Several students that don't fit into the sped classrooms with the rigor and demands of RTI. Some students need even more intense intervention than even I can provide in my SPED/RTI

would've been in extended resource, but are only in inclusion and one sped intervention class, are struggling. Some students are failing multiple subjects. With the fast pace in the general education classrooms, its almost impossible for special ed. students to follow along and understand.

I am not familiar with this term.

Do not know

n/a

Do not know

I believe it is a "pull out class" for extra focus and practice.

Pull out class

Pulling student out of general ed classes for more focus

Pull out class

Students were given small group instruction with a certified special ed teacher in a certain content area for work on Tennessee state standards. This was an extension of the regular ed teacher instruction.

Small group instruction
Certain content area

Giving students an extension of the regular gen ed curriculum in small group

Small group instruction
Certain content area

none

Do not know

n/a

Do not know

Nothing.

Do not know

n/a

Do not know

I know that RTI works on very specific skills at the student's individual level. The students can achieve growth and move forward.

Very specific skills
Students can achieve growth

Teaching students very specific skills to achieve growth

Very specific skills
Students can achieve growth

Students with primarily severe learning disabilities spend most of their instructional day outside of a general education setting.

Severe learning disabilities
Outside of gen ed setting

Teaching students with severe learning disabilities outside of the gen ed setting

Severe learning disabilities
Outside of gen ed setting

It is very a very targeted, specific learning/teaching approach to the students who are at the bottom of the bottom.

Targeted,
specific learning/teaching approach
Lowest students

Teaching the lowest performing students with targeted/specific

Targeted, specific learning/teaching approach
Lowest students

Question 5 How do you modify the curriculum in your classroom to meet the needs of your special education students?

I modify certain assignments.

I modify the type of text used within my instruction. I want it to be challenging, but not frustrating for the learner. I also check for understanding often to make sure students are comprehending in a sufficient way.

My students are tested regularly on basic math skills. I monitor them and check off what they have mastered. I modify the curriculum by giving the students the time they need to master a skill. I will modify the level of instruction by what the student needs. I let the students work on white boards because many feel comfortable erasing and redoing their work. I never give too many problems. One student may need 10 problems to work out, however, another students may only need to work 3 to show mastery. I always include past problems in daily work. I want to make sure they are maintaining the skills that they have learned in the past.

I try to give the students the same amount of information as everyone else but scale it to a version that they can handle at their level. This can be very difficult to achieve sometimes

I change the reading level when I have that option. Other than that I provide extra help and extra time.

I will try to teach it multiple ways and simplify it as much as possible. I do a lot of basic problems to grasp the concept before building to more complex.

N/a

Modify certain assignments
Modify type of text used within my instruction
Checks for understanding often
Monitor them for mastery, modify the level of instruction, never give to many problems, review often

Scale information to a version that they can handle at their level

Changed the reading level when I have that option
Extra help and extra time
Teach multiple ways and simplify it as much as possible

approaches
n/a

N/a

Modify certain assignments
Modify type of text used within my instruction
Checks for understanding often
Monitor them for mastery, modify the level of instruction, never give to many problems, review often

Scale information to a version that they can handle at their level

Changed the reading level when I have that option
Extra help and extra time
Teach multiple ways and simplify it as much as possible

The same way that I modify it for general education students that perform at a below average level (small groups, reteaching with the same content but on a level that is closer to their achievement level)

Pacing is different; we may spend more time on fewer activities. My questioning is different, and I will often be more direct in the instruction, trying to break down the lesson and make it as concrete as possible.

I modify the content by using interactive lessons to help cover a lot of the information. When assessing the information I use abbreviated assignments, and I modify worksheets/assignments by providing additional prompts when writing or by providing word lists (with only some of the words) when trying to get students to use prior knowledge.

The students may get assignments broken down into various segments, students assignments or assessments can be shorter. Students may get extended time to complete assignments or assessments.

I may limit the number of questions being asked, grade each student on what they got right instead of wrong, redo any materials for better understanding and retest on failing tests.

Besides the in-class reading practices, I've modified activities to fit specific levels of learning, tests to match students' abilities, and individualized projects to meet the students where they are challenged, but not overwhelmed.

I provide notes with further explanations of a concept /modify notes for length, reteach material and modify

Small groups, re-teaching the same content but on a level that is closer to their achievement gap

Pacing is different, more time on fewer activities, break down, questioning is different

Interactive lessons, abbreviated assignments, modify worksheets/assignments, providing additional prompts

Assignments broken down into various segments, assessments can be shorter, and extended time

Limit number of questions being asked, grade students on number right, redo any materials

I've modified activities to fit specific levels of learning, to meet the students where they are challenged.

Provide notes with further explanation,

Small groups, re-teaching the same content but on a level that is closer to their achievement gap

Pacing is different, more time on fewer activities, break down, questioning is different

Interactive lessons, abbreviated assignments, modify worksheets/assignments, providing additional prompts

Assignments broken down into various segments, assessments can be shorter, and extended time

Limit number of questions being asked, grade students on number right, redo any materials

I've modified activities to fit specific levels of learning, to meet the students where they are challenged.

Provide notes with further explanation,

worksheets through the use of partially completing problem for students with retention issues or using color coding and shortened directions to complete problem on the worksheet as needed based on the individual student.

I modify the reading material according to student's determined reading level.

I have textbooks that are at a lower reading level, tests are modified and have fewer questions, classwork students have extra time and classwork is modified.

More one-on-one instruction, more distinct directions more often, modified assignments and assessments

Well, my classroom is all about modifications. I am not supposed to teach standards, so practically everything I do is modified in one way or another. I move at a slower pace, I prompt, abbreviate assignments, give additional opportunities, use kinesthetic activities, present information in multiple ways, and I teach on the students cognitive level, not their grade level. I meet them where they are and go from there. I also try to build their self-worth and self-confidence.

I will modify the length of assignments, allow re-do opportunities, and allow additional time.

Preferred seating, alternative testing, study guides, extra time, alternative assignments, "retake until pass"

Less practice problems, more visual aids, slower and more in-depth delivery of content, questions on assessments with either less options or easier

reteach material, modify worksheets, color coding, and shortened assignments based on a students individual needs

Modify reading material based on level

Lower reading level text books, modified tests with fewer question, with extra time

One on one instruction, distinct directions, modified assignments/tests

Slower pace, abbreviate assignments, give additional opportunities, kinesthetic activities, present information in multiple ways, teach on the students cognitive level

Length of assignments, allow re-do opportunities, additional time

Alternative testing, study guides, extra time, alternative assignments

Less practice problems, visual aids, slower and more in-depth delivery

reteach material, modify worksheets, color coding, and shortened assignments based on a students individual needs

Modify reading material based on level

Lower reading level text books, modified tests with fewer question, with extra time

One on one instruction, distinct directions, modified assignments/tests

Slower pace, abbreviate assignments, give additional opportunities, kinesthetic activities, present information in multiple ways, teach on the students cognitive level

Length of assignments, allow re-do opportunities, additional time

Alternative testing, study guides, extra time, alternative assignments

Less practice problems, visual aids, slower and more in-depth delivery

explanation, extra attention and time during R&E

By using more than one learning style, these students are more likely to stay tuned into the information given and allows for them to understand the information more. By giving an alternative assignment, students are not overwhelmed by the amount of questions they have to do. Instead they are able to focus on the ones that are given and can do their best at those. Peer tutoring can also benefit these students, because students can sometimes explain the information in an different way that may click for the student.

I modify the rubric I use to grade writing, and I sometimes require a lower lexile reading assignment to enable students to learn the skill without the confusion of more difficult texts.

I modify by following the IEP, prompting, additional time, calculators, but all students are expected to achieve the standard being taught/tested and reason through MICA

modified grading of certain assignments(based on skill level), shortened lecture notes

The usual, I allow extra time, more prompts, (if needed), fewer questions (but still address all skills) and one on one during R & E if needed.

Question 6 What does the term least restrictive environment mean?

I don't know.

of content, easier explanation, extra attention and time during R&E

Using more than one learning style, alternative assignment, students are not overwhelmed by the amount of questions they have to do, peer tutoring can also benefit these students

Modify rubric, require a lower lexile reading assingment

Following the IEP, but all students are expected to achieve the standard

Modified grading of certain assingments

Extra time, more prompts, fewer questions, one on one during R&E

n/a

Don't know

n/a

n/a

of content, easier explanation, extra attention and time during R&E

Using more than one learning style, alternative assignment, students are not overwhelmed by the amount of questions they have to do, peer tutoring can also benefit these students

Modify rubric, require a lower lexile reading assingment

Following the IEP, but all students are expected to achieve the standard

Modified grading of certain assingments

Extra time, more prompts, fewer questions, one on one during R&E

n/a

Don't know

Least restrictive environment is term that refers to students with deficits participating in regular classrooms. This allows them the opportunity to expand their learning capabilities.

LRE - part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Special Education students should spend as much time as they can with peers who do not receive special education. Meaning they should be with students in the general education program to the maximum extent that is appropriate. The key word is "appropriate". What is right for the student.

That means that there is nothing holding back from the learning environment for any student.

That students should be able to be in the regular classrooms to the greatest extent that is appropriate for them. Each student's disability is unique to them.

Everyone is on an equal playing field as far as learning opportunities.

The best place for a student to be so that they can still be taught the necessary standards, but where they can also perform well.

Special education students have unique needs, covered in their IEP. However, the least restrictive environments means including special education students with the general population to the fullest extent possible while still

Students with deficits participating in regular classrooms

Sped students should spend as much time as they can with undisable peers. Key word is appropriate

Nothing holding back

To the greatest extent that is appropriate for them. Unique

Equal playing field

Best place Taught necessary standards and perform well

Unique needs Including special education students with the general population

Allowing student with deficits to participate in regular classroom

Sped students spending as much time as they can with nondisabled peers.

Holding nothing back from the learning for any student

Understanding what is the greatest extent appropriate for each student

Teaching everyone on an equal playing field

Teaching students in the best place for them to perform well and learn the standards

Meeting a students unique needs in the general

Students with deficits participating in regular classrooms

Sped students should spend as much time as they can with undisable peers. Key word is appropriate

Nothing holding back

To the greatest extent that is appropriate for them. Unique

Equal playing field

Best place Taught necessary standards and perform well

Unique needs Including special education students with the general population

meeting their unique needs.

All students should be able to work and learn in an area regardless of disabilities. Allow students with disabilities the same education and opportunities that their peers are receiving.

To me, least restrictive environment means that a student with disabilities can be mainstreamed into a learning environment with other students with disabilities and those without disabilities. These students are provided with supplementary aids and instructional services so that their academic success can be achieved successfully.

An environment that will be the least restrictive in a student's ability to learn. It may require special seating, peers assistance and group work. Whatever will help that student advance.

This is what is used when trying to identify what type of learning environment best fits a student. The least restrictive environment is the learning environment that least interrupts the student's experience when compared to a general education student's.

That is an educational placement where the student has the greatest access to the curriculum without having a negative impact on their ability to be successful within the curriculum.

to the fullest extent possible
Unique needs

Allow students with disabilities the same education and opportunities that their peers are receiving

Mainstreamed special education students with general education students

Whatever helps that student to advance

What type of learning environment best fits a student
Least interrupts the student's experience

Greatest access to the curriculum without have a negative impact

education classroom as much as possible

Allowing students with disabilities the same education and opportunities that their peers are receiving

Mainstreaming

Helping the student advance

Knowing what type of learning environment best fits each student

Providing the greatest access to the curriculum without having a negative impact

to the fullest extent possible
Unique needs

Allow students with disabilities the same education and opportunities that their peers are receiving

Mainstreamed special education students with general education students

Whatever helps that student to advance

What type of learning environment best fits a student
Least interrupts the student's experience

Greatest access to the curriculum without have a negative impact

Least restrictive environment means a student with a special education disability receiving instruction in an environment with non-disabled peers, deemed most appropriate based on the students learning needs.

A student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent appropriate.

The student is educated in whatever environment gives them the most access to the general education that all students are given, according to their individual abilities.

That is the place where a special education student has the greatest opportunity for learning to the maximum extent possible. This varies from student to student.

It means that the student is placed in the regular classroom, with support, as much as it is possible.

A least restrictive environment is one where there are the fewest barriers to learning **BASED ON INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND THEIR NEEDS** and not as a member of the group.

This means that a student who has a disability should have the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers, to the greatest extent appropriate.

A student with a disability has the opportunity to work with students that do not have one.

Environment with nondisabled peers deemed most appropriate based on the students learning needs. Opportunity to learn with non-disabled peers

Whatever environment gives them the most access to the general education that all students are given.

Varies from student to student
Greatest opportunity for learning
As much as it is possible

Based on individual students and their needs

To the greatest extent appropriate
Opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers
Opportunity to work with non-disabled

Receiving an education with nondisabled peers

Providing the opportunity to learn with non-disabled peers
Giving students the most access to the general education that all students are given

Educating students varies from student to student
Educating students in the gen ed classroom as much as possible

Basing a child's education on their individual needs

Providing the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers
Providing the opportunity to

Environment with nondisabled peers deemed most appropriate based on the students learning needs. Opportunity to learn with non-disabled peers

Whatever environment gives them the most access to the general education that all students are given.

Varies from student to student
Greatest opportunity for learning
As much as it is possible

Based on individual students and their needs

To the greatest extent appropriate
Opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers
Opportunity to work with non-disabled

A student with a disability should have the opportunity to learn with general education students to the extent that this is possible.	students Opportunity to learn with general education students	be educated with non-disabled peers Providing the opportunity to be educated with non-disabled peers Mainstreaming	students Opportunity to learn with general education students
average population functioning on mainstream schedule	Mainstream schedule	Mainstreaming	Mainstream schedule
requires that special education students get their education in as "regular" an environment as their disability will allow. Every effort must be made to educate them alongside non-disabled students	As regular an environment as their disability will allow	Requiring as regular an environment as each child's disability will allow	As regular an environment as their disability will allow
Least Restrictive Environment is the requirement that students with disabilities receive their education, with all peers and that special education students are not removed from regular classes.	Requirement that students with disabilities receive their education with all peers	Requiring as regular an environment with their peers as each child's disability will allow	Requirement that students with disabilities receive their education with all peers
<u>Question 7</u> What are the subject specific instructional strategies you have found to be helpful for the special education students to succeed in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a
Individualized instruction and slower pacing.	Individualized Slower pacing Peer tutoring with sped student and gen ed student		Individualized Slower pacing Peer tutoring with sped student and gen ed student
Teaming special education students with higher functioning students has been one strategy that has been successful. Students seem to enjoy learning for one another.	Peer tutoring with sped student and gen ed student		Peer tutoring with sped student and gen ed student
Math: flash cards, fraction strips, research based activities and games, number lines, vocabulary wall, hands on activities, group activities, real world situations, computer,	Math flash cards, fraction strips, researched based		Math flash cards, fraction strips, researched based

steps written down on how to solve problems, examples, students working on the board - not on paper. thumbs up thumbs down, think-pair-share, show me the answer, collaborative learning.

The ones that I explained earlier as fill-in the blank notes, and using charts and graphs to allow the students to see the connections of events from one to another. Also, listening to speeches or watching events in videos typically captures their attention the most. The load of coursework can have a big impact because it takes special education students longer to work through problems so being aware of the length of an assignment can help the students stay on task and complete more of them.

Read aloud and discuss the vocabulary. Extra help. Most of my SPED students understand the information quicker and better if they are working with someone.

Breaking things down into steps so they understand the process of how to solve a problem Questioning that leads to the discovery of the answer smaller texts, adjusting the difficulty of the text (and gradually raising it when appropriate)

Use of a calculator, additional time, and shortened assignments are huge for math. Calculators give confidence, additional time reduces stress, and shortened assignments can make the math assignment seem more manageable. Manipulatives (especially when discussing

activities and games, number lines, vocabulary wall, hands on activities, real world situations, computer, steps written down on how to solve problems, examples, students working on the board, thumbs up thumbs down, collaborative learning

Using charts and graphs
Listening to speeches or watching events in videos typically captures their attention

Understand information quicker working with someone

Breaking things down into steps

Smaller texts and adjusting the difficulty of the text
Calculator, additional time, and shortened assignments, manipulatives, connecting movement

activities and games, number lines, vocabulary wall, hands on activities, real world situations, computer, steps written down on how to solve problems, examples, students working on the board, thumbs up thumbs down, collaborative learning

Using charts and graphs
Listening to speeches or watching events in videos typically captures their attention

Understand information quicker working with someone

Breaking things down into steps

Smaller texts and adjusting the difficulty of the text
Calculator, additional time, and shortened assignments, manipulatives, connecting movement

geometry) also make the lesson more concrete. Connecting movement or actions to aid in the material is also beneficial.

Visuals such as maps. I discuss many things in my class, but I do not always have a picture or map to go along with the information. I usually have the visual when I think the information is hard to understand with out the visual. However, many of my special educations (depending on their needs) seem to benefit when they can see or practice information by using maps. Visuals also help with the other students, but I have seen where it benefit the special education students the most

I have found that classroom centers allow groupings which help these students. Giving the special education student more specialized instruction to blend with the basic instruction given to the class. I like small groups or "classroom buddies" to give the special education a higher level of confidence and comfort. Providing different levels of materials to the special education student is most crucial to their success.

Technology, group and peer work, modify grade scale, and limit the quantity required on assignments.

Reading all texts aloud and identifying key concepts prior to working with information. Providing students with study guides and games that review major standards prior to tests. Small group, collective learning activities that vary learning abilities and allow peers to support each other.

or actions

Visuals such as maps. Visuals benefit the special education students the most

Classroom centers, small groups or classroom buddies, providing different levels of materials

Technology, group and peer work, modify grade scale, and limit the assignment quantity
Reading all texts aloud and identifying key concepts prior to working with information
Study guides, games, small group, collective learning activities that vary learning abilities and allow peers to support each other.

or actions

Visuals such as maps. Visuals benefit the special education students the most

Classroom centers, small groups or classroom buddies, providing different levels of materials

Technology, group and peer work, modify grade scale, and limit the assignment quantity
Reading all texts aloud and identifying key concepts prior to working with information
Study guides, games, small group, collective learning activities that vary learning abilities and allow peers to support each other.

Having hands on activities that the students are able to use while learning new math concepts. Writing notes on the board while discussing to allow students who are not auditory learners to be able to have a higher likelihood of understanding. Chunking information instead of giving students all of the needed information at one time. Checking for understanding often through the use of student problem solving work during breaks in the lecture.

The instructional reading strategies I have found most helpful for special education students to succeed in my classroom would include presenting directions and instructions to reach a variety of learning styles, prompting, teaching scanning, and key words, and differentiated instruction, even within small groups

Creating hand on stations and allowing students to discover on their own new ideas and draw conclusions about new standards being presented have helped special education students relate to the subject matter at the beginning of the lesson.

More visuals, pictures, and graphics have been found to be helpful for my science students who receive special education services

Since I teach math only I use lots of manipulatives, songs/raps, videos, games/ activities, computer programs, and multiple strategies that are embedded in our Do the Math Now program.

I think breaking down instructions into smaller steps helps quite a bit. It makes it easier for them if they don't have to look at the whole.

Allowing definitions to be "in their own words" as long as it

Hands on activities, writing notes on the board while discussing to allow students who are not auditory learners to be able to have a higher likelihood of understanding.

Chunking information. Presenting directions and instructions to reach a variety of learning styles, prompting, teaching scanning, and key words, differentiated instruction, small group Hand on stations

Visuals, pictures, and graphics

Manipulatives, songs/raps, videos, games/activities, computer programs, and multiple strategies Breaking down instructions

Definitions in own

Hands on activities, writing notes on the board while discussing to allow students who are not auditory learners to be able to have a higher likelihood of understanding.

Chunking information. Presenting directions and instructions to reach a variety of learning styles, prompting, teaching scanning, and key words, differentiated instruction, small group Hand on stations

Visuals, pictures, and graphics

Manipulatives, songs/raps, videos, games/activities, computer programs, and multiple strategies Breaking down instructions

Definitions in own

covers the item, reading too them and discussing material instead of reading at them and having them answer questions, guiding them to the answer instead of giving it to them

Hands-on manipulatives, visual aids, calculator, peer tutors

Pulling for R&E and early morning help where students can have more one-on-one time with the teacher. Placing these students towards the front of the room to allow them to focus on what's in front of them. Utilizing your EA or SPED teacher to help keep the student on track or to help them with understand the problem or information allows for multiple ways of teaching to get the information across.

I use KWL charts, T charts and other graphic organizers. I teach pre-reading and pre-writing strategies and embed basic reading strategies and skills in the curriculum. I use reciprocal teaching, and I teach and use text annotation. I also encourage independent reading outside of class.

providing stations so that students can move at their own pace but have an end goal

shortening the duration of activities, student-led study guide sessions, allowing students to make a "cheat sheet" to reference during tests

Any sorts or manipulatives are great for struggling students. Repetition is another thing that helps. Any time you can put learning to song (linking verbs, prepositions for example) that is a great way for lower learners to succeed. As stated earlier, they really like to try and find the teacher "wrong"! :) I sometimes state things clearly wrong and love it when they "catch" me. (and they do it

words

Hands-on
Visual aids
Calculator
Peer tutors

More one on one time with the teacher
Placing these students towards the front of the room

KWL charts
T charts and other graphic organizers. I teach pre-reading and pre-writing strategies

stations

Shortening the duration of activities, student-led study guide sessions

Manipulatives
Repetition

words

Hands-on
Visual aids
Calculator
Peer tutors

More one on one time with the teacher
Placing these students towards the front of the room

KWL charts
T charts and other graphic organizers. I teach pre-reading and pre-writing strategies

stations

Shortening the duration of activities, student-led study guide sessions

Manipulatives
Repetition

every time)!

**APPENDIX F: Focus Group 1
Data Analysis**

Content from Focus Group	Participant Number	In Vivo Codes <i>(verbatim principle)</i>	Process Codes <i>(...ing)</i>	Initial Codes
Question 1 What is your perception of how the special education students are performing on class work activities in your classroom? Are they struggling with the material, expectations, or rigor? So think about...	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Expectations – they have lower expectations than I do. I have very high expectations in that classroom but they don't want to meet those expectations they can be lazy	11	Lower expectations Can be lazy	Evaluating expectations	Special education students' "Lower EXPECTATIONS"
Some are and some aren't	25	Are Aren't		Based on INDIVIDUAL
If you set the bar up here that's where they should rise to, you should not set it down here and expect less than what they are able to do.	CM4	Set the bar Rise to Able to do	Setting the expectations	Setting high EXPECTATIONS
Which goes along with the rigor, they don't expect themselves to do well. They see the rigor and shut down and refuse to attempt it at all.	3	Don't expect themselves to do well Shut down	Analyzing students' reactions to the rigor	Shutting down due to RIGOR

They say its hard and will refuse to do it and sit there for days	25	Refuse to do it	Refusing to do it	Shut down
Like if I gave them a test that was hard they would just sit there and not do it.	25	Just sit there and not do it	Refusing to do it	Shut down
Part of the hard, my opinion, part of the hard part it when they come up from the elementary schools they are coddled and that's what we have seen across the board. Some of them have had someone sit with them practically one on one instead of if they need that I understand that but lots of times don't need that and I am a special ed person so a lot of them don't need as much as they are getting and we are trying to ween them off of that and a lot of times it is not working because they say well I've somebody helped me with this for five years now and now and they think they don't have to do anything. So...	CM4	Elementary schools coddle them A lot of them don't need as much as they are getting	Coddling in elementary school	Elementary to middle school change
Once they move to...I get that we do not have to coddle them they have to do it, I'd say 9 out of 10 times they will advance, they will try. There are a few that shuts down, they just shut down	22	9 out of 10 times they will advance Few shut down	Moving students past the coddling	Elementary to middle school change

They were never held accountable and now they are being held accountable and it makes it, I know we all see that, it makes it harder some times to for them to realize their potential.	11	Never held accountable Hard to realize potential	Holding students accountable	Holding students ACCOUNTABLE
And 50% of their parents probably assist in them staying in the position. We do get those parent want advancement, some of them want more advancement than the child can give but I'd say a good 50% of them don't expect much from their child that's what hurts	22	Parents assist Want advancement 50% don't expect much from their child	Evaluating the parent involvement	EXECTATIONS of parents
Yea, its sad when you hear a parent say I know that they are not going anywhere so it doesn't matter, well it does matter.	11	Parent say Not going anywhere	Evaluating the parent involvement	Parents lack of concern
And they can go somewhere	CM4	Can go somewhere	Going somewhere	Pushing the students
We believe they can do the work you don't want to take care of them for the rest of their life	11	They can do the work	Believing in the students	Believing in the students
You just try to get them from point A to point B wherever their point B is, you are the special ed	22	Point A to Point B Wherever their Point B is	Moving the students forward	Pushing the students INDIVIDUALLY based

I really don't have anything on that	CM3			
Do they struggle with materials, expectations, or rigor?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rigor	CM3	Rigor		RIGOR
Do you see anything specific?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
What do you mean by material?	CM4			
What they need in class	25	Need		
It just says are they struggling with the material expectations, or rigor?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oh, I understand	CM4			

I think they all do	CM4	All do	Discussing what all students need	All students struggle
Do we need to just pick one choice	11			
I'm not sure I just read it	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
I lean more toward...it depends on the child	22	Depends on the child	Evaluating needs based on individual child	Based on INDIVIDUAL child
I guess it does	11	It does		
That is where it is on an individual basis	11	Individual basis	Evaluating needs based on individual child	Based on INDIVIDUAL child
For some of them it is purely material its too difficult they can't do it	3	Some Purely material Too difficult	Discussing difficulty of the material	Difficulty with material
The rigor of the math is affecting them a lot	CM3	Rigor of math	Discussing the math rigor	Math RIGOR

How fast we are having to go	CM3	How Fast	Pacing	PACING
We see the same thing with ELA though too	11	Same in ELA	Pacing	PACING
We have so many standards its like we fly through them	25	So many standards We fly through	Pacing of standards	PACING
We literally have to hit a standard every couple of days	3	Hit a standard every couple of days	Pacing of the standards	PACING
When you have to test you have to review you have to remediate they just get lost in all of this and they just shut down	3	They get lost Shut down	Reviewing and remediating	PACING causing students to shut down

<p>I'm just going to step out there...I think when they removed the extended resource class it was very detrimental to special ed students that are between CDC and being able to go into the regular curriculum a lot of them can't go into the general education classroom even with the modifications and accommodations on their IEP they need that lower level to be taught to get that bottom information or they do not have that ability to do the classroom material. They don't have the ability and to me even with the accommodations and everything some of them are not going to be able to do that and that might sound strange coming from a special education person but they're not</p>	<p>CM4</p>	<p>Removed extended resource class Detrimental to special ed students Regular curriculum Modifications Accommodations Need lower level Don't have the ability Not able to do that</p>	<p>Removing the extended resource class</p>	<p>Removing EXTENDED RESOURCE CLASS detriment to special education students Lacking ability for classroom material</p>
<p>When they tell us to teach them just the specifics, just teach those students the essential learnings just focus on that and I have one of two it's like how do I teach the other 26 kids the lesson and teach this one kid the essential learnings and she pulls them out later and works with them on the essential learnings they have still wasted 50 minutes of their day not understanding what I'm teaching I mean if you have to get your fingers out to count to 10 and I'm teaching systems of equations its complete Spanish to you.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Teach them just the specifics Essential learnings Pulls them out later Wasted 50 minutes Fingers out to count</p>	<p>Teaching just the essential learnings Wasting the students' time</p>	<p>Wasting students time in general education classroom</p>

I agree	CM4	Agree		
So I feel they are wasting their time because they do not know some of the basic foundations of math but...	3	Wasting their time Basic foundations	Wasting the students' time	Wasting students time in general education classroom
It is also incorporated in science	25	Incorporated in science	Incorporating math in science	Math is also incorporated in science
This is what we talk about if they can't add numbers together they can't do and if they can't do division what they can't do like some other stuff	25	Can't do	Building skills on top of each other difficulty	Can't build skills without fundamental knowledge
With the scope and sequence jammed the way it is we don't have time and that's all subjects they just expect they have gotten 100% of every other grade they have been through and especially these special ed students that have missed so much and have been babied and coddled and its like BAM here you are its hard	3	Don't have time Its hard	Pacing of the standards	PACING of standards
And they take away accommodations before they are ready. Its like teaching a child how to dog paddle and them throwing them in the ocean.	22	Take away accommodations	Building skills on top of each other difficulty	Can't build skills without fundamental knowledge

Well changing the accommodations the reading the guidelines for the read aloud on the test, yes that's crazy	CM4	Changing the accommodations Read aloud	Changing reading accommodation guidelines	Read aloud accommodations changed
Yea cause half those kids don't read and they don't have the opportunity to hear read aloud so they are going to bomb the test the lexile level is so high they are not going to comprehend it either	11	Opportunity to hear read aloud Bomb the test Not going to comprehend	Changing reading accommodation guidelines	No read aloud causing students to fail tests
And when it is thrown down from the state of from whoever and they are like do it now, those kids don't have any type of adjustment period.	3	State Adjustment period	Adjusting reading accommodation guidelines	No TRANSITION Period
No, they don't	CM4	No		

<p>I had a student last year that came from JPE and he was phased out of sped and came to my room and he was in my inclusion class but he didn't have any accommodations. At the beginning of the year I was like what is wrong with this kid he can't do anything then I found out he was just transitioned out and so now he is being flopped into middle school changing classes all the time and he has all these different teachers and on top of that he has no accommodations so shockingly by the end of the year he did ok and he actually did well at the end of the year. I think he is doing well in 8th grade as far as I know but like that first 3 quarters</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>Phased out of sped No accommodations</p>	<p>Phasing students out of special education</p>	<p>No TRANSITION from sped to general education</p>
<p>We are not allowed to do consultation anymore</p>	<p>CM4</p>	<p>Not allowed consultation</p>	<p>Consulting with special education students</p>	<p>No consultation</p>
<p>Yea he wasn't on consultation</p>	<p>25</p>			
<p>We are not allowed to do consultation anymore</p>	<p>CM4</p>		<p>Consulting with special education students</p>	<p>No consultation</p>

And even his mom reached out and was like how's he doing, but this was like at Christmas. I was like, oh that would have been nice to know in September	25			
So to answer your question I think he would have to be depending on who the child is	22	Depending on who the child is	Evaluating needs based on individual child	Based on INDIVIDUAL child
Case by case	22	Case by case	Evaluating needs based on individual child	Based on INDIVIDUAL child
Yeah	25			
Yeah	11			
Question 2 What are some accommodations that were common in your classroom before the implementation of RTI ² that are not utilized now?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wow, let me count the ways	22		Counting the ways	Lots of ways

Pull out	22	Pull out	Pulling out students into special education classes	EXTENDED RESOURCE CLASS
I don't know because RTI is working to a certain degree but not all children are getting the help they need it only helps a few	22	Not all children are getting the help they need Few	Helping a few through RTI	RTI only helping a few
I think this is a hard question	25			
I would say it would probably be that resource class	25	Resource class	Pulling out students into special education classes	EXTENDED RESOURCE CLASS
The extended resource class	CM4	Extended resource class	Pulling out students into special education classes	EXTENDED RESOURCE CLASS
That is what I would say is that they have taken away that the most, that I notice, because CDC and general ed are catching kids that don't really need to be in CDC	25	CDC and general ed are catching kids	Catching kids in general education and CDC	Dividing students between CDC and general education
Well, they can't be in CDC unless they are on an alternative assessment if they take the TCAP	CM4	Can' be in CDC Alternative assessment	Alternatively assessing CDC students	CDC only if alternatively assessed

They can't be in CDC	25	Can't be in CDC		
Right	CM4			
And that is another subject the TCAP	22	TCAP	Discussing TCAP	
If some of them, if some of the special education students	CM4			
They take the TCAP right	25	TCAP	Discussing TCAP	
No if they are in CDC they have an alternative assessment	CM4	Alternative assessment	Assessing alternatively CDC students	CDC only if alternatively assessed
They definitely do?	25			
Yes, if they take the TCAP then they are not in CDC	CM4	TCAP not in CDC	Assessing alternatively CDC students	CDC only if alternatively assessed

So but...	25			
And they may read on a first grade level but their IQ level is not such or their adaptive scores are not such that they are in CDC then they do TN READY/TCAP	CM4	Read on first read on first grade level Do TN Read/TCAP	Reading level is low but still assess on state assessment	Reading level and state assessment
He went to CDC but I wasn't sure if he had to come out for...	25			
He is not right now due to his behavior	CM4			
He is not CDC	25			
He is but he is not coming out right now for the two general education classes due to his behavior	CM4		Scheduling due to behavior	CDC socialization
Gotcha, I was wondering that	25		Wondering	

You know its not going to benefit him if he is not going to pay attention and it is detrimental to all of the other students in the classroom	CM4	Benefit him Detrimental to all	Assessing student's schedule based on his behavior	CDC socialization not always positive
Ok, I was wondering how that worked	25		Wondering	
I went with Mrs. Edwards and Mrs. Maxwell to 2 or 3 of the RTI trainings we had before we implemented it and I know with that the one thing they really stressed their beliefs that if you are one day going to one day live on your own that was their way of saying CDC or not CDC if you are going to live on your own you need to be getting grade level content. And I get that you need to be getting it	3	Live on your own Grade level content	Living on your own you get grade level content	CDC versus general education
You need to be getting it or you need to be understanding it?	11	Getting it Understanding it	Getting it or understanding grade level content	Understanding grade level content not a necessity
Well they said you need to be getting it, we need to be teaching them grade level content that is where they removed the extended resource class cause they said we were teaching them at their level not at their grade level	3	Teaching grade level content Removed extended resource	Teaching them grade level content	Understanding grade level content not a necessity

But then again	11			
When you have a 6 th grader on a 3 rd grade reading level taught him 6 th grade, he jumped a grade level or two but he still didn't understand it	11	3 rd grade reading level Jumped a grade Didn't understand it	Understanding grade level content	Understanding grade level content, not a necessity
With the science book, with the social studies book the reading it doesn't matter what it is,	11	The reading doesn't matter	Understanding grade level content across subjects	Understanding grade level content across subjects
it makes sense until we are teaching systems of equations again and you can't do basic math and we are skipping over that and some of the kids are getting it in RTI some of them are not we just keep skipping over it. I mean you can't pay your bills because you can't add and subtract. And I have kids who have to use a calculator I have kids that talk to Siri to use their calculator because they can't figure out how to work the one on their phone. Yes	3	Can't do basic math Skipping over that Calculator Can't figure out	Lacking in basic math skills	Students are lacking in math fundamentals
Bless	25			

So I get their idea of get your grade level content in class get your skills in RTI but let's face it these kids are in 8 th grade some of them only have 4 years left and they are not going to get everything they need in RTI	3	Not going to get everything they need	Not getting the skills they need	Students are not going to the skills they need
We have one "general ed" RTI math teacher now the special ed teachers do have some general ed students if they want to divide it that way they need to add more staff.	CM4	Add more staff	Dividing students between special education and general education	Dividing students
Look at the kids who are pulled by the screener some of my kids, I don't see how they are not in RTI, I mean they are doing fine and	3	Pulled by the screener How they are not in RTI	Pulling students for RTI	Pulling students for RTI
There is not room for them, we have waiting list	CM4	Not room Waiting list	Waiting on room for students in RTI	Waiting list
I don't see how some of my kids are in RTI because they are doing perfectly I mean I can say ok let's do this decimal multiplication without a calculator and they are like ok let's go you are holding someone else's spot it what you are doing	3	Doing perfectly Holding someone else's spot	Pulling students for RTI	Pulling students for RTI

<p>If they goofed off just like the reading on the screener then they are in there until they make the gains to get out of that to show that and if they come in there and goof off on the progress monitoring and their chart doesn't show that they are going up now they can have one drop like one outlier or whatever but if they go up and they go down several see they are not going to be taken out</p>	<p>CM4</p>	<p>Screener Gains to get out Progress monitoring</p>	<p>Progress monitoring students in RTI.</p>	<p>Progress monitoring</p>
<p>I got some that get in there and flip out and they bust their butt to get out but I've got some that just love it and I ask Heim how is he in there and she will say he has been in there forever because he loves her and he loves the class</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Bust their butt Some just love it</p>	<p>Scheduling students for RTI</p>	<p>RTI based on INDIVIDUAL student</p>
<p>And they don't go to, they don't want to go to writing workshop so...</p>	<p>CM4</p>	<p>Writing workshop</p>	<p>Scheduling students for RTI</p>	<p>Avoid other classes</p>
<p>That is a whole other tangent</p>	<p>11</p>			
<p>You don't want to do that</p>	<p>25</p>			

Can we take them out of their electives?	11			
Were there any accommodations you were using in your classroom that you are no longer using?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
In the classroom?	25			
I'm still using everything	22	Using everything	Using everything	Using everything
Except when they changed, they can't have prompting on tests	CM4	Prompting on tests	Prompting students on tests	No prompting
See I feel like I had to reduce mine because I can't prompt and if they don't have modifications for a lower class assignment or test I don't really modify that stuff because it is not on their accommodations	11	Reduce mine Can't prompt Modifications Lower class assignment or test Don't modify	Reducing due to change in accommodations	Reduced accommodations
They are not going to get the accommodation on the test so I need to prepare them for it	11	Accommodation Test Prepare	Reducing due to change in accommodations	Reduced accommodations

Prompting	CM4	Prompting	Prompting students on tests	No prompting
Yea	25			
We lost prompting	22	Prompting	Prompting students on tests	No prompting
And a lot of read aloud	22	Read aloud	Reading aloud to students on assignments and tests	No read aloud
I think the read aloud was what we all lost	22	Read aloud	Reading aloud to students on assignments and tests	No read aloud
Was that due to RTI	3			
Oh no! that was from the state department that was the guidelines for the read a loud	CM4	State department Guidelines Read aloud	Setting read aloud accommodations by the state	State Department changed read aloud guidelines
Did that answer your question?	11			

I just read the question	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
So did it answer the question	11			
Sorry my bad	11			
Question 3 How are accommodations being included in lessons to allow for all students to experience success in the general education classrooms?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
We do a lot of reading aloud in class as a whole	22	Reading aloud As a whole	Reading aloud to the entire class	Whole group read aloud
Alternative	25	Alternative	Teaching alternatively	Teaching alternatively
Popcorn reading	11	Popcorn reading	Reading in a popcorn style around the room	Whole group reading

Peer tutoring/peer grouping	11	Peer tutoring	Tutoring by peers	Peer work
A lot of peer grouping	22	Peer grouping	Grouping with peers	Peer work
Brandi does a lot of extra notes during lessons she takes the notes and makes copies for them	3	Extra notes Copies	Making copies of extra notes	Copies of notes
She's quiet but she's awesome	22			
I don't know why she is so quiet	11			
Print off power points	11	Power point prints	Printing power points	Copies of notes
Visuals and give instructions in multiple ways	25	Visuals Instructions in multiple ways	Instructing with visuals and multiple ways	Visuals Instructions in multiple ways

I know cause I have a lot in there but we pull out for small groups or we halved the room an taught half and half to make it a little bit smaller so they would ask more questions	3	Pull out Small groups Halved the room Questions	Creating smaller groups	Smaller groups
Cooperative teaching...loving it	CM4	Cooperative teaching	Teaching cooperatively	Cooperative teaching
We have 60 kids	25			
We have done a lot of hands on this year	25	Hands on	Creating hands on experiences for the students	Hands on
Yes, I've done a lot of kinetic and a lot of music now like with vocabulary I love it	11	Kinetic Music	Teaching using kinetic movements and music	Kinetic and music
Yea	25			
She does music	3	Music	Teaching using music	music

To the left to the left	3			
I do a lot of the American Sign Language to help with the kids that don't necessarily get it, I do a lot of coloring lets highlight lets color	11	American sign language Coloring	Teaching using the American sign language and coloring	Movement and visual
Very visual	CM4	Visual	Teaching using visuals	visual
I try to hit as many of those as I can to	11			
Repeat, repeat, repeat	22	Repeat	Repeating	repeat
Or have a kid explain	11	Kid explain	Letting kids explain to the class or other kids	Peer work or peer whole class
Ok what did she just say, say it again, and keep coming back to that kid until they at least acknowledge that they heard somebody in the classroom talking	3	Coming back Acknowledge	Acknowledging what another student has said	Group discussion

Having an alternative, like we switch kids sometimes I'll give her my kids during R&E that have me twice so they can hear it from someone else	11	Alternative Switch kids R&E Hear it from someone else	Switching students with another teacher	Cooperative teaching
What else?	11			
I do a lot of ok you explain why it's wrong or you explain why it's right as opposed to me doing it, we all do that too	11	Explain why	Explaining why	Explain why
Question 4 From your perspective, since the school wide implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention how is the inclusion process that is in place promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Class sizes are really big especially the inclusion classes are huge so that like mine last year got up to 34 kids plus yourself and another adult that's 36 bodies some of them were basketball players so that was like having a grown man in my class.	25	Class sizes Really big Inclusion classes	Teaching very large inclusion classes	Class size

That's when you can think leveling a little bit, and I know some people are against it. Leveling out a little bit more so you can have two and the low ones can get more help and less people as opposed to trying to have everyone all at once. Cause that's when it can be a struggle.	11	Leveling Low ones More help	Leveling classes	Too many levels in one class
I have 2 sped classes. The first one I have 27 kids the second one is 21 and the 21 is a lot easier and you get a lot more done.	22	21 is a lot easier Get more done	Teaching smaller inclusion classes	Class size
Class sizes, am I getting the question wrong it seems like we have talked about the fast pace is what is hurting the kids. The fast pace of having to go and move on, go and move on.	22	Class sizes Fast pace Hurting the kids	Teaching very large inclusion classes Slowing down the fast pace of the class	Class size
There is no transition for them	11	No transition	Not transitioning the students	No TRANSITION
There is no transition They either get it or they don't	22	No transition	Not transitioning the students	No TRANSITION
There are not enough periods in the day	11	Not enough periods	Lacking time in the day	No time

And that's true	25			
But you don't want to take anything away because they are all important	11	Don't take anything away	Not taking anything away in the student's schedule	No time
Running	11			
I feel They need RTI they need to learn those background skills they do but I so miss math lab where they got a double dose of the same thing so they heard it from me and Mrs. CM3 and then later or even when Goodman had a class they got to later process it a little bit	3	Need RTI Background skills Double dose Process it	Needing background skills in RTI but missing double dose	Pull out classes
Pull out reading and the pull out math	CM4	Pull out reading Pull out math	Pulling special education students out for reading and math	Pull out classes
That was one of the most beneficial things they had because they see our content get to absorb it a little bit and then see it again.	3	Content Absorb See it again	Seeing the content again	Pull out classes
The way we are teaching we don't have time I think that is one of the biggest differences the change in that	3	Don't have time	Lacking time during the school day	No time

What's interesting is a lot of time in my intervention class I'm using Scholastic Action Magazine and some of the stories that we read are exactly in line with what is going on in the classroom we read a story about the Native Americans and I actually played a song from the 70's called Cherokee People and it talked, remember that, it was directly in line with that and they said oh we are talking about that in Social Studies right now. And I said go tell Mr. Douglas that's what your doing, so I talked to him about it and told him what I had used and he, and I told him we could swap what we are doing. So some of it is, the curriculum part, some of it is the same. But when we did the double dose math and reading they were like, if you have 6 or 10 kids in there and you taught them a different way like ya'll are talking about using a power point or a song they would say Oh now I get it. Because they had already heard it once and then they heard it again and they got it.

CM4

Intervention class
In line
Classroom
Curriculum part
Double dose
Taught
Different way
Already heard it once
Heard it again

Allowing students in double dose to hear the curriculum again.

Pull out classes

I know they need, and I know it's a scheduling issue and I don't want a kid to have math three times a day. But they need the back ground skills but they also can't get it in 50 minutes when we are moving on the next week.

3

Scheduling issue
Need back ground skills
Moving on

Lacking in time during the day for background skills

No time

It's almost like they need a fundamental class along with their regular classes	11	Fundamental class	Creating a fundamental class	Pull out class
Oh that's a good way to put it	CM4			
I mean it's the same thing with ELA and the same thing with Social studies because you need it all no matter where you are. Have a fundamental class to get them all the fundamentals they need and then they can push into the next direction.	11	Fundamental class Push	Creating a fundamental class	Pull out class
That is how college does it with developmental courses	22	Developmental courses	Comparing fundamental classes with college classes	Pull out class
There is just not enough time in the day because I have kids who failed the test on Monday and the grading period ends tomorrow and they try rush in saying they have already been pulled by another teacher and they don't understand what is going on in science so I really need to be in there. So I have my lunch I had so many kids in there today so they spending their lunch time because we are literally scrapping for time and we have none.	3	Not enough time Scrapping for time	Lacking in time during the day	No time

That is where also a lot of them are slacking too and waiting until the last minute so it may be literally what you just said but some may be hey I've been doing this all quarter oh crap now I have an F and its ending on Friday.	11	Slacking Last minute	Waiting until the end of a quarter	Last minute
I have probably 6 F's that are still F's and I have at least 15 kids coming to me every week asking for their makeup work one of them has a B and wants an A. Not one of my F's have come to me concerned at all	3	Asking for makeup work	Asking for makeup work	Make up work
That's why you have an F	25			
Especially of my, I've got three of my special education students with an F I've emailed I've given them work and I've given them every opportunity what did we just say I don't know, what did we just say I don't know, can you repeat what we just said, no I didn't hear it	3	3 special education students with an F Every opportunity	Giving students every opportunity but they are still failing	Opportunities for success
Its like they have given up so much because they already they have in their mind they are already going to fail they have in their mind just let me fail I'm not going to be held back and I'm not going to take summer school, who cares,	11	Given up In their mind just let me fail	Developing the mindset of failure	FAILURE MINDSET

And that's what they say I know you won't hold me back I made the 20 last year and I'm here right now	3	Won't hold me back	Realizing thought process of students	NCLB
So I mean that's where that is where the struggle is right now because they don't care because they are told at home or they have been told by their teachers it doesn't matter I'm not going to be worth anything but you need basic math to balance your checkbook you need to be able to read that legal document saying you are buying a house and you are signing a contract so if they don't have that they are truly not set up for success. It's almost like we need to go back to the basics and then move forward. I mean like start again first, second, third grade	11	Don't care Not going to be worth anything Go back to the basics	Going back to the basics	FAILURE MINDSET
I think that is where RTI is going to be successful when it has had enough time	25	RTI Successful Enough time	Allowing for time to adjust	Adjustment time
In like 8 years	22	8 years		Adjustment time
When it has had enough time	25	Enough time	Allowing for enough time	Adjustment time

<p>It's like common core, just like the standards, when they have had enough time to adjust and grow with it but these 7th and 8th graders that have had 7 or 8 years of completely different school and then we are just like BAM. And some of my kids are like Mrs. 3 why is it all so different this year.</p>	3	Common core Time to adjust	Allowing for time to adjust	Adjustment time
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<p>Like backward addition, which is the thought in common core I guess well Connor had only that for homework and I was like praise Jesus cause we are out of fluency and we are now doing addition word problems which seem hard but you know he's like I can do that 7 plus three I can do that ok. He had five the only one I had to help him with was four and that's because they refer to students as pupils and he was like well everyone has two pupils and I don't know if I can do multiplication, it was super cute. Well this is so much better than sitting for four hours and this is so much better than fluency cause we were doing fluency we would sit for hours doing math but now that he is getting it in 2nd grade He's been doing these pretty much since definitely first grade</p>	11	Backward addition	Experiencing success in RTI	RTI success
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<p>That's how you need to start is with kindergarten and first grade not in the middle of their education</p>	11	Start Kindergarten Not in the middle	Starting RTI earlier	Earlier start for RTI
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It has to be evolved. RTI will work	22	Evolved RTI will work	Allowing for time to evolve	Adjustment time
But it is going to be a long time	22	Time	Allowing for time to evolve	Adjustment time
I feel like its Tennessee with our Race to the Top we are always striving to do things like that and they don't understand these are kids. This is not a law that you are passing these are kids laws that you are messing with and parents tell me all the time my kid is so stressed out about this test and they keep changing it now it's on the paper. The kids are freaking out about this I have some kids worried about having to write their English and their Social Studies out. They are like we have been practicing typing it can we practice writing it and I'm like you have written your whole life you will be ok. They are freaking out and the state does not realize that they don't care, but the kids	3	Kids Stressed out State does not realize Don't care	Racing to the top not understanding kids	Adjustment time
Why are we fastest improving when slow and steady wins the race, not fast	11	Fastest improving Slow and steady wins the race	Improving too fast for students to catch up	Adjustment time

**APPENDIX G: Focus Group 2
Data Analysis**

<u>Content from Focus Group</u>	<u>Participant Number</u>	<u>In Vivo Codes</u>	<u>Process Codes</u>	<u>Initial Codes</u>
Question 1 What is your perception of how the special education students are performing on class work activities in your classroom? Are they struggling with the material, expectations, or rigor?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Not as well as I use to	23	Not as well	Evaluating self	Sped students are struggling
I would agree with that	2	Agree	Agreeing	Sped students are struggling
Yes	7		Agreeing	Agree
I have students who are reading on a grade one level maybe grade three some of them and I have some who I know read aloud that aren't getting read aloud and that breaks my heart because I have one kid who can pass the test if I read it aloud to him but he has not scored above a 30 on any test including retakes this year. And I think he needs read aloud but he can't get it. He doesn't qualify	23	First grade reading level Can't get read aloud	Not reading aloud	First grade reading level not getting read aloud Struggling
Yea because of the new criteria for that	CM1	New criteria for read aloud	Referencing new criteria for read aloud	Referencing new criteria for read aloud
Somebody else talk	23			
I think yea, I mean, with math and number sense is a big thing for some of them and I think, honestly for some of them, it just is a work ethic thing but I know last year I had kids that worked really hard for me and they did really well on the test but then this year I'll offer help or someone will offer help and they are kind of like rejecting the help	2	Work ethic Rejecting the help this year	Students rejecting help this year	Students' work ethic

Unless you give them the answer or do it for them they don't want your help they do not want to go back and look at the text again they do not want to repeat any work that they might have done. They hope that they can skim it and just answer the question	7	Don't want help unless given answer	Giving students the answers	Students don't want help unless given answers
My kids, well with Social Studies, my kids are not giving opinions they do not want to give an opinion at all. There is no right or wrong its an opinion but my sped kids will not give an opinion	23	Sped kids will not give an opinion	Sped students not giving an opinion	Sped students not comfortable giving opinion
They are afraid of being wrong and they are afraid of making a mistake	7	Afraid of being wrong or making mistake	Fearing mistakes	Fear being wrong or making mistake
Especially, I teach RTI special ed, so the kids that come to me they are coming and I can only work on their basic skills which is good cause they need that however they are sitting with an F in math and they are like why can't you work with me on this why can't you show me how to do this, well I just can't do that right now cause we are working on basic skills	CM1	Sped kids want help with math but can't because basic skills is the curriculum	Wanting math curriculum help	RTI is for basic skills not grade level curriculum help and that's what kids want
I think where we are failing them in the RTI program is after the universal screener they are pulled for the weakest I have a student who is being pulled for the math because the math is the worst than the reading but for social studies please help them with the reading but they are not getting that they are falling through the crack of we are only working on which ever one is worse. And that is the only place where I see that failing. Cause my kids who are being pulled for reading are doing so much better but it is the kids that, cause I even went and asked	23	RTI is failing not pulling kids for reading help Kids who are getting reading help are showing improvements in social studies	RTI is failing kids with dual deficits	RTI is failing our dual deficit kids
Except the special education kids that qualify for both	CM1	Except sped kids that qualify for both	Excepting sped dual deficits	Sped kids can qualify for both

Its are they pulled for reading no they are only being pulled for math because that is the lower one right now so I'm sure there are some that are lower in reading right now that are being helped with reading that are falling through the math crack right now cause they could use the extra help in math.	23	Pulled for reading maybe falling through math crack	Students falling through cracks due to dual deficits	Students falling through cracks due to dual deficits
Mickulin and Heim are seeing Kids they see are doing really good in reading or math and are doing terribly in the other so we try to pull them during R&E when they are not being pulled the dual deficit kids that we see once a month. But its getting really difficult with R&E because they won't come or one of their other teachers has pulled them its just not as efficient	CM2	Try to pull kids during R&E to help with the dual deficit but difficult	Trying to pull students with dual deficit during R&E	Try to pull kids during R&E to help with the dual deficit but difficult
Yea	23		Agreeing	It is difficult
As we thought it would be	CM2		Thinking it would be	It is difficult
That is the only big flaw I'm seeing in and it probably only because the kids that I wish were getting the extra reading help are getting the extra math help cause that's where they need it most.	23	Kids need extra reading help but getting math help	Needing reading but getting math help	Needing reading but getting math help due to screener
Well I also see it cause the are not getting the extra help from you guys on the skills for class when they come to class they are just sit there and don't even try I don't really have to try I can just sit here and let it go on by and it. you know what I'm saying by that in math cause they need that extra help from you guys so when them come to class they have more confidence and therefore learn more	4	Not getting help on class skills They just sit in class	Kids needing help to be confident in class	Kids lacking confidence in class
Its just like today I had a student who was exited from sped and she said she liked coming to me right before math class to work on extra stuff, if I had extra time we would work on angles or proportions. That's not what Aimes Web is that's not what I'm supposed to	CM2	Student liked coming to get extra help on math class skills	Student enjoyed coming for extra help	Students enjoy getting extra help on math grade level skills

be doing but you feel bad telling them no.

Especially if they want to learn, if they want the help	23	They want to learn	Wanting to learn	Students want to learn
Cause then they come to class and they are defeated cause they don't understand anything I'm saying	2	Defeated Don't understand	Not understanding in class	Students feel defeated in class
Right! That's what I'm saying	4	Right	Agreeing	Students feel defeated in class
So yea well there's no point in me taking these notes cause I don't understand what he is saying anyway you know so we do examples, examples, examples, but they don't understand what we are saying so then they just shut down	2	No point Don't understand Shut down	Shutting down	Students shutting down in class
And they fall further and further behind	4	Fall further behind	Falling further behind	Students falling further behind
So then its just like I'm already whatever grade	2			
And they are probably panicking about well if I don't understand that I'm not going to understand anything else as you go on they are still panicking back there on the other one	23	Panicking Not going to understand anything	Panicking about not understanding	Students panicking about not understanding
That's the thing with math we try to build and so if they don't understand how to add and subtract then they don't understand how to do a multi step equation and if they don't understand how to do a multistep equation they can't do slope and if they can't do slope they can't graph and then its just a snowball	2	Building in math Don't understand it's a snowball	Not understanding math concepts	Students not understanding in math creates snowball effect
Well when I first came here three years ago that's what we did I pulled kids remember and I pulled them and taught them what they were doing in the classroom so in other words like Mrs. 4 would give me ahead of time we are going to be working on this, this, and this so I would start working on that including	CM1	Pulled out kids work on grade level stuff Kids felt good It's a good start	Pulling kids to work on grade level stuff raised confidence	Kids feel good when they get help on grade level material

basic skills with it you know those days when they get in the classroom and the teacher says ok we are going to work on adding fractions and they felt good about themselves now they may not understand how to simplify them or they may not understand how all this but they could at least get a start with it and figure it out.

We made lots of gains on TCAP. Then last year, you remember, we had the class where we did that. But then they took away the extended resource so they changed our model with the special ed so we have a lot of kids who are falling through the cracks with that you know they don't fit in here well they only come to use for one period and they don't go to anyone else...its not working for everybody.

So do you think they are struggling with the material, expectations, or rigor?

I think it all ties together because we have our expectations but if its too rigorous for them they are still struggling with the first foundation of knowledge

You can't even get to the rigor part

What's the other one

Material

All of the above cause I think it all ties together

You think?

Yea definitely the materials are more rigorous too that's why in reading I see a lot of them just give up

CM2

Took away extended resource
New sped model
Kids falling through the cracks

Taking away extended resource
Kids falling through the cracks

Students falling through cracks with new sped model

Facilitator

n/a

n/a

n/a

23

Too rigorous
Struggling with foundation knowledge

Struggling with foundational knowledge

Students struggling with foundational knowledge

4

Can't get to rigor

Not getting to the rigor

Due to students' struggle can't add rigor

23

Facilitator

n/a

n/a

n/a

23

All ties together

Tying all the stuff together

Rigor, expectations, and materials all tie together

23

7

Materials are more rigorous

Giving up due to not understanding

Giving up due to not understanding

cause they can't even begin to understand		They give up Can't understand	material	material
Well in social studies we are having to teach them a new way of thinking cause the test questions are different	23	New way of thinking Different test questions	Developing a new way of thinking	Teaching students new way of thinking for new test
Yea, with the math too	4	Math too	Agreeing	Teaching students new way of thinking for new test
Well you guys too, so I'm hoping as we get more down the line it will get better	23	Hoping it will get better	Hoping it will get better	Hoping it will get better soon
They will come to us already knowing	7	Already knowing	Knowing the stuff already	Students should know basics already
But half of my battle is getting them to reprogram their way of thinking cause the multiple choice is not, you are not going to find it in the reading its not there you have to use your knowledge in the reading and come up with your own answer and so they have to think there is no recall so I think...	23	No recall Reprogram thinking	Reprogramming their thinking	Reprogramming students' way of thinking
But they do have to go back to the text more frequently than they are use to and mine are just you know	7	Go back to text	Going back to the text	Go back to the text more
The main problem is the making connections my sped kids are not all of them but having problems making connections to the ok this topic leads to this topic which leads to that topic which leads to that topic and when we test them that is how we test them because that is how the state is going to test them well then they can make this connection 1 to 2 but they can not make the 1 to 3 connection	23	Problems making connections	Making connections is a problem	Problems making connections
They can not synthesize the information	7	Can not synthesize information	Synthesizing information is a problem	Can not synthesize information
Its too much for them to process and the writing	23	Too much for	Processing the	Processing the

prompts sound like something that should be in college or high school		them to process	writing prompts is a problem	writing prompts is a problem
Same way in math too its not basic skills anymore its deep thinking and problem solving	4	Deep thinking and problem solving in math	Deep thinking and problem solving in math	Deep thinking and problem solving in math
And the kids we are having right now are not programed for that yet	23	Not programed	Kids not ready for deep thinking	Kids are not ready for deep thinking
So we are throwing this whole huge new test on them this year and in the mean time they are not even getting any extra help	4	New test and no extra help	Testing them differently with not additional help	New test and no extra help for students
Yep	2		Agreeing	New test and no extra help for students
I feel like it is also the generation you look at the students in our building they are they ones we just throw calculators to they ...	CM2	Generational Calculators were given	Generalizing the need for calculators	Students dependent on calculators
They can't problem solve	23	Can't problem solve	no problem solving	Students can't problem solve
And in the same way you can't problem solve you can't make inferences or connections you know they were pulled out and worked on other stuff and all of a sudden the rigor goes through the roof they can't make all those connections they can't keep up	CM2	Can't make connections or inferences	Not making connections or inferences	Can't make connections or inferences
And special ed kids are the first ones to shut down and a lot of times we think oh they don't want to do it or they are just being stubborn or they are just being this or that and there are a few there are but when you take some of them in a small group man their little hearts will start pouring out about well you know if I understood what that was I would know what to do	CM1	Sped kids shut down They want to know what to do	Shutting down Kids wanting to know what to do	Sped students shut down due to not knowing what to do
You can see the frustration	23	See the	Seeing the frustration	Seeing the frustration

Oh yeah you can see the frustration but their way of dealing with it is to either act out or shut down or be a bully	CM1	frustration See the frustration Either act out or shut down	Seeing the frustration	from students Seeing the frustration from students
Or just not do it, cause if I sit here one on one and I don't have time to do that with every student if I discuss the process or the steps and go through it they can pretty much follow me they can get there but they have to be lead there and they just don't know how to think the way we are asking them to think and that's what scares me because they are being trained now in elementary school but the kids that we have got we are asking them to do something they are not prepared to do and they do not have the tools to do	23	One on one but not time Students not prepared	Allowing time for one on one not an option	Time does not allow for one on one
I think its good that we are asking them to think at that certain level but I also think we're developmentally inappropriate	7	Developmentally inappropriate	Thinking at a certain not appropriate	Developmentally inappropriate
That is exactly what I was going to say	2	Agreed	Agreeing	Developmentally inappropriate
We've gone way to far I know at that age that all of us were geniuses and we weren't doing that so that may be a little sarcastic but still I just feel like we've really over stepped, we've gone too far	7	We've gone too far	Over stepping where we should be	Developmentally inappropriate
That's why you all need to go to the state website with the social studies standards and any person can complain and you should say this is too rigorous for a 7 th grade student cause some of them are.	23	Go to state website and complain about rigorous standards	Complaining to state about rigorous standards	Challenge to complain to state about rigorous standards
Well you said those prompts are like college prompts I mean I didn't have anything like what we are teaching in English until the 11 th grade honors English	7	College prompts	Identifying age level of writing prompts	Identifying age level of writing prompts
I have Spectrum kids that get overwhelmed with our prompts that we do so I can't even imagine how the	23	High kids are overwhelmed	Overwhelming our gifted students	Writing prompts overwhelming gifted

lower students feel

students

Part of it is the multi steps I mean just wait I haven't even gotten through step 1 and you are on step 3

7

Multi steps loses kids

Losing students during instruction

Losing students during instruction

Yea that's the bad thing in math like there part A, B, C, D, E, F so if you miss part A and don't put the equation right then when you get to part E you are missing everything cause you didn't even get the first thing right

2

Missing steps in math

Students failing

Students failing due to missing steps

You have already failed the rest cause you couldn't get the first one.

7

Failed due to mistake at beginning

Students failing

Students failing due to mistakes

I think we are just overwhelming them

23

Overwhelming

Overwhelming students

Overwhelming students

I do too

7

Agreed

Agreeing

Overwhelming students

And I think they feel that way I think they feel that they are just passing through

CM1

Feel they are just passing through

Feeling just passing through

Students have become complacent

My 8th graders have been so concerned about what am I going to do when I get to high school Mrs. CM1 is it really going to be like this, is it really going to be, and I'm like yes I taught there I taught Algebra and Geometry yes its really going to be that way you know and when I tell them you know that calculators yea you can use them but on some stuff you can't and just the little everyday thinking skills that they don't relate to it, you know they just don't see it

CM1

Students concerned about high school

Helping students understand high school

Students are concerned about rigor of high school

Well I watch mine, like what's two plus five and we all can think of it really quickly but they literally have no idea. I tell them you are using the calculator to figure out something that you should already know so you are using your working memory to figure out something you already know so quit wasting your time now if you want to go check yourself that's great

2

Using working memory to figure stuff out you should already know.

Using working memory for basic skills

Using working memory for basic skills

but why are you using a calculator for simple stuff.

I've got kids that, and I bet CM2 can relate to this, the nine's multiplication the only way they can do it is with their fingers they will have to put that one down and count these five fingers. I'm like can't you just remember this is 5, 6, 7, 8 and they will go "Oh" and then they will go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and they will count them again	CM1	Must use fingers to answer 9's multiplication	Using fingers to multiply	Using fingers to multiply
Oh yea	CM2		Agreeing	Using fingers to multiply
And they will do it on the table	CM1	On the table	Visually using fingers to multiply	Using fingers to multiply
Yea	CM2		Agreeing	Using fingers to multiply
Because they don't see they really don't see that	CM1	They don't see	Not understanding	Not embarrassed to use fingers to multiply
Well its like they don't have a concept of time because they can't remember a clock so they can't sit here and think ok its this proportion	23	No concept of time	Not understanding proportions	Not understanding time or proportions
Its like a pie graph, they can't tell what...	7	Like a pie graph	Not understanding proportions	Not understanding proportions
Are we off topic	23	Off topic	Getting off topic	Off topic
I don't know	2	Yes	Not knowing	
Question 2 What are some accommodations that were common in your classroom before the implementation of RTI ² that are not utilized now?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
So what were you doing before RTI ² that you are not doing now.	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
A lot more read aloud even with regular students we don't read aloud anymore hardly because if they	7	Don't read aloud anymore	Not reading aloud anymore	No read aloud

aren't doing it themselves I'm afraid of what will happen to them on a test. That's for all students too to make sure they could understand but particularly for my weakest students because that made a huge difference in their answers. Night and day I mean

Afraid of test

Now its such different qualifications from the state

CM1

Different state qualifications

Qualifying for read aloud differences

Different state qualifications for read aloud

I know

7

Different state qualifications for read aloud

That's why I don't even I mean I use to use it for even regular ed kids I don't use it hardly at all and only 2 out of 20 in my class get it.

7

Don't use it hardly at all

Not using reading aloud

No read aloud

I do all the same stuff except I've added we do a lot more vocabulary and academic vocabulary now because they are going to have to read it on their own so we play the academic bingo and we do flashcards with what does it mean to examine what does it mean significant, what does analyze mean. Whereas before I never did that but now that I know some of my students are not going to get that read to them I mean just all the words any words that we feel are important in whatever we are studying at that time we will do a lot more activities with the vocabulary because I want them to at least see that word recognize it and have some idea when they are reading on their own what that word is going to mean so I've we have actually added too instead of take away.

23

More vocabulary games

Adding in academic vocabulary

Adding in academic vocabulary

Well ever since they saw delineate on a writing prompt I'm with you on that cause if they couldn't answer that question they wrote down everything but the answer because that word was like...what? So

7

Saw tough word on writing prompt

Discussing tough academic vocabulary

Discussing tough academic vocabulary

See that's what scares me because if it says compare you need to comparing it not contrasting it and so the vocabulary right now without them having the read aloud where they hear the words more often I'm just scared they are going to shut down and just think oh this means this and go on. Examine oh elephant I got it! You laugh, I had a kid who was reading to me and the word was examine and he said elephant that's when I emailed Teresea Mason I was like oh no I'm in trouble	23	Vocabulary may shut them down	Students shutting down due to vocabulary	Students shutting down due to vocabulary
I think I remember that kid	7		Remembering a student	Remembering a student
That's my one that is reading on a first grade level	23	First grade reading level	Reading low level	Low reading level
But I had one come to me today during R&E and they had started angles so we were talking about congruent and I said it was kind of like when you get into geometry you sort of change your vocabulary with congruent and equivalent and she goes no fractions are equivalent and I was like well yea and so she said so that doesn't mean congruent you know just seeing those vocabulary just throws them totally off cause its worded different for them and they don't know the vocabulary so	CM1	Throws them completely off cause its worded different and different vocabulary.	Students shutting down due to vocabulary and wording	Students shutting down due to vocabulary and wording
I think they try to, at least for me, they want to learn the vocabulary but then they end up confusing themselves more because I'll say what's whatever and they will start throwing out random words and I'm like think about what you are doing before you just start throwing out random words.	2	They want to learn vocabulary	Wanting to learn vocabulary	Students want to learn vocabulary but confused
I tell you R&E academic vocabulary bingo between Horner, Moffett, and I; I think our kids understand academic vocabulary and you play once a week sacrifice that time cause I would rather have them understand what they are being asked	23	Sacrifice time to help students understand academic vocabulary	Sacrificing teaching time for vocabulary	Sacrificing teaching time for vocabulary

Do you have something online with it?	4	Something online?	Questioning the academic vocabulary game	Academic vocabulary game
No we made our own bingo cards, I'm telling you best thing we ever did cause we read the definition they have to find the word and then when they get bingo they have to pronounce them all	23	Made bingo cards	Discussing academic vocabulary game	Academic vocabulary game
That is good	CM1			Academic vocabulary game
I did a lot of that when I taught reading lab a lot of vocab	7	Reading lab uses a lot of vocab	Discusses academic vocabulary	Did do this in class then moved to core ELA class
I never thought of doing it for social studies but	23	Never though in Social studies	Thinking of vocabulary in social studies	Academic vocabulary in social studies
We deal with children with a lot more limited vocabulary even in good families cause people read less. Every year as rigor gets harder vocabulary is shrinking	7	Rigor gets harder student vocabulary knowledge gets smaller	Identifying as rigor gets harder it appears student vocabulary is shrinking	Identifying as rigor gets harder it appears student vocabulary is shrinking
When I was at one of those meetings for the state this past summer one of the gentlemen, one of the testing coordinators actually, made the comment that students with a higher vocabulary will score higher on the test and I was like Oh! I had never put two and two together so we have been pushing vocabulary since August	23	Higher vocabulary on state test	Teaching academic vocabulary due to test	Higher vocabulary on state test
But still the best way to gain vocabulary is to read more and that's a hard sale	7	Reading more leads to more vocabulary	Reading leads to high vocabulary	Reading more leads to higher vocabulary
Question 3 How are accommodations being included in lessons to allow for all students to experience success in the general education classrooms?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
Well I've got to do more along with normal delivery	7	Kinesthetic things	Moving students	Moving students

more active things I try to do more kinesthetic things I try to do more grouping where they may get some extra help from a classmate even more than I'd have done before. Because even though I can get around my class there are too many for me to hit all of them. If I have a strong student that can help somebody I do a lot more of that we don't make a big deal out of it but we put them with people that maybe they can help so I'm		Extra help from classmate	around the room and allowing them to work with a classmate	around the room and allowing them to work with a classmate
Yea peer tutoring	23	Peer tutoring	Tutoring by another student	Tutoring by another student
You are not supposed to call it that	7			
Yeah I know but doing R&E its great	23	Great during R&E	Tutoring by another student during R&E	Tutoring by another student during R&E
Heterogeneous Grouping	7	Heterogeneous grouping	Grouping students with different levels	Grouping students with different levels
I mean I keep kids during R&E that can help me	23	Keep kids to help during R&E	Tutoring by another student during R&E	Tutoring by another student during R&E
Yeah I do that too	7	Yeah	agreeing	Tutoring by another student during R&E
So they will work on an assignment and I'll say can you help them with this assignment so they can get done and I'll go help somebody else	23	Use them to help someone after they finish assignment	Tutoring by another student	Tutoring by another student
Well that's a way to enrich them as well for them to teach it does fill two bills having some of your good students in there helping out	7	Good student helping out leads to enrichment	Enriching top performing student by them tutoring another student	Enriching top performing student by them tutoring another student
These days we've got to have help cause in math, well everywhere we just don't have it. In math they just need practice and practice, and try again, and look at it this way and lets try it this way. And they are not getting it, they only get Mrs. 4 for 55 minutes or whatever it is	4	Must have help Math needs practice Not getting it	Asking for help with math teaching	Math teachers need help cause students are not getting it
Some of them are getting confused cause they want	23	Students are	Confusing students	Confusing students

to answer two answers on my test and I'm like there is only one. They keep saying in math there are two. I'm just saying. Poor little kids

confused about tests

with different testing

with different testing

Do you guys have select all?

4

Select all

Discussing test questions

Select all test questions

Yeah, and I just found out in math through RTI I have some kids that I have been doing multiplication with two digit times two digit for forever but we are able to use some different strategies in there cause of the small group and I have one little girl who is using the splitting strategy and it is the best thing in the world for her she is multiplying four digits times three digits, does it take longer yes but she gets that problem right. She couldn't do it the traditional way if I worked with her for a year least year on it and she could not do it. Now I'm doing splitting with her and man she is racking it up but she can't do it as fast but she is getting them

CM1

Two digit multiplication splitting method

Allowing a student to use a different strategy

Allowing a student to use a different math strategy

I sometimes think the difference between students who do well and those who do not, and not just math, are the students who do really well have figured out strategies just by themselves to kind of help. Especially in math and the others just haven't thought of it. You know there might be multiple ways but they just haven't thought of that way. And even in reading things I see. I just thinking its interesting because the big difference here is you automatically do that. One of the differences in reading is the children that read to themselves can they hear it in their head or can they not. If they can not hear it in their head they are not going to get the expression that goes with it or all of those inferences and underlying meanings.

7

Students figured out different strategies to help In reading, hear story leads to hearing inferences

Allowing students to explore different strategies

Students who can figure out different strategies to use will do well others will not

We have been doing more annotated reading when we do that cause that helps the lower kids and the

23

Annotated reading

Reading and annotating

Annotated reading

advanced are like this is sort of fun you know.

Mark it up

7

Mark it

Reading and
annotating

Annotated reading

You know when you talk about modifications something happened this afternoon that I thought was hilarious the 8th graders were gone this morning to the pathway fair and I had one this afternoon that was filling out an application and it said in complete paragraph write and she said I didn't know you would have to write a paragraph on an application. And I said yes sweetheart any time you fill out an application. Oh my gosh she said I just thought you would have to write down you know and I said no you have to write a paragraph. And she said I just don't know that I can do this I just don't know.

CM1

Writing a
paragraph on an
application, not
sure if going to do
it

Students giving up on
stuff due to
expectations

Students giving up on
stuff due to
expectations

That's one of our 8th grade students

7

Some
accommodations
are good but not a
bunch

Accommodating for
too many things is
not good

Too many
accommodations is
not a good thing

I know we have all sat and said at high school when you go to for a job and they just don't believe you. Sometimes I think accommodations are good, and I'm a special education teacher, and sometimes I think how many do we give them. Cause when they get out in the real world nobody is going to accommodate for them nobody's going to do all that for them. And by the time they get to high school, I know from teaching there accommodations are few and far between they really start taking them off over there and these 6th graders are coming in with 500 accommodations

CM1

I know I'm working on one right now

CM2

Working on one

Accommodating for
too many things is
not good

Too many
accommodations is
not a good thing

I just don't understand why we have continued by the time you get to 6th, 7th, 8th grade why we have continued to pass them on when they don't have the basics and now they are stuck

4

Why we continue
to pass them on
without the basics

Passing kids on when
they don't have the
basics

Passing kids on when
they don't have the
basics

I think there is a point between elementary and middle school	7	Point between elementary and middle	Passing kids on when they don't have the basics between elementary and middle	Passing kids on between elementary and middle
Now we have wasted time	4	Wasted time	Wasting time	Wasting teachers and students' time
I was helping a kid on ten works on proportional that kid had no idea what the word was or how to pronounce it. It was like proportion what's that, I was like...	CM2	Didn't know what proportion was	Not understanding the vocabulary	Not understanding the vocabulary
When we were talking about vocabulary and I don't like them to rote memorize but they do have to memorize some stuff and I feel that they have lost that skill entirely almost. I'm having a really hard time with some of them no big deal but others can't remember what we did yesterday literally can't remember what we did yesterday even though its right there in their notes.	7	Memorize vocabulary	Condoning memorizing vocabulary	Condoning memorizing vocabulary
Cause they don't have to cause they are going to ask siri. I tell you if I have one more person tells me. I had a student ask me if they could ask siri what her opinion is. I was like, no I want to know what your opinion is.	23	They can ask siri	Asking Siri	Dependent on technology
I do not understand the question	2		Making a joke	
I really worry about what's going to happen to some of these kids, I really do I mean I just cause some of these kids are just so dependent on all of that they just can ask all those questions and look up stuff	CM1	Worry about kids so dependent on stuff	Worrying about students dependency on technology	Worrying about students dependency on technology
But it limits their body of prior knowledge	7	Limits prior knowledge	Students limiting their knowledge base	Students limiting their knowledge base
Yea they are smart about all of that stuff but they can't figure out one plus one without a calculator	CM1	Can't do basic math without a	Students depending on a calculator	Students depending on calculators

Yeah	2	calculator		
Yeah we failed them somewhere plus they are not concerned about failing	23	We failed but they are not concerned	Failing students	Failing students
We failed them by not failing them maybe	7	We failed by not failing	Failing students	Failing students
When I was little I was terrified not to do my homework terrified and terrified of failing	23	Terrified of failing	Failing students	Failing students
Now they don't care	CM1	Don't care	Students not caring	Complacency of students
If you fail when you are young, and I don't mean fail but mess up something or make a mistake you learn the consequence you learn how	7	Failing leads to learning consequence	Learning consequences through failure	Learning consequences through failure
There are no consequences	7	No consequences	Lacking consequences	Lacking consequences
Right so they get to college and they don't know how	23	Don't know how in college	Not understanding demands of college	Not understanding demands of college
They want the mom to call their professor	7	Mom call professor	Not understanding demands of college	Not understanding demands of college
And we have to give them a 50 even though they turned in nothing	4	Have to give a 50	Giving students grades	Giving students gift grades
Yeah	7		agreeing	Giving students gift grades
And that is what I was going to say about the Mom's and these accommodations if they do not get all of their accommodations we get called immediately you know if you're not meeting all the accommodations and that's where I feel like we have too many accommodations. And we have started to take away a lot we really have	CM1	Need to take accommodations away	Removing accommodations	Removing accommodations parents get involved
Then I think with the new guidelines with some of these students they really need it they shouldn't be	23	Don't have mental capacity to make	Making connections is too abstract for	Making connections is too abstract for

expected they don't have the mental capacity to do what we are asking them to do and I have two of those in class they cannot make those connections because they do not have the capacity to make those connections they do not have the background it is too abstract its not concrete. They cannot see it		connections. Too abstract	students	students
And for some of them they will never have that ability its just not meant to be	7	Never have ability	Having the ability to make connections is not there for some	Having the ability to make connections is not there for some
Yeah but I shouldn't be having to quote judge them on this ability because the state tests them	23	Shouldn't judge them because the state tests	Judging students ability by testing	Judging students ability by test
No I know	7			
We standardized state test kids that will never have that ability that's not within their its never going to happen for them.	7	Don't have the ability	Understanding the ability for some students will never be there to make connections	Some students will never have the ability
And we are standardized testing them that we do that	7	Standardized testing	Standardizing students	Standardizing students
When you add that rigor with all those extra steps to get to those connections they do not have the mental capacity to do it	23	Adding rigor to make connections they can't due to mental capacity	Understanding the ability for some students will never be there to make connections	Adding rigorous connections with students who do not have the ability to do that
And that's what the state needs to realize	CM1	State realize	Wanting the state to realize that some students can't	Wanting the state to realize that some students can't
And I don't mean we give up I just mean that there is a point that me need realize that capacity may not be there	7	Don't give up	Teachers not giving up on students	Teachers not giving up on students
And they are working	CM1	They are working	Students working	Students are working
And they are good	23	They are good	Students working	Students are working

I think the rigor is good in theory cause you want to be able to problem solve and have a work ethic cause those are real world applicable skills so you go back to problems like yes they are good but once they get through college or high school or whatever there are no such thing as accommodations you know and so its like yes I have to teach these standards however what's the chances that you are going to use systems of equations in the real world right now unless you become an 8 th grade math teacher I don't see you using systems of equations you know.	2	Rigor is good in theory Problem solve and work ethic Real world applicable skills	Enjoying the rigor in theory due to problem solving, work ethic, and building real world skills	Rigor is good in theory
But its like we are failing them because they don't turn something in so I'm just going to give you a 50 if I don't turn in my mortgage they are not going to give me another 9 weeks they are going to take my house	2	Failing for not turning something in	Failing students	Failing students
We are actually teaching them a bad lesson	7	Teaching a bad lesson	Teaching students real world situations	Teaching students real world situations
Well standardized testing is the worst thing that ever happened because we can't teach those lessons anymore. And I don't think its wrong. I like my standards and I like that they are rigorous but only the majority of student can handle them the ones' that can't handle them shouldn't be punished because they can't handle them they should be able to do the parts and steps that they can do gather what they can out of it and move on instead of have the state judge me on the fact that they can't do that.	23	One's who can't handle standards should not be punished	Differentiating between what students can handle in the standards	Differentiating what students can handle in the standards
I agree	7	Agree	Agreeing	Differentiating what students can handle in the standards
I absolutely agree	7	Agree	Agreeing	Differentiating what students can handle in the standards
I mean they need to be in there and they need to hear the rigor and they need to hear all of the	23	Valuable they are there to hear the	Wanting low students in class to	Wanting low students in inclusion

conversations and they may not be able to part of that conversation and add to that conversation but I think it is valuable that they are there		rigor	hear conversations and rigor	classes to hear conversations and rigor
They are going to pick up something from it	2	Pick up something	Students getting something from the class	Students getting something from the class
Yeah they are going to pick up something	23	Pick up something	Students getting something from the class	Students getting something from the class
They are not going to pick up everything	2	Not pick up everything	Students not getting everything from the class	Students not getting everything from the class
Sometimes you are surprised you are like Wow!	7	You are surprised	Surprising teachers with what they get	Surprising teachers with what they get
But they are not going to get everything they need for the test	23	Not getting everything	Students not getting everything from the class	Students not getting everything from the class
But its something	2	something	Students getting something from the class	Students getting something from the class
I think that's it I think it is teacher judgment is that test appropriate for every child	7	Teacher judgment test appropriate	Teachers judging what's appropriate for every child	Teachers judging what's appropriate for every child
But I think the students though know that they are not getting all of it and are therefore pressured because they know the high stakes test is coming and it is going to make them do even worse and get flustered and nervous and upset and feel bad about themselves whereas if they knew it wasn't going to count as part of their grade it wasn't going to affect all this other stuff and it was just like it use to be this is what we teach and this is what you get it	23	Students feel pressured by test get flustered nervous and upset	Students losing confidence	Students are lowing confidence
We could use that information to see what we could maybe do better	7	Use information	Using testing information to help learners	Using testing information to help guide teachers
Cause they will show a gain	23	Show a gain	Students showing	Students showing

Right	7	Right	gains Agreeing	gains Students showing gains
They are gaining something they are just not going to get the rigor that is expected of them so I can sit here and retest and retest like I have been doing with this one students and he has yet to pass a test this entire year. I put, he has a 50 for everyone because they are actually 20's and 30's and 35's. Retest pull in work with R&E retest same exact grade missed different questions same exact grade. He is just not going to get it and I think its terrible that he feels the pressure that he is going to have to get it. I'm off my soap box	23	Retest and still not get it due to rigor expected	Understanding student does not have capacity to get it	Understanding some students do have the capacity to understand
That a girl 23	2			
Question 4 From your perspective, since the school wide implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention how is the inclusion process that is in place promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
I don't think its impeding it	23	Not impeding	not impeding instruction	Inclusion not impeding instruction
Can you read it again	4	Read again	Reading again	
From your perspective, since the school wide implementation of Response to Instruction and Intervention how is the inclusion process that is in place promoting or impeding instruction for special education students?	Facilitator	n/a	n/a	n/a
So in other words we have gotten rid of our extended resource so all of those kids are in your classrooms and now we can only teach basic skills in RTI	CM1	Gotten rid of extended resource so all kids in our classes	Getting rid of extended resource revamped inclusion classes	Getting rid of extended resource changed our inclusion classrooms
So lots of the things we have already talked about	4	Already talked about	Repeating	Many things already discussed

Well then it is impeding it because instead of being able to teach what is going on in class or front loading any information so when they go to class they feel like they can contribute.	23	Impeding not front loading so they can contribute	Discussing double dose	Inclusion is impeding instruction. Students can't contribute due to no front loading
Gosh do you know how nice that would be to hear it twice Oh my goodness and then the next day hear it twice so it can sink in and you build and build and build	4	Nice to hear twice to build on and sink in	Discussing double dose	Double dose is a good set up
That's more productive	23	More productive	Discussing double dose	Double dose is productive
Not even that but the frustration level is so much higher that impedes learning cause I would shut down with some of the stuff	7	Frustration level is higher leads to shut down	Noticing level of frustration of students	Noticing level of frustration of students
Yeah I would much rather her teach it to me and then they may not understand it all but to have	23	Rather teach it	Discussing double dose	Benefits of double dose
In a small group	4	Small group	Setting of learning	Small group setting
Recognize some words so that when Mrs. 4 talked about it I can think oh wait we did this I'm comfortable its all good	23	Recognize words so comfortable	Discussing benefits of double dose	Benefits of double dose
Or vice versa You go to 4 and get it a little bit and then go to CM1 and its like oh yeah and it clicks for them but they are just coming to us and going to 7 th period.	2	Two classes leads to it clicks for them	Discussing benefits of double dose	Benefits of double dose
I've said before that is what I use to do and I felt like it worked about real good. And I realize we have a lot of kids that need these basic skills that's where I feel like why isn't RTI like a mixture and its not because of what we have to prove and we have to test so we have to stick with the basic skills but I just feel like from watching these kids in RTI we've got some that are so close to their grade level that if we could do both in there you know	CM1	Why isn't RTI like a mixture we should do both	Questioning RTI and the curriculum	Questioning RTI and the curriculum: basic skills and grade level material.

I'll be honest I've had three students that have been in reading RTI that seem way ahead of other kids on their test even	7	Reading rti kids ahead of others	Seeing benefits of RTI in reading	Seeing benefits of RTI in reading
See it's a little different with reading	CM1	Different with reading	Understanding reading is different	Understanding reading is different
I know, I know I know how we test for the reading but its just its almost surprising that they are in there because	7	Surprising they are in there	Surprising teachers when they realize students are in RTI	Surprising teachers when they realize students are in RTI
Oh right, oh right	CM1	Right	agreeing	Surprising teachers when they realize students are in RTI
That they are there and I have other kids and many are in inclusion classes and they go but they are not getting what they really need and they are getting basic skills	7	Some go to RTI and not getting what they need	Students getting basic skills in RTI	Students getting basic skills in RTI but need grade level help
And I know it would be really hard but where it would help us out if they were grouped in RTI classes on their levels and I know other people help them but we have to get down to the basics you know but we can still work with them on like angles	CM1	Grouped RTI classes on levels	Grouping RTI on levels would be beneficial	Grouping RTI on levels would be beneficial
That would be good	7	Good	agreeing	Grouping RTI on levels would be beneficial
You know what I'm curious to see what the percentage of students that were able to graduate out of sped compared to those that are going to be stuck in there because they are not getting that second helping of it.	23	Percentage of students graduate out of sped or stuck due to no second helping	Researching benefits of double dose on sped kids	Researching benefits of double dose on sped kids
That would be interesting but I know that first year my kids loved knowing that they could come into my room that day and say hey we worked on this today Mrs. CM1 and I didn't have a clue what they were doing can you help me. Sure let's do that today. I	CM1	Come to my room and get help on work they worked on today	Working with students in double dose	Working with students on double dose grade level material

never had a plan.

That's really different in reading because it is all mushed together and they can't figure out what they are doing

7

Reading is all mushed together

Understanding reading is different

Understanding reading is different

All the other kids would be really interested because they knew they were getting ready to do it so they were like you know

CM1

Other kids were also really interested

Working with students in double dose

Students interested in working on grade level material

The reading is what affects me

23

Reading is affecting me

Verifying what affects her class

Reading is important for multiple classes

Its harder to break it down because everything is so but that's why you can focus on vocabulary and things like that. Dulcie is probably one of the best teachers I've ever seen at it for like three years and they exceed other students who aren't getting RTI in my class so I don't know if it's the test disconnect on how we test them to get in there or what but something is weird to me about it.

7

Harder to break down
Focus on vocabulary

Focusing on vocabulary

Focusing on academic vocabulary

The students I know that go to RTI I have not seen any types of improvement in math ability or computation

4

No improvements from RTI students in math ability

Not seeing improvements with math rti students in class

Not seeing improvements with math RTI students in grade level class

Because it is not that complex thing you are teaching

23

Not that complex thing you are teaching

Noticing different curriculum

Grade level is different material than RTI class

I mean not even the computational part they are still grabbing for the calculator to do basic things

4

Not computations still grabbing for a calculator for basics

Observing students still dependent on calculator

Students dependent on the calculator

Because that is their comfort zone I bet

23

Comfort zone

Recognizing students comfort zone

Calculator is a comfort zone

But they don't even know how to work the calculator is the problem

2

Can't work calculator

Understanding students don't know how to use the

Students don't understand how to work the calculator

Well you need to teach a class on that	23	Teach a class on that	calculator Suggesting teaching a class on calculators	Need a class on calculators
We don't let them use a calculator	CM1	Don't use calculator	Not allowing students to use a calculator	Not allowing students to use a calculator
Yeah cause I time to do that	2	No time	Not allowing time for calculator class	Not allowing students to use a calculator
They get mad at us cause they are like we get to use a calculator in the regular room so why can't we use it in here.	CM1	No calculator in RTI leads to student frustration	Not allowing students to use a calculator in RTI	Students frustrated when not allowed to use a calculator
We take them for some things like squares and cubes we don't have calculator you need to know that	2	No calculator for squares and cubes	Categorizing what students can use a calculator for	Categorizing what students can use a calculator for
Yeah what happened to that I remember in school we said here and did multiplication until we got it and we had to take tests when we walked in everyday and speed and all this other stuff	23	Speed of multiplication tests	Remembering multiplication speed test	Remembering multiplication speed test
They should have all of that before they come to use	4	Should have before use	Identifying elementary curriculum	Multiplication is an elementary skill
See that is the thing I could spend time developing all of that but now I'm behind on my standards so its	2	No time to develop basics	Not allowing time for basics	Not allowing time for basic skills
Yeah I'm right there with you	23	Yeah	agreeing	Not allowing time for basic skills
I would love to get them to that point but then I'm going to get in trouble because I haven't taught anything and its November	2	Getting in trouble teaching basics due to time	Not allowing time for basics due to amount of standards	Not allowing time for basics due to amount of standards
So in the RTI you are not seeing any difference in it?	23	No difference in RTI?	Questioning math RTI	Questioning math RTI
That is scary cause the student I need in reading is in math right now and if its not helping them	23	That's scary	Questioning math RTI	Questioning math RTI
Sometimes in reading I'm not seeing it because they	7	Reading they have	Differentiating	Differentiating

have always done well so in my mind I'm like well why are they in RTI cause they do not need the basic skills. I do know that there are aspects of fluency and their fluency may not be that great but apparently they have been able to do without that.		always done well maybe fluency	between fluency and comprehension	between fluency and comprehension
Could it be the comprehension?	23	Comprehension	Questioning comprehension	Differentiating between fluency and comprehension
Well no cause that is what I'm seeing them getting, the fluency is more what, you know how smoothly with expression and speed so there speed is sometimes not what it should be but they have been compensating somewhere so you know its hard for me to see any real upside to having it to honest because I keep thinking a while down the road after they have had it in elementary school we will see a dramatic	7	No you see comprehension you may not see fluency	Differentiating between fluency and comprehension	Differentiating between fluency and comprehension
That's what I hope, I can understand a huge emphasis in elementary school using the RTI but by middle school our math and our reading is so complex and so its time we need help its too late for sped students. Its such a huge transition	4	Elementary RTI I understand middle is too late	Understanding the difference between RTI in elementary and middle	Understanding the difference between RTI in elementary and middle
Its too late	7	Too late	Hypothesizing that it is too late	Hypothesizing that it is too late
We need help and RTI is not doing it	4	Need help not RTI	Asking for help not RTI	Teachers need help with grade level material not RTI
And RTI in some schools I know that the tier 2 students get it from their regular classrooms but here you know they are pulled by us so that, yeah	CM1	Some school RTI Tier 2 in classroom	Noting differences in school RTI programs	Some schools place Tier II in classroom
And we really wouldn't have time for that in our schedule now I'll be honest you know our schedule is tight	7	No time	Not allowing time for tier 2 in classroom	There is no time for Tier II in the classroom

Well in elementary school I think you are locked down to students all day so you would have time	2	Elementary locked down – have time	Allowing time for Tier 2 in elementary	Elementary schools have different schedule allowing for time
Well you are right so why are we getting kids in middle school that don't have the basics you would think if they did not get in elementary school they would not pass them on	23	Getting middle school kids without the basics	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school
You would think	2	You would think	agreeing	Think elementary would have time
I know	4	I know	agreeing	Think elementary would have time
Because if they don't have the basics	23	Don't have basics	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school
That comes down from way above	7	Comes from above	Knowing where that decision comes from	That decision comes from above
Well I mean she is right though if they are that far behind they are not going to get your concepts, and teaching them the concepts is just wasting their time they need to be where they are getting the concepts and your stuff at the same time.	23	That far behind will not get concepts and wasting time	Students falling further behind	Students falling further behind
I've always thought that elementary math needs to be just computational and maybe some problem solving but when you get to middle school that's where your depth comes from	4	Elementary math need to be computational only	Discussing elementary math curriculum	Elementary math needs to be computational only
Well you need to know that stuff without even thinking	7	Know stuff without thinking	Memorizing the basics	Memorizing the basic skills
Abstract stuff getting prepared for high school, I guess that is not the way it goes	4	Abstract stuff preparing for high school	Preparing students for high school abstract thought	Preparing students for high school abstract thought
You are still teaching them how to subtract and add	CM1	Teaching subtract and add	Realizing still teaching basics	Realizing still teaching basics

Remember they did not start RTI	7	Did not start RTI	Understanding when RTI started	RTI is developmental phase
So they are not getting	23	Not getting it	Understanding when RTI started	RTI is developmental phase
Everybody got thrown in at the same time so we are working with gaps until hopefully that'll catch up	7	All working with gaps	Understanding when RTI started	RTI is developmental phase
Yeah but they will still be learning the basics	23	Learning basics		Learning basics
I know, I know	7	I know		
There is a huge gap between what they are doing and what they are getting in RTI	23	Huge gap in RTI and class	Recognizing the gap between core classes and RTI classes	Recognizing the gap between core classes and RTI classes
But the kids she has in RTI, what I'm saying is, the same year everybody started it so they can't so hopefully those that started it in first grade are getting it intensively enough that in a couple of years we won't see these big gaps or as many	7	In a couple of years won't see big gaps	Closing those gaps	Closing gaps over time
They still keep passing kids that can't read over here, do you really think its going to change	23	Still passing kids that can't read	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school	Passing students on without the basic skills to middle school
Well its both though, we really hope it helps both, I'm trying to be optimistic	7	Optimistic hope it helps both	Hoping time will help	Hoping time will help with development of RTI
Our special ed kids are not RTI they are special ed kids they are not even tiered. They are in our RTI classes but they are not RTI they are special ed they are getting the most intense. The RTI is just for our general ed kids. So they are mixed they are all together. I have more general ed kids than I do sped kids, can you believe that.	CM1	Sped kids are not even tiered they get most intensive	Understanding where special education students fit on the pyramid	Sped students are not tiered they get most intensive
Is that due to the screener?	2	Screener		Gen ed students mixed in with sped students

Yeah	CM1	Yeah		
I can believe that cause the gen ed kids just fly through the screener	2	Gen ed kids fly through screener	Questioning the screener	Gen ed kids fly through the screener
Our LD kids are automatically in our classes They are special ed so they can't be in RTI but they are already in our classes and then the OHI kids ADHD and they can be in a RTI class.	CM1	LD kids are automatically in RTI classes	Understanding where special education students fit on the RTI pyramid	LD kids are automatically in RTI class
Our Special Ed kids should have gotten it in those extended resource. One year here I taught a little bit of everything. One year I taught just special ed a class the improvements were tremendous.	CM1	Sped kids should be in extended resource	Needing extended resource for special education students	Needing extended resource for special education students
We are not giving them what they need	23	Not giving them what they need	Not giving them what they need	Core teachers not able to give sped kids what they need
I taught exactly what they did but I just broke everything down	CM1	Broke everything down from class	Breaking everything the students need down in double dose class	Breaking everything the students need down in double dose class
I have a student for Christmas gave me a 2015 calendar and he still does not understand why I will not put that on the wall because it has all the same dates, and I'm supposed to teach a higher concept to him	23	Student gave a 2015 calendar can't teach him a higher concept	Discussing students low ability level and high concepts that need to be taught	Students low level must be taught higher concepts makes for a struggle
Well, I'm watching kids..	7	Watching kids		
He can't even get the dates	23	Can't get dates	Discussing students low ability level and high concepts that need to be taught	Students low level must be taught higher concepts makes for a struggle
I'm watching kids that are in inclusion class that probably would have been in the extended resource class that what we are teaching so far above their	7	Teaching so far above their level Its that far gone	Watching students struggle in class	Watching students struggle in class

level, it's hard to watch. And it's a lot of them in one class too. Its more than 5. I know one child nothing I say, he's going to sit there, and he will sometimes put pen to paper but I know nothing is going in. It's that far gone

We were never frustrated as math teachers when we found out they were going to stop that pull out program and they were just going to work on basic skills that was not a good day. It was like what in world were they thinking.

Especially in math you could see huge gains

Yes

I mean I know

You see I look at these kids in math that I have for RTI that are a seventh grade student on a sixth gradelevel yeah they may be missing a few little things but I could work with them on the skills they are doing in the classroom and probably have them up to their grade level a lot quicker than I do just working just those basic skills cause they are going to get those basic skills just out of themath

Yes

Now if you are working on a third or fourth grade level that's a whole different story and that's our special ed kids I'll be honest with you

4

7

4

7

CM1

4

CM1

Frustrated math teachers due to no pull out

Huge gains in math

Yes

I know

Working on grade level stuff could pull them up to grade level faster than working on basic skills

Yes

Sped kids are on 3rd or 4th grade level

Discussing the frustration of math teachers due to no pull out classes

Discussing frustration of math teachers due to no pull out class

Agreeing

agreeing

Trying to pull kids up to grade level

Agreeing

Understanding that sped kids are a different story

Math teachers frustrated due to no pull out

Math teachers frustrated due to no pull out

Math teachers frustrated due to no pull out

Math teachers frustrated due to no pull out

Trying to pull kids (that are close) up to grade level using grade level material

Trying to pull kids (that are close) up to grade level using grade level material

Sped kids are not able to be pulled up to grade level using grade level material

And that's why they haven't progressed	7	Not progressed	Sped students not progressing	Sped students are not progressing
And you have a few who I think Ami's got one or two tier 3 that are probably 4 th grade level	CM1	Some tier 3 kids on 4 th grade level	Comparing her class to a none sped RTI class.	Some Tier III gen ed kids are on 4 th grade level
They would still get some of the things we are teaching if you were able to help them.	4	Still get some if helped.	Progressing students	Able to progress some students if helped with grade level material.

APPENDIX H: Interview 1 Data Analysis

Content from Interview	Invivo Codes	Process Codes	Initial Codes	Emergent Categories
How are the special education students coping in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
I think some of the special education students like rising to the occasion and almost exceed the expectations in the inclusion classroom. Other students are struggling with the expectations, the curriculum, and everything that is going on in there.	Rising to the occasion Exceed expectations Struggling	Some students are rising and some are struggling	Some Sped students are rising and some are struggling	n/a
How are special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
That again the students, the struggling ones, they are, its either they are struggling a lot or they are kind of able to keep their head above water. The rigor has been very hard on the students that are struggling and it seems like if we could just slow down a little bit or possible give them another class period of the same thing then that would help them some, but the rigor is definitely hard on our struggling kids.	Slow down Rigor is hard	Slowing down the curriculum would help	Slow down Rigor is hard	n/a
How are you accommodating for the special education students in order for them to be academically successful in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
I have provided them with modified notes on things we are going over breaking down the language for them so that it's not as much vocabulary or unknown vocabulary, umm, a lot of assignments I color code them so they are able to visually see what they need to work with I'm math so a lot of things if you just color code it then they are able to see 'oh that goes with that examples like the coordinate plane the X's all go across with a yellow marker the x-line the x-axis and then in the ordered pairs I'll also color the x coordinate like yellow that way they can match those coordinates the other ways...I've tried to do or suggest more hands on activities making it more relevantfor	Modified notes Color code notes Hands on	Modifying notes Utilizing color codes Providing hands on activities	Modified notes Color code notes Hands on	n/a

the students to try to get their attention on things umm I think that's about it.

What are some things you notice your special education students struggling with in your classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

They struggle with the vocabulary um vocabulary wise like the word problems they are having to analyze in math they are not able to, a lot of them struggle with comprehension already and so when they read the word problem it's not going anywhere they are absolutely not able to decide what operation they need to do to figure it out. Some of the actual math computation they are struggling with too though when they have like math deficits they are really unable to do like the higher 8th grade math we are working on this year, it's really been hard for them to do like systems of equations or even two step equations where they have to know like the opposite inverse, positive, or things like that they really struggle with all of those.

Vocabulary struggle
Comprehension
Analyzing math problems
Math computation

Students struggling with comprehension, vocabulary, analyzing math problems, and math computation

Students struggling with comprehension, vocabulary, analyzing math problems, and math computation

How has RTI² changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

Umm, I really don't know the answer to that. This is only my second year teaching and so there's always been RTI so I don't really know any different. I can say that I do believe RTI has helped with some of those smaller skills those students need like they've, I've seen quite a few students improve on like their addition and subtraction or even being aware that they have 10 fingers on their hands and they can use them to count. That's a good thing.

Improving students
Basic skills

Improving students

Improving basic skills

Anything else you want to add.
No, not that I can think of.

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

APPENDIX I: Interview 2 Data Analysis

Content from Interview	In Vivo Codes	Process Codes	Initial Codes	Emergent Themes
How are the special education students coping with the expectations in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
They're struggling, let's say that, they are not one confident enough and they do not have the background knowledge. And the ones that did come from resource or the double doses they do not have enough of the knowledge of the 7 th grade that connects to it so whenever they see something and even when I try to break it down to a lower to what they would have seen in 7 th grade they don't even know that so it's hard to break it down so a lot of it my lowest of the low some of them I'm told to just teach our essential standards which is like ok so I'll teach these three kids something different than the rest of the class and they look at that and they can't even do it so everything you give them and they can't do it they're confidence is down and their work ethic is down cause once they realize they couldn't do one thing they shut down and they don't want to try anything. They see one bad grade and they are done.	Struggling Not confident No background knowledge Shut down	Shutting down	Shutting down Not confident No background knowledge	
How are the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
About the same cause the rigor is hard and even if I break it down cause the rigor for a regular class or an advanced class is not going to be the same as an inclusion class so even if I break down the rigor for...which is rigorous for them they have already shut down just from the material alone that the rigor they don't look it and even attempt to read it most of the time, getting them to get out the paper and work is a struggle. But I will say the inclusion kids that are higher functioning would be my consideration of just a learning disability for the most part and they just kind of been, would never have been in resource or in double dose they are doing great because when they find, we do have some skills in 8 th grade that are actually easy and so as soon as they saw a good grade on that they tried so hard for me. Soyou	Break down rigor no help Already shut down Material	Shutting down Breaking down rigor Difficulty understanding material	Shutting down Breaking down rigor Difficulty understanding material	

can see a big difference between those that have always been in inclusion as compared to some of our other labs like PAES labs or resource that kind of thing. You can definitely tell. I don't know if it's from being in there they feel like they can never been in a real classroom again or if they have missed the instruction from the other grade levels I can't put my figure on it, and it might be different for each child, but...

So how are you accommodating the special education students in order for them to be academically successful in your classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

Like I said some of them are doing great. I can lower the amount of problems they have I can tell them to pick so many I can give them extra time and they do great with that. The others are more that I'm supposed to give completely alternative assignments to sometimes if we are doing multi step equations I might give the a two-step equation or even a one-step equation that act like they have never seen an equation that is helping some if they I know the inclusion teacher I have in there with me I know she does a really good job of working them though one and saying ok you worked through one now you one let's do another and sometimes that helps them like just seeing that they can do one really helps so that one on one teacher help but as soon as you walk away is usually the problem so and we have a really big class I think I have 16 IEP's in that class so it's hard to get the one on one thank goodness there is not that many lower like the lowest so we can usually we actually have them seated together which on one hand during instruction she can stand there cause they usually have their notes already copied for them, she makes copies of the notes so they are not having to write it down and she is showing them how to follow along but then there is no help on the other side of the room so it's a give and take but we have several different accommodations going and some work better than others and some the kids, like I said, no matter how many accommodations I give them they shut down. They shut down well before I got them.

Extra time
Alternative assignments
Pick so many problems
Inclusion teacher
Examples
Copies of notes
Some work better than others
No matter they shut down

Providing extra time, alternative, and shortened assignments.
Inclusion teacher providing copies of notes
Shutting down no matter what

Providing extra time, alternative, and shortened assignments.
Inclusion teacher providing copies of notes
Shutting down no matter what

So what are some things you notice your special education students

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

struggling with in your classroom?

The work load, even if I like some of those equations like the systems of equations even if I give them two I mean sometimes half a page of work um back ground knowledge that they have missed not just adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing cause we give them a calculator most of them get calculator accommodations so they can get that part but it's the 6th grade, the 5th grade, the like two step equations, what's an inverse, what's an ordered pair, and with our standards, these new standards are so complex and so fast I mean we sometimes have 9 standards in 9 weeks and it's so fast sometimes I don't have time to get all the background knowledge in there um. They struggle with the rigor they struggle with the expectations cause some of them I really think could do more and when I tell them you have shut down you need to try they don't like that I want them to do something. They are like well so and so said I couldn't do it so I'm good and they struggle with the fact that there is math lab or I guess the math intervention and then there is my class and there is no other alternative that they would like. They do not like that they are having to sit in a class and listen to my instruction some times. And I think this group, I think some of them were in our when we did that pull out double dose and I think they miss that too cause some of them talk about the teachers they might have had and some of those special education teachers that might have taught those things and they always say well I might do better if I could go see her, so they have a connection with somebody who had that so they miss that which I understand.

Work load	Not	Not
Math skills	understanding	understanding
Rigor	the previous	the previous
Expectations	grades' math	grades' math
Miss double	skills.	skills.
dose	Struggling	Struggling
	with the work	with the work
	load, rigor,	load, rigor,
	and	and
	expectations.	expectations.

So how has RTI² changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?

n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
-----	-----	-----	-----

I definitely have more lower students like I've always had an inclusion class or two and that's usually standard, but having some of those that are so low that I mean I see them over there counting to 5 on their hand and I'm like and that is also a big difference when they were in a smaller group or in a group with kids who were all on the same level they were more apt to do that, and this student did it once or twice and he looked around the room

More lower	Not knowing	More lower
students	what to do for	students
Students	them.	Students
aware of	Co-teaching	aware of
differences.	and grouping	differences
Co-teaching	are different.	Co-teaching

and realized wait a minute all these kids are smarter than me and stopped and wouldn't do it at all. So they lose some of their confidence especially when it comes to class participation. I have a class of 26 and I hear from maybe 5 of them. Ironically it's my 5 proficient kids so it's, the class moral is a little lower. They are definitely aware of their differences more than I would think. I can't think of anything else. It's changed how we can co-teach as well. Before we could split the class so the class would be a little smaller instruction we would co-teach, we have done where we split the class and each teach on each side or we have done groups where we meet with those around the room but the low ones they get so lost that it is like literally someone has to be right there with them. It's harder to do the pull out groups or the co-teaching it's just and there really is I'd say three to four in my class but still I can't just let them not do anything. I can't just sit there. And I know that sometime they can't get the curriculum but I don't know what to do, it kills me.

Groups

Being aware
of student
differences.

and groups
Not knowing
what to do for
them.

APPENDIX J: Interview 3 Data Analysis

Content from Interview	In Vivo Codes	Process Codes	Initial Codes	Emergent Categories
How are the special education students coping with the expectations in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
I think um I think they are coping with the expectations pretty well um but um let me think, I'm trying to, I feel like those that are I guess lower since they are not getting extended resource like if they don't reach the expectation they just shut down so that's a hard thing to deal with as a teacher cause you want to still push them but then they are not asking the questions they need to ask to understand the information or they are not taking notes like they should be to get the information or anything like that so they just shut down and quit paying attention so its and there are some that try to push through and you think they are getting and then cause I'll say anyone got any questions and no one asks any and then you assess them and they bomb it and something doesn't happen so you know like I said the lower end it really shuts down now they can't do the content cause they don't know how or whatever the case may be so that's one thing I have seen this year compared to last.	Don't reach expectation Shut down Not asking questions Quit paying attention Can't do content	Reflecting on students in class who shut down due to content	Don't reach expectation Shut down Not asking questions Quit paying attention Can't do content	
How are the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
I mean that kind of ties in I guess I mean I don't know that they are coping with the rigor to be honest you know and with the whole standards changing and everything like that it is deeper and that's how I've always taught anyways. In math the answer generally is what it is but now you have to understand how or why you got to that because you can get there several different ways. You know. And so I'm ok with for example if the answer is 6 and I do three plus three and you do it five plus one we are still getting the same thing, you know, and if you do it three times two that may be easier for you than for me and	The rigor is too much You have to understand how or why Caught up in process Don't understand	Not understanding the process Not getting the rigor	The rigor is too much You have to understand how or why Caught up in process Don't understand	

so as long as that consistently works I'm ok with that because I find that a lot of kids come up with different stuff to help them especially with the rigor. Like ok here is the process to solve the problem so understanding that process and like why you have to do the inverse operation or something like that over time just overwhelms them really I guess as far as the rigor because you are wanting them to understand the process but they are getting so caught up in the process take the kid who can't multiply without a calculator you know so they are worried about if its $3x-5$ is that plus 5 or minus 5 to do the inverse and they miss that one little step and now there whole problem is messed up so they get caught up in the process but don't understand the process so then they just get overwhelmed they don't ask the question that they need to ask to understand what they are doing wrong so they are potentially doing the same mistake wrong but then in their mind they are doing the same thing every time so they think that that's the correct process when really it would be an easy fix so you know and its crazy to see like the difference from year to year you know I know the focus is my inclusion class this year but last year like those kids would take the time to ask the questions to get what they needed and this year I feel like they are wanting me to spoon feed them I guess and I don't so then they are just stuck pretty much. So I don't even know if that answers the questions but um yeah I mean they can't feel, I guess to sum all that up that can't get the process and understand the process they either get it or they kind of understand the explanation but as far as the whole rigor it's just too much I guess to sum all that up.

process
Just stuck

process
Just stuck

How are you accommodating the special education students in order for them to be successful in your classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

I try to break things down you know obviously I teach math so I keep going back to the process so I try to break things down in like steps um and so you know like for example I'll give notes in words step one you do this, step two you do this, step three you do this , whatever but I

Break things
down
Color code
Scaffold

Breaking down
assignments
Scaffolding
Color coding

Breaking
down
assignments
Scaffolding

also do those words in a different color um so that really may not hit everybody but it will hit the visual and tie back in later but like step 1 is red, step 2 is blue, step 3 is green, or whatever when you go to solve the problem I'll work out the problem in the color that correlates to the steps we just wrote down so that way if they do it that way they go back and look ok well what did he do here well its green and these words are green so that's one way to help them visualize the steps cause I'll tell them if you do it the same way every time it's hard for you to mess it up. Um, another way you know is just breaking it down by words not even by color but even doing it in short distinct steps I guess, cause I know if step one is really lengthy word, word, word, word they are going to caught up in all the words and not understand what to do I try to condense the steps and I want them to understand the vocabulary but I also want them to understand the process so if I can just say so add the decimals that's three words they know what to do um rather than make it some drawn out professional sounding thing kid friendly almost like here's how you do it let's roll with it and see how it works so that's one way to kind of help me and even I usually try to scaffold too like I do a basic problem with them and see how they get it depending on the topic obviously um and then kind of throw another step in there throw another step in there once I feel they are comfortable with you know baby stepping it out, which seemed to help out. I guess that's a couple of ways.

Color coding

What are some things you notice your special education students struggling with in the classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

Um, I guess mathematical processes you know, I guess that seems to be a common theme that I keep saying but like they can't I mean for me because it has come so easy for me and I have to remind myself that it doesn't to them or to any student really it's the first time they are seeing it so how do I convey that to them so I try to tell them and break it down in those steps I was talking about and try to say it's so easy cause I figure if I can convince them and get them on board they

Mathematical processes
Logical reasoning
Basic skills

Struggling with mathematical processes, logical reasoning, and basic skills

Struggling with mathematical processes, logical reasoning, and basic

will think it's easy. You know he makes it look easy, oh yeah it is. But as far as even logical reasoning because they just A I think some of them struggle because they don't have the basic skills that they need and so they are using their brain to punch in on the calculator when it should be automatic so they are using their working memory to do something they should already know so then by the time they get done they have messed up or whatever they just struggle and that's across the board with whatever the standard is they just do not have the mathematical processes or the logical reasoning. Because I can look at a problem and reason through it as to how I want to go about it and maybe eliminate some of the steps once I understand how to do it, but they don't see things like that. Like if it's a minus 5 do I have to do the inverse and plus 5 or do I just minus 5 because that is what I did on the last problem even though it has changed and then like when I finally get them to understand what an inverse operation is they will get like $2x$ and say like well I need to subtract instead of divide so they really don't understand all of the processes that are going on. Um, and that is a struggle cause I don't know how to break through and you know and I can't just do it for them cause then they are not learning but then you can't just not do it cause then they are not learning. So it's a hard thing to go about cause you know I'm like man this is so easy but it's not for them because they are new and they struggle with it. Um so yeah I mean they struggle with mathematical processes and logical reasoning and really like they have no like I said they have no logical reasoning at all to even think like they just want to dive it and even this like, this drives me nuts but I could say what's $5 + 2$ something they should know automatically they start throwing out random numbers which is good because they want to participate but they are not thinking about what I'm asking to hit that rigor again and so now they are just wrong and some of them just shut down because they don't want to say anything because I'm going to be wrong not that I'm like embarrassing them but if they would just take time to think about what I'm asking because I'll even or like I'll say what's $5+2$ for example and they will say 7 and I'll ask another question and say

skills

like “is it” and the way that I say it has them second guessing well maybe it’s not 7 but the way I’m asking it makes them think about the process again and they have to double check to make sure they really did it correctly which is helping them hit the rigor and the processes and then they realize that they double check and say on yeah it is 7 and he was just whatever, but they’ll like struggle with second guessing themselves so they will either say something too quickly and say something wrong because they didn’t take time to think about it or they’ll second guess themselves just because of how I’ve asked something just to trick them almost um really just double checking their work. Um...

How has RTI² changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?

n/a

n/a

n/a

n/a

Um, well I mean I guess they don’t have the extended resource again so the thing I’ve noticed and struggle with my first year I would have a kid what would be our RTI teachers now you know for a period and they could work on almost like a double dose class so they could be doing stuff in my room and their room like twice a day so they would be hearing it to different ways from two different people. You know at two different times so if they went there first and then came to me they would be like oh yeah I already heard this and they would feel more confident about it. Or if they went to me first and then went to them they could get extra help with anything they didn’t understand that I taught you know in the class. So that has changed because we don’t have that anymore I guess so they are not getting, if a kid struggles with basic skills I get that but at this point it’s almost too late to work on the basic skills because they are spending so much time getting the basic skills but then they come to my class and don’t understand anything I’m saying because they don’t have the basic skills and so yes basic skills are important but we want them also to get the content but if they don’t understand any foundation of math I’m just up there talking about who knows what and so they just zone out because they don’t understand they don’t understand anything

Don’t have extended resource
Double dose class
Spending too much time on basic skills
Not understanding all the standards that have to be taught
Needing a smaller setting

Spending too much time on basic skills

I'm talking about with inverse operation and all the vocab words that I can throw out they don't understand them because they don't have a good foundation that they have missed in years prior so that has really changed because they can't go get the extra help or they can't spend the time getting help on the content and so it's kind of a waste I guess not necessarily a waste but you know there is so much standards and so much you have to fit it and so they don't understand it and they come and get extra help or whatever but by the time they want to or realize they should they have dug themselves such a hole that it goes back to what I started out saying they just shut down. Well I don't understand anyway, which is a terrible attitude but you know I get it to an extent whereas if they had that double dose or whatever it is you want to call it. Like I feel like they would be much more encouraged cause that would be a smaller setting for them to get practice on a certain standard or if they are doing a multi-step equation and they are doing wrong on one step then that would be the time to tweak that one step to be successful in my class or whatever. I don't know if that answered the question or not but that's all I've got right there.

APPENDIX K: Interview 4 Data Analysis

Content from Interview	In Vivo Codes	Process Codes	Initial Codes	Emergent Categories
How are the special education students coping with the expectations in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Um, there is a lot of struggle a lot of deer in headlight expressions and the frustration level is , is, you can see it in their work, in their anxiety um I mean we try to help them as much as possible but they're stressed. And it's now manifesting itself in just not doing it, that stubborn attitude.	A lot struggle Frustration level Anxiety Stressed Just not doing it	Building frustration, anxiety, and stress	Building frustration, anxiety, and stress	
How are the special education students coping with the rigor in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Um, we try to scaffold instruction in order to get them there but it is not always attainable so it's been a struggle for them and for me to make sure it's rigorous enough for the kids that can, um it's frustrating for them. I'm trying to think, cause they are not coming from a place of rigor so they are not ready for the rigor its, its, it's like a huge jump into the ocean there.	Scaffold Struggle Frustrating Huge jump	Scaffolding to meet the rigor struggling	Scaffolding to meet the rigor struggling	
How are you accommodating your special education students to be academically successful in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Again we scaffold a lot of instruction for them, um, we can we do like a duality in certain work where there is a certain level lower level and a higher level for the class. Of course I have a teacher a special education teacher in there and he is excellent and I have an aid in there and um so there is a little more one on one for each of them to get them there. It's the higher order thinking the writing and the organizing that is really a struggle they can't synthesize information in the way other students can so. What was the question again? I want to make sure I'm answering the question	Scaffold instruction Special education teacher	Differentiating instruction and work	Differentiating instruction and work	

How are you accommodating your special education students to be academically successful in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
A lot of extra help a lot of things that are a little lower to get them going and hopefully moving them up and they might not ever get to the level of the other of the regular Ed students in there but I do see some improvement.	Lower Moving them up Some improvement	Moving them to level Lowering assignments	Moving them to level Lowering assignments	
What are some of the things you notice your special education students struggling with in your classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
I think I just answered that, the higher order thinking skills the analyzing the synthesizing being able to take something I have taught them in any other area is hard particularly when we get to writing. It's very difficult for them to put together the whole essay	Higher order thinking skills Analyzing synthesizing	Struggling with thinking, analyzing, and synthesizing	Struggling with thinking, analyzing, and synthesizing	
How has RTI2 changed the makeup of your inclusion classroom?	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Its larger and the difference between the lowest student and the highest student is more dramatic, which makes the lowest student feel more inadequate than they probably should no matter how you try to accommodate them they still stick out and there's enough students that low that it really is a problem I mean there are so many that it's kind of a problem too. And it makes it hard to teach that top student too make sure they are getting the enrichment they need. I don't want to sound whiney. I mean it's just hard, it's a lot harder to differentiate when you have got super low and super high I have no idea how to deal with that.	Dramatic difference Inadequate feelings Hard to differentiate	Feeling inadequate Differentiating is hard	Dramatic difference Inadequate feelings Hard to differentiate	
Anything else you want to add	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

I miss the extended resource for them. I personally think that worked better but you know this is what we deal with so we do the best we can and we hope that at some point it will improve.

Miss
extended
resource

Missing
extended
resource

Miss extended
resource