

AN EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR ALL: STRATEGIES FOR  
SECONDARY GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO MEET THE LEARNING NEEDS  
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS LEARNING IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

By

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## **Capstone Project Description**

The research question this capstone project seeks to answer is as follows: Which strategies are most effective for secondary general education teachers to provide modifications, accommodations, and differentiation for special education students in the areas of instruction and assessment? The project consists of four separate components. The first component is a four-hour-long large group professional development session. This initial session provides participants with a knowledge base regarding the purpose and structure of modification, accommodation, and differentiation as well as specific strategies for applying modifications, accommodations, and differentiation to their pedagogical practice. It focuses on two elements of pedagogy in particular, instruction and assessment, and provides an overarching framework for incorporating modification, accommodation, and differentiation into both areas in order to provide students with special needs learning in the general education classroom with the equitable educational experience to which they are entitled. The other three elements of the professional development project are implemented during small-group professional learning community meetings at three different points throughout the first half of the school year. The first session asks participants to reflect upon their use of the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy in their classroom instruction. The second session asks participants to reflect upon their use of the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy in their assessments. The third session asks participants to complete an exit survey designed to measure the extent to which they utilized the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy throughout the first semester.

The goal of this project is to provide secondary general education teachers with effective strategies for modifying, accommodating, and differentiating their instruction and assessment of

special education students learning in the general education setting in order to meet the unique learning needs of these students. Therefore, the primary audience for this project is secondary general education teachers. This includes general education teachers licensed to teach grades 5-12 in any general education subject. The project is intended for implementation at the individual school level. The strategies presented are general and therefore applicable to any general education classroom and not limited to any specific category of student disability. The project provides knowledge and skills that are applicable for secondary general education teachers regardless of their teaching experience, thus all secondary general education teachers teaching in the school are expected to attend. Although the primary target audience is secondary general education teachers, the effective implementation of the strategies presented rely to some extent on collaboration between general education teachers and other staff and faculty members that work with special education students. This includes special education teachers, social workers, counselors, therapists, and special education paraprofessionals. Therefore, any special educational professionals working in the building are also expected to attend this professional development workshop. By familiarizing themselves with the modification, accommodation, and differentiation strategies that general education teachers apply to their instruction and assessment of students with special needs learning in the general education setting, special education professionals will be able to work more effectively with general education teachers to ensure that the learning needs of special education students are being met.

## **Professional Development Workshop Outline**

### **Initial Half-Day Session:**

1. Pre-Session Individual Survey - 30 minutes (pages 5-6 of this document)
  - a. Distribute the survey and explain the purpose of the survey.
  - b. The purpose is to collect baseline data regarding the extent to which participants provide modifications, accommodations, and differentiation in their current teaching practice, specifically in the areas of instruction and assessment.
2. Large Group Presentation: I.N.C.L.U.D.E. - one hour (pages 7 and 12 for the presentation outline and pages 23-27 for presentation slides)
3. Learning Activity: Applying I.N.C.L.U.D.E. - two hours (pages 8-11)
  - a. Participants divide evenly into small groups.
  - b. Distribute one “Applying I.N.C.L.U.D.E.” learning activity to each group.
  - c. Participants work together in their groups to complete the learning activity.
  - d. For the final 30 minutes of the session, each group shares out their responses for the large group.
  - e. Collect the completed learning activity for each group. The learning activities will be scanned and shared with all participants via email or Google Drive.
4. Distribute information packet and closing questions - 30 minutes
  - a. Distribute the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy information packet to every participant.
  - b. The packet consists of of the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy presentation outline and slides (pages 7, 12 and 23-27). Participants should refer to the information packet

as well as the completed learning activities to inform their application of the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy to their teaching practice over the course of the semester.

- c. Ask for and respond to any closing questions from participants.
- d. Explain to participants that there will be three follow-up sessions related to this workshop that participants will complete within their professional learning community (PLC) groups.

**First PLC Follow Up:**

1. Scenarios: Applying the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy for Instruction (pages 13-16)
  - a. Participants complete the learning activity in their PLC groups (mid-October).
  - b. Accountability - each PLC group must submit its completed learning activity to the PLC coordinator within one week of its assignment.

**Second PLC Follow Up:**

2. Scenarios: Applying the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy for Assessment (pages 17-20)
  - a. Participants complete the learning activity in their PLC groups (mid-November).
  - b. Accountability - each PLC group must submit its completed learning activity to the PLC coordinator within one week of its assignment.

**Third PLC Follow Up:**

3. Post-Session Individual Survey (pages 21-22)
  - a. Participants complete the Post-Session Individual Survey (end of semester).
  - b. Accountability - participants submit the completed survey to the PLC coordinator within one week of the end of the semester.

### Pre-Session Individual Survey (ANONYMOUS)

**Instructions:** Please respond to the following questions regarding modification, accommodation, and differentiation of your classroom instruction. Refer to the scale below when answering. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer. **This survey is anonymous, please DO NOT include your name.**

| Never<br>1 | Rarely<br>2 | Sometimes<br>3 | Frequently<br>4 |
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------------|

1. I differentiate my instruction to meet the learning needs of my students.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

2. I differentiate my assessment to meet the learning needs of my students.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

3. I provide accommodations for my students with special needs in my instruction.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

4. I provide accommodations for my students with special needs in my assessment.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

5. I provide modifications for my students with special needs in my instruction.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

6. I provide modifications for my students with special needs in my assessment.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

7. I consult my students' IEPs and 504 Plans when designing my learning activities.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

8. I consult my students' IEPs and 504 Plans when designing my assessments.

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|

9. I consult with Special Education staff when designing my learning activities and assessments.

1

2

3

4

10. I use specific strategies to modify, accommodate, and differentiate my instruction and assessment for my students with special needs.

1

2

3

4

11. **How do you define an “equitable educational experience”? Use the space below to provide a brief response.**

## **I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy Presentation**

1. Introduction to I.N.C.L.U.D.E.
  - a. General strategy for providing equitable educational experiences to all students
  - b. Useful for developing and implementing modifications, accommodations, and differentiation
  - c. Applicable to both classroom instruction and assessment
2. Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.
  - a. Identify classroom demands
    - i. Classroom management
    - ii. Classroom grouping
    - iii. Instructional materials
    - iv. Instructional methods
  - b. Note student learning strengths and needs
    - i. Academics
    - ii. Social-emotional
    - iii. Physical
  - c. Check for potential areas of student success
    - i. Classroom observations
    - ii. Student products
    - iii. Current Levels of Performance in IEP
  - d. Look for potential problem areas
    - i. “Mismatches”
    - ii. IEPs and 504 Plans
  - e. Use information to brainstorm modifications, accommodations, differentiation
    - i. IEPs and 504 Plans
    - ii. Special education staff
  - f. Deliver equitable instruction and assessment
    - i. Co-teaching
    - ii. Paraprofessionals
    - iii. Execute plans for modification, accommodation, differentiation
  - g. Evaluate Student Progress
3. Learning Activity - Applying I.N.C.L.U.D.E.
  - a. Divide into small groups
  - b. Distribute “Applying I.N.C.L.U.D.E.” worksheet
  - c. Share strategies and closing questions



## Applying “I.N.C.L.U.D.E.”

Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Read the following scenario, then work together to apply the elements of the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. strategy to meet the learning needs of **all** students in the class.

**Scenario:** You are a secondary teacher teaching a section of ninth graders. This class has 28 students, 14 of which are students with special needs. All students with special needs have either an IEP or a 504 Plan. You are co-teaching this class with a Special Education teacher. The breakdown of the students with special needs is as follows:

- All 14 students with special needs have been identified as having general learning disabilities affecting literacy, comprehension, organization, and task completion.
- Four of these students are also English Language Learners.
- Seven of these students have been identified as having ADD or ADHD.
- Five of these students have been identified as having Emotional or Behavioral Disorders; of these five students, two struggle primarily with emotional regulation and the other three have been identified as having Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

| Step of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.   | Potential Challenges | Potential Solutions |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Identify classroom demands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom management</li> <li>● Classroom grouping</li> <li>● Instructional materials</li> <li>● Instructional methods</li> </ul> |                      |                     |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Note Student Learning Strengths and Needs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Academic</li><li>● Social-emotional</li><li>● Physical</li></ul>  |  |  |
| <p><b>Check for potential areas of student success</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Classroom observations</li><li>● Student products</li><li>● Current Level of Performance in IEPs</li></ul> |  |  |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Look for potential problem areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● “Mismatches”</li><li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li></ul>  |  |  |
| <p><b>Use information to brainstorm modifications, accommodations, differentiation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li><li>● Special Education staff</li></ul> |  |  |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Deliver equitable instruction and assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Student Choice</li> <li>● Age/Developmentally Appropriate</li> <li>● Feasibility</li> <li>● Demonstrated Effectiveness</li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>Evaluate student progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Formal and Informal Evaluation</li> <li>● Use data to inform instruction and assessment strategies</li> </ul>  |  |  |

## The I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy Presentation

### A. What is I.N.C.L.U.D.E.?

1. General strategy for providing equitable educational experiences to all students
2. Useful for developing and implementing modifications, accommodations, and differentiation
3. Applicable to classroom instruction and assessment

### B. Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

1. **I - Identify classroom demands**
  - a. Classroom management
  - b. Classroom grouping
  - c. Instructional materials
  - d. Instructional methods
2. **N - Note student learning strengths and needs**
  - a. Academic
  - b. Social-emotional
  - c. Physical
3. **C - Check for potential areas of student success**
  - a. Classroom observations
  - b. Student products
  - c. Current Levels of Performance in IEP
4. **L - Look for potential problem areas**
  - a. "Mismatches"
  - b. IEPs and 504 Plans
5. **U - Use information to brainstorm modifications, accommodations, and differentiation**
  - a. IEPs and 504 Plans
  - b. Special Education Staff
6. **D - Deliver equitable instruction and assessment**
  - a. Co-teaching
  - b. Paraprofessionals
  - c. Execute modification, accommodation, and differentiation strategies
7. **E - Evaluate student progress**
  - a. Formal and Informal Evaluation
  - b. Use data to inform instruction and assessment practices

## Applying the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy for Instruction

Names: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Within your professional learning community, complete the chart below. Submit your completed chart to your PLC coordinator.

| Element of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.   | How we have applied it so far this year | How we will apply it in the future |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <p><b>I - Identify classroom demands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom management</li> <li>● Classroom grouping</li> <li>● Instructional materials</li> <li>● Instructional methods</li> </ul> |   |                                    |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>N</b> - Note student learning strengths and needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Academics</li><li>● Social-Emotional</li><li>● Physical</li></ul>                           |  |  |
| <p><b>C</b> - Check for potential areas of student success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Classroom observations</li><li>● Student products</li><li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li></ul> |  |  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>L</b> - Look for potential problem areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● “Mismatches”</li><li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li></ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>U</b> - Use information to brainstorm strategies for modifications, accommodations, and differentiation</p>                              |  |  |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>D</b> - Deliver equitable instruction |  |  |
| <b>E</b> - Evaluate student progress     |  |  |

## Applying the I.N.C.L.U.D.E. Strategy for Assessment

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Within your professional learning community, complete the chart below. Submit your completed chart to your PLC coordinator.

| Element of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.   | How we have applied it so far this year | How we will apply it in the future |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>I - Identify classroom demands</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Classroom management</li><li>● Classroom grouping</li><li>● Instructional materials</li><li>● Instructional methods</li></ul> |   |                                    |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>N</b> - Note student learning strengths and needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Academics</li> <li>● Social-Emotional</li> <li>● Physical</li> </ul>                           |  |  |
| <p><b>C</b> - Check for potential areas of student success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Classroom observations</li> <li>● Student products</li> <li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li> </ul> |  |  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>L</b> - Look for potential problem areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● “Mismatches”</li><li>● IEPs and 504 Plans</li></ul> |  |  |
| <p><b>U</b> - Use information to brainstorm strategies for modifications, accommodations, and differentiation</p>                              |  |  |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>D</b> - Deliver equitable assessment |  |  |
| <b>E</b> - Evaluate student progress    |  |  |

### Post-Session Individual Survey (ANONYMOUS)

**Instructions:** Please respond to the following questions regarding modification, accommodation, and differentiation of your classroom instruction. Refer to the scale below when answering. Circle the number that corresponds to your answer. **This survey is anonymous, please DO NOT include your name.**

| Never | Rarely | Sometimes | Frequently |
|-------|--------|-----------|------------|
| 1     | 2      | 3         | 4          |

1. I differentiate my instruction to meet the learning needs of my students.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

2. I differentiate my assessment to meet the learning needs of my students.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

3. I provide accommodations for my students with special needs in my instruction.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

4. I provide accommodations for my students with special needs in my assessment.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

5. I provide modifications for my students with special needs in my instruction.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

6. I provide modifications for my students with special needs in my assessment.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

7. I consult my students' IEPs and 504 Plans when designing my learning activities.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

8. I consult my students' IEPs and 504 Plans when designing my assessments.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

9. I consult with Special Education staff when designing my learning activities and assessments.

1

2

3

4

10. I use specific strategies to modify, accommodate, and differentiate my instruction and assessment for my students with special needs.

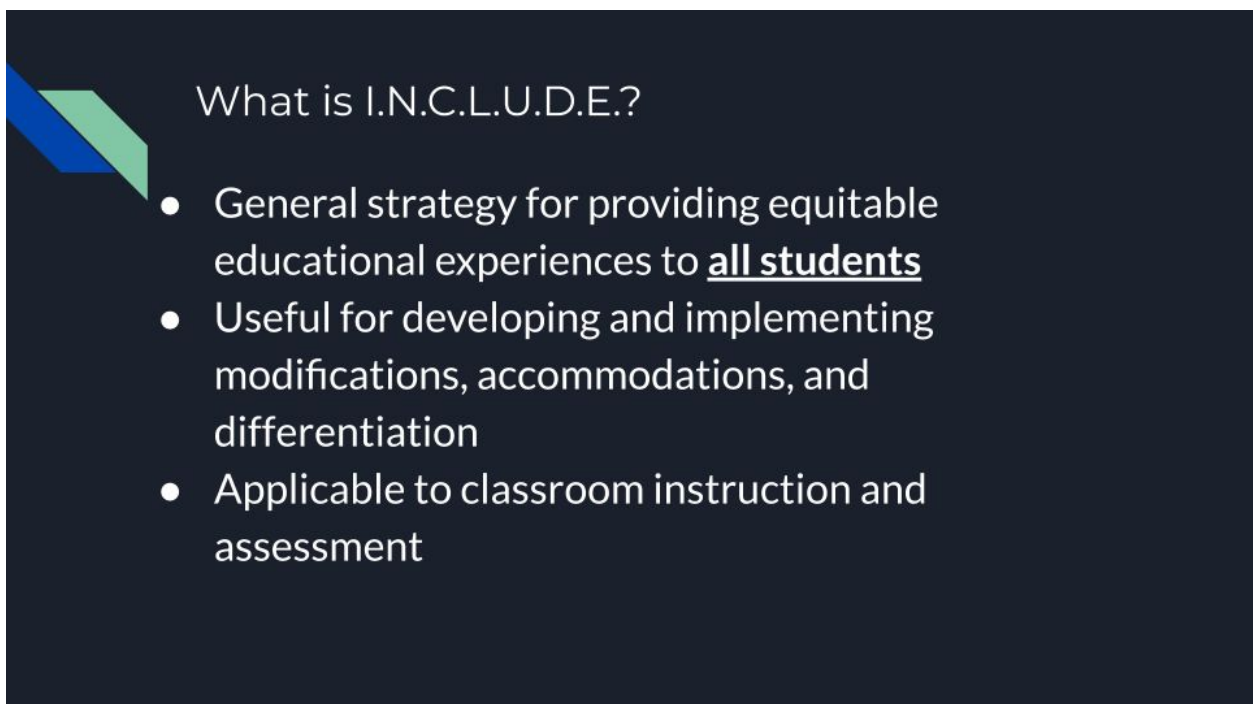
1

2


3

4

11. **How do you define an “equitable educational experience”? Use the space below to provide a brief response.**







## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

### I - Identify classroom demands

- Classroom management
- Classroom grouping
- Instructional materials
- Instructional methods



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

### N - Note student learning strengths and needs

- Academic
- Social-emotional
- Physical



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

### **C** - Check for potential areas of student success

- Classroom observations
- Student products
- Current Levels of Performance in IEP



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

### **L** - Look for potential problem areas

- “Mismatches”
- IEPs and 504 Plans



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

**U** - Use information to brainstorm modifications, accommodations, and differentiation

- IEPs and 504 Plans
- Special Education Staff



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

**D** - Deliver equitable instruction and assessment

- Co-teaching
- Paraprofessionals
- Execute modification, accommodation, and differentiation strategies



## Elements of I.N.C.L.U.D.E.

### **E** - Evaluate student progress

- Formal and Informal Evaluation
- Use data to inform instruction and assessment practices

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