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What is Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Visual Impairments?



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What is Specially Designed Instruction for Students with Visual Impairments?

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PART 1

Introduction, Adapting the Content and Adapting the Methodology

In working with Local Education Agencies (LEAs: school districts and charters) for many years, the question seems to arise as to how specially designed instruction differs for students with visual impairments from other students with disabilities. Since the population of students with visual impairments is a very diverse group that includes all age ranges, levels of cognitive and physical abilities as well as a wide range of vision abilities, all components of specially designed instruction potentially may apply to any child with a visual impairment. Yet, there are some unique needs of students with visual impairments that may be unfamiliar to some educators because of the low incidence of this population. Thus, this article will focus on these unique needs rather than the broad topic of specially designed instruction which is required for every student with a disability who receives special education services.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) definition of Specially Designed Instruction indicates that:

“Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the

- content
- methodology or
- delivery on instruction” (IDEA § 300.39 (b)(3).).

The definition continues by indicating that the three components listed above: content, methodology and delivery of instruction should be adapted to:

- “address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and
- ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards...” (IDEA § 300.39 Special education (b)(3)(i-ii).).

The definition above combined with the stated Purpose of IDEA:

“To ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services:

- designed to meet their unique needs and
- prepare them for further education,
- employment, and
- independent living” (IDEA § 300.1 Purposes, (a).),

help us understand the role of education in relation to students with visual impairments.

“Specially designed instruction (SDI) is planned, organized and meaningful in that it is an intentional and systematic process that specifically addresses the student’s needs as expressed in the IEP” (Auburn Public Schools, n.a.). “The LEA must provide a child with a disability specially designed instruction that addresses the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability, and ensures access by the child to the general curriculum, even if that type of instruction is being provided to other children, with or without disabilities, in the child’s classroom, grade or building” (Musgrove, M., 2012). For a student to be considered to need special education services, the student must require specially designed instruction to make progress in the curriculum and these components should be reflected in the student’s IEP. Thus, this article will explore the three components of specially designed instruction as described in IDEA in relation to a student’s visual impairment. The three components are:

1. Adapting the content,
2. Adapting the methodology
3. Adapting the delivery of instruction.

Component I: Adapting the Content

Usually when educators think of adapting the content, they focus on the state curriculum content standards. However, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), *2017 Guidelines and Standards for Educating Students with Visual Impairments in Texas* (2017, p. 6) state that “in addition to the general education curriculum all students with visual impairments, starting at birth, also need an **expanded core curriculum** (ECC) to meet needs directly related to their visual impairment (TEC 30.002, Subsections (c-1) and (c-2).” Thus, when considering adapting the content for students with visual impairments, the ARD committee must consider two content areas:

1. General education curriculum
2. Expanded core curriculum (ECC).

This additional content area, known as the Expanded Core Curriculum, is essential for students with visual impairments so they can graduate ready for further education, employment and/or independent living as required by the purpose of IDEA. Meeting this IDEA purpose “is a key role of the TVI [teacher of students with visual impairments] and the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual Impairments...” (AFB, n.d., p. 5).

According to the *2017 Guidelines and Standards for Educating Students with Visual Impairments in Texas* (TEA, 2017, p. 6), the expanded core curriculum includes:

- Compensatory skills that permit access to the general curriculum (such as braille and concept development, tactile graphics, Nemeth Code, and specialized communication skills)
- Orientation and mobility skills
- Social interaction skills
- Career education and planning
- Assistive technology, including optical devices
- Independent living skills

- Recreation and leisure skills
- Self-determination, and
- Sensory efficiency (including visual, tactual and auditory skills).

The guidelines do not indicate that one area of the ECC is more important than another area. They are all equally important for students with visual impairments. Therefore, for the ARD committee to appropriately develop an IEP for a student with a visual impairment, the committee must have access to four types of evaluation/assessment data:

1. Functional vision evaluation (FVE)
2. Learning media assessment (LMA)
3. Expanded core curriculum (ECC) assessments (in all areas)
4. Orientation and mobility (O&M) evaluation.

“The FVE, LMA and ECC assessments are the main specialized assessments for students with visual impairments that form part of a comprehensive evaluation for eligibility” (Zebehay, et.al. 2017, p. 39). In addition, in Texas, the Orientation and Mobility Evaluation is also a requirement of the initial and continuing eligibility of a student with visual impairments (SBOE § 89.1040 (12)(B).). So, all four evaluations/assessments are required both at the initial evaluation and at the three year evaluation. IDEA is clear that a comprehensive evaluation must address both eligibility and “content of the child’s IEP” (IDEA § 300.304 (b) (ii).). Furthermore, “these specialized assessments should be considered a ‘living document,’ meaning that they should be updated frequently enough to maintain a record of the student’s functioning and to assess current and future needs that may change with age, grade level, or visual prognosis” (Zebehay, et.al. 2017, p. 39).

Therefore, specially designed instruction for students with visual impairments must consider “two equally essential and interrelated curricula, the general curriculum and the expanded core curriculum....The first is the core curriculum which consist of all skill areas that are common to all students” (Holbrook & Rosenblum, 2017, p. 205). The second curriculum, the ECC, is important because “after analysis, there is evidence that there are numerous significant relationships between the receipt of instruction in expanded core curriculum (ECC)-like content areas and meaningful outcomes, such as employment, postsecondary training, and engagement in social activities” (Wolffe & Kelly, 2011). Thus, the expanded core curriculum is an “integral and indispensable component of the [general] curriculum, not skills that are considered extra or for enrichment” (Holbrook & Rosenblum, 2017, p. 205).

When devising an IEP for a student with a visual impairment, the ARD committee needs to address both curricular areas because one area can impact the other. For instance, the general curriculum may need to be adapted because the braille reading curriculum is commonly not aligned with the general education reading curriculum. Braille instruction includes learning symbols and contractions of words that frequently need to be introduced in a different order than letters and words in the traditional reading curriculum.

Another example is sometimes a student with a visual impairment may not be reading on grade level because of proficiency with braille, not because of the student’s ability to learn. Braille takes more time and practice than visually reading print. Learning braille also can be impacted by other disabilities or the age when the student’s vision was impaired. So consideration of adaptations of both curricula, general curriculum and braille curriculum (part of the ECC), must be addressed simultaneously as one can impact the other.

Component II: Adapting the Methodology

The second component of specially designed instruction is adapting the methodology for students with visual impairments. There are two questions that need to be explored in regards to methodology:

1. What instructional strategies are needed for students to learn/access the content?
2. What materials need to be adapted or provided for the student to learn/access the content?

According to Holbrook and Rosenblum (2017, p. 205), while “the elements of the expanded core curriculum serve as the basis for what teachers of students with visual impairments teach...the instructional strategies and materials the teachers use to instruct students with visual impairments are also unique.” Therefore, adapting the methodology, including instructional strategies and materials, should to be addressed in the IEP.

Adapting instructional strategies

The ARD committee needs to address the unique instructional strategies that may be required for the student to access both the general curriculum and the expanded core curriculum. Some examples of specific instructional strategies that may be required for a student to access the general curriculum are:

- The TVI may need to pre-teach concepts because the classroom will be addressing concepts that the child has not observed (i.e. what birds look like when they are sitting vs when they are flying)
- The student may need hand under hand instruction or may need to touch and examine objects being shown in the classroom
- The student may need to sit at a specific place in the room to reduce glare, use their peripheral vision or move closer to the focal point of the instruction
- The student may need additional time to complete assignments because of visual fatigue or slow reading of braille material

In addition, after the ARD committee reviews the ECC assessment data and determines the priority goals for the student, the IEP will need to address what specific instructional strategies are needed to access/learn these goals. Some examples of instructional strategies that may be needed for the ECC curriculum are:

- A student who does not learn through incidental learning because of limited sight, may require instruction in a community setting rather than in an on-campus setting to develop orientation and mobility skills, career education, social skills, etc.
- The instructional sequence of learning technology may need to be revised so that the instruction meets the needs of an auditory or tactile learner.
- The instructional strategies for teaching social skills may need to be adapted because of the student's classroom setting, age or visual impairment.

One specific instructional strategy that may need to be adapted is whether the student will need technology to access the curricula. Does the student require assistive technology (AT) to participate in the instructional process? Does the student require AT to meet the expectations of the IEP goals and objectives? “Technology is critical for individuals with visual impairments....Technology is used to access information, communicate, increase productivity, and organize information” (Kamei-Haman, Lee & Presley, 2017, p. 613).

The IEP will need to address whether the student needs low tech, high tech or optical devices to access both curricular areas. Does the student require a laptop with accessible features, an electronic braille or something as simple as a braille ruler? The list of assistive technologies that may be required for students with visual impairments can be extensive. Sometimes the TVI must

work together with the LEA AT team and the school technology specialist to devise a plan that will be functional for the student as well as conducive to the classroom setting.

In addition, many students with visual impairments require a low vision evaluation by an Optometrist who specializes in prescribing optical devices such as magnifiers, telescopes, or specific CCTVs. These evaluations are the responsibility of the LEA to address the appropriate accommodations and instructional strategies for the student.

Technology is essential to the lives of people with visual impairments, yet “the ability to use technology does not come readily, and it requires specific attention” (Kamei-Haman, Lee & Presley, 2017, p. 613). Thus, the IEP team should document the student’s AT needs, devices, and instructional strategies as a part of specially designed instruction, related services, and/or supplementary aids and services.

Furthermore, in order for a student with visual impairments to access and learn the curriculum, the TVI will need to work with the classroom teachers to assure the curriculum is presented in a way that the student can understand it. All instructional strategies that need be adapted to meet the individual needs of the student, should be addressed in the IEP as part of the student’s specially designed instruction.

Adapting instructional materials

Another part of adapting the methodology is adapting the instructional materials. “Educational materials can be modified in three ways: visually, tactilely, and auditorily” (Holbrook & Rosenblum, 2017, p. 242). The functional vision evaluation in conjunction with the learning media assessment conducted by the TVI provide critical data for the ARD committee to determine these needs. Any required adaptation of instructional materials should be documented in the IEP as part of the student’s specially designed instruction. In addition, the IEP should indicate who will provide instruction in the use of the adapted materials/equipment.

Often students with low vision may use a combination of visual adaptations. “Visual adaptations are generally accomplished through:

- enlargement of materials [including magnification devices]
- electronic enlargement of text
- increased clarity and contrast
- increased illumination,
- decreased glare, and
- decreased visual clutter” (Holbrook & Rosenblum, 2017, p. 243).

Which visual adaptations are necessary, depends on the environment and educational requirements. For instance, sometimes it may be more efficient to use a magnification device to enlarge text, but at other times, it may be more effective to scan a document and enlarge it electronically.

For students who use their tactile sense for learning, materials may be adapted by:

- transcribing written materials into braille including text, handouts and tests
- providing tactile representation of maps, graphics and pertinent pictures
- providing three-dimensional models.

Even students who use their vision for some activities may find it more efficient to use their tactile sense for other tasks. Details in pictures can be difficult to see; thus, providing a 3-D model or a real object (when possible) may be needed for a student to explore and to truly understand all the details. For example, it is very difficult in a picture to discern the difference between a cat and a dog, such as that cats have whiskers. However, once the student tactually learns about this detail, the

student can use a magnification device to examine the picture and look for subtle details such as whiskers on a cat.

Of course, for students with little to no vision, tactile adaptations become critical to learn about even the simplest of objects or to read text. Therefore, knowing the student's best sensory learning modality is very important for a student with limited vision.

Besides adapting materials visually or tactilely some materials may need to be adapted auditorily. "The use of auditory materials is critical for the success of students with visual impairments, especially for large quantities of written materials that must be read in a short period of time" (Holbrook & Rosenblum, 2017, p. 246). Visual and tactile learners often have to supplement their learning using their auditory skills. They may use:

- auditory materials from sources such as:
 - Bookshare
 - Learning Ally
 - National Library Service
 - Books from the local library
- teacher recorded materials
- same classroom materials as their peers.

For some students to use their auditory skills effectively, they may need instruction and practice in using these auditory materials. Just because the student's sight is reduced, does not automatically mean the student is a proficient auditory learner.

After determining what materials need to be adapted, visually, tactilely or auditorily, the ARD committee also needs to include IEP goals and instructional time that may be necessary for the student to master the use of these adapted materials.

PART II

Adapting the Delivery of Instruction, O&M, Mainstreamed Students, Summary

Part I of this article focused on the first two components of specially designed instruction (SDI): Adapting the Content and Adapting the Methodology. Part II of this article will focus on the third component of SDI which is Adapting the Delivery of Instruction. In addition, a short paragraph regarding SDI and O&M will be addressed (a more detailed article is needed to fully address O&M) and information from the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook regarding services to student who are mainstreamed will be cited. Finally, this section of the article will summarize both Part I and Part II of this article.

Component III: Adapting the Delivery of Instruction

To address the third component of specially designed instruction related to adapting the delivery of instruction, this article will specifically focus on the unique needs of students with visual impairments in regards to the instructional arrangement of services from a TVI.

IDEA § 300.115 (a-b) indicates that:

Each public agency must ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services. The continuum required

in paragraph (a) of this section must include the alternative placements listed in the definition of special education under §300.39 (instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and

instruction in hospitals and institutions); and make provision for supplementary services (such as resource room or itinerant instruction)

to be provided in conjunction with regular class placement.

This IDEA requirement is true for all students with a disability including students with visual impairments because “students who are visually impaired comprise a diverse population in terms of age, cognitive abilities, and type of eye condition” (Levack, 1994, p. 6). Thus, instructional arrangements and services for students with visual impairments will vary depending on the identified least restrictive environment. In addition, “since placement must be reevaluated at least annually, it is likely that the placement for a particular student will change as the student’s needs, abilities, and strengths are appropriately addressed” (Lewis & Allman, 2017, p. 296).

Besides other identified specially designed instructional options such as settings, supports, and related services a student receives, the IEP should clearly indicate what type of services the student will receive from the TVI. Some students may need both TVI support in the form of direct instruction to focus on deficiencies in expanded core curricular areas and collaborative consultation to address identified content modifications/accommodations, and/or adapted instructional strategies and materials. Yet other students with visual impairments may not need direct services from a TVI, but will require collaborative consultation to assure all aspects of their IEPs are addressed in a way that benefits them.

Specially designed instruction from a TVI is critically important for students with visual impairments as so much of learning both instructionally and incidentally is based on visual information. “Students with visual impairments face unique challenges because of their limited access to incidental information gathered through casual observation...and challenges imposed by environmental (barriers) and societal barriers” (Wolffe, 2017, p. 146).

“Students who don’t have the benefit of incidental learning may require a different approach” (Sacks, 2016, p. 27). The TVI may need to assure the student has the same concepts regarding a topic as their peers with sight. Something as simple as that apples are different colors may not be addressed in the classroom as it would be assumed that all children know this from casual observation. However, a child with a visual impairment may need to be given the “opportunity to explore and taste the difference between red, green, or yellow apples” (Sacks, 2016, p. 27).

Also, sometimes students are limited by people’s perceptions. For instance, a PE teacher or an Art teacher may not want a student to participate in an activity because of safety concerns. The TVI can address these concerns by suggesting adaptations for the activity or providing appropriate resources so that the student can safely participate. Thus, the TVI is very important to assure the student can access/understand the educational curriculum.

Data of the student’s strengths and weaknesses from the comprehensive evaluation including the functional vision evaluation, learning media assessment and the expanded core curriculum assessment will assist the ARD committee in devising appropriate goals for the student in the two curricular areas. Then the committee identifies the least restrictive environment for the student and the type of specially designed instruction needed from the TVI:

1. Direct instruction and collaborative consultation or
2. Collaborative consultation.

In addition, the ARD committee determines the frequency and amount of TVI services that are needed for the student to make progress and be successful both in the general educational curriculum and in the expanded core curriculum.

The type and amount of services can vary depending on the students' needs. Some students will need:

1. Short term intensive direct service with collaborative consultation for integration
2. Ongoing direct service with collaborative consultation
3. Intermittent direct service with collaborative consultation or
4. Collaborative consultation

Notice that the first 3 options are a type of direct service but each one also includes collaborative consultation. If a student receives direct service from a TVI, the student should also receive collaborative consultation. Consultative assistance is needed to assure the accommodations in the IEP are effective and are being implemented appropriately to allow the student to make progress toward the IEP goals. The fourth option applies when a student may not require direct service, but still needs collaborative consultation. Let's examine these 4 specially designed service delivery options in more detail.

Short term intensive direct service with collaborative consultation

Sometimes students may need short term intensive direct service so that they can participate in the classroom activities. For instance, a student may already know how to use the computer keyboard but not know how to use the text to speech software that will be needed for a computer course. The student may require intensive service for a short time in order to master the software application prior to the course. Collaborative consultation should be included to assure the student learns what is needed for the course and to verify that guided practice is being provided/integrated by other service providers. The IEP should clearly reflect the amount of direct service and collaborative consultation that are needed including the frequency and duration of the service such as how many weeks are needed, how many sessions per week and the amount of time of each session.

Some other examples of when short term intensive direct service with collaborative consultation might be needed are to address:

- visual efficiency skills in authentic settings
- concept development so that student has an experiential and conceptual basis for learning
- new braille or Nemeth math code symbols that were not previously applicable for the curriculum.

Ongoing direct service with collaborative consultation

Ongoing direct service with collaborative consultation is frequently needed to teach the ECC and/or concept development such as:

- Braille reading and writing
- Abacus and Nemeth braille code
- Notetaking skills
- Assistive Technology
- Social skills
- Visual efficiency and low vision devices

Ongoing direct service usually will be from a daily to a weekly service depending on the intensity of the needs of the student, the ability of the student to receive guided practice between sessions and/or the student's ability to remember skills taught over a period of time. If a student needs to learn

a skill such as braille to be successful in the classroom then more frequent, intensive service is needed. Occasionally, a district may develop a resource room specifically for students with visual impairments when there are several students on the same campus with similar needs. The TVI is the main teacher during this daily resource time.

However, sometimes a student may only need weekly services. For instance, one way to address social skills is for the TVI to work with the student on a specific skill once a week and then collaborate with the other service providers to incorporate daily practice of the skill.

Intermittent direct service with collaborative consultation

Intermittent direct service including collaborative consultation is used:

- to provide generalization of mastered skills:
 - in different settings
 - with different people
- to address skills that may require:
 - classroom practice/implementation between sessions such as implementing a daily routine with a student who has significant delays
 - the student to complete activities between sessions such as transition activities (e.g. contacting a caseworker or transportation office)

Intermittent direct service may be delivered every other week or once a month. However, a student should not receive this type of infrequent service unless another service provider is consistently implementing the IEP goals. For instance, a TVI may work on a routine with a student several times during one week while simultaneously training the classroom service provider to implement the routine so that it can be consistently done on a daily basis. Then the TVI continues to provide consultation the following several weeks to determine if all elements of the routine are being implemented successfully. Afterwards another routine may be developed which requires direct services and collaborative consultation follow up.

Another scenario is if a TVI is working on transition skills with a Jr. high or high school student. The student may need to do some research or make multiple phone calls between sessions. In this case the student may receive direct service every other week or once a month.

Yet, even with this type of specially designed instruction, the IEP needs to clearly identify how much and how often the service will be delivered so that all parties understand the type and amount of service being delivered by the TVI as well as by other service providers. Furthermore, the IEP should indicate who will collect/report the data regarding the progress on the goals.

Collaborative consultation

Collaborative consultation is imperative for the success of a student with visual impairments. "Consistent communication with the classroom team is vital in conveying information about how a student's learning relates to [the] visual impairment" (Erin, 2016, p. 91). "Consulting, when successful, and effective, is a method of providing robust services that involves frequent visits with the student and the educational team" (Chang, Kamei-Hannan, O'Connor, Toelle, 2017, p. 390). Collaborative Consultation entails:

1. Assisting school personnel
2. Locating, providing and coordinating appropriate resources and materials
3. Being a liaison with parents or community resources.

Assisting school personnel

Assisting school personnel can vary from frequent in-class observations and discussions with classroom teachers to coordination between teachers and related service providers. A TVI might assist school personnel with:

- developing an integrated IEP to enhance student's classroom functioning
- understanding and adjusting accommodations/adaptations/modifications
- interpreting eye medical reports
- understanding student's visual impairment and unique educational implications
- developing routines to include multi-sensory activities
- developing visual efficiency within daily routines
- understanding and infusing ECC skills into daily activities
- arranging the physical environment for visual/auditory/tactile access.

It is vital for the TVI to have time to collaborate with multiple team members and observe lessons for each student on the caseload in order to assure that appropriate instructional techniques are being implemented and accessible materials are provided in a timely manner.

Locating, providing and coordinating appropriate resources and materials

The TVI also spends a great deal of time assessing the immediate classroom needs of the student and locating/procuring specific resources so that the student can access and participate in required educational activities. In addition, the TVI must adapt materials or locate similar materials, to those used in the classroom, that the student can tactually explore or see. These tasks have been compounded by the use of digital materials that frequently are not accessible and by the fact that many LEAs no longer use state adopted textbooks which are available in braille or large print.

Other types of resources/materials that a TVI may assist with procuring are:

- American Printing House materials
- large print materials and equipment
- braille materials
- adaptive equipment/software and technology
- braille, large print or auditory textbooks
- low vision devices.

Being a liaison with parents and/or community resources

Because "families are the guiding force behind all life decisions for the child or youth with visual impairments" (TSBVI, n.d.), the TVI must maintain a healthy connection with the families of their students. TVIs assist parents in understanding their child's abilities and to set long range goals. As skills in the expanded core curriculum are learned, it is important that these skills are generalized to the home setting whenever applicable and possible. In addition, the TVI can assist parents in navigating the many community resources and programs that are available to children with visual impairments.

This type of collaborative consultation may take on many forms such as:

- Assisting parents in understanding child's abilities/progress
- Assisting parents in generalizing skills at home
- Connecting parents with community resources such as:
 - Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
 - Texas Workforce Commission
 - Texas Health and Human Services Commission
 - Programs from other agencies such as Regional Education Service Centers or Lighthouse for the Blind

So, as you can see that the specially designed instructional service of collaborative consultation is equally important to the success of students with visual impairments as direct service. Furthermore, collaborative consultation can take the same, or frequently, more time than planning and delivering direct service. In fact, if you examine the caseloads of a TVI, both for ARDed consultation time and other time spent on behalf of the student, you will find this may exceed all the time spent on direct services. Lewis and Allman (2017) indicate that “consultation does not necessarily imply limited time commitment....Time is needed to:

- Become acquainted with the student and the family
- Understand the student’s complex needs,
- Learn about the student’s educational environment
- Meet with other team members for planning, explaining unique learning experiences... evaluating the impact of interventions” (p. 289).

Therefore, it is incorrect to believe that collaborative consultation is not as effective as direct instruction or that it takes less time. Collaborative consultation is as valuable to student success as direct service and can require the same or more time than ongoing services. Thus, both direct intervention and collaborative consultation may equally be a part of a student’s specially designed instruction.

Orientation and Mobility Services

While this article mainly has focused on the unique instructional arrangement of TVI services, there is another distinctive type of specially designed instruction that students with visual impairments may require which is typically identified as the related service of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training. This service is for students with visual impairments who need assistance in learning to negotiate their environment safely and efficiently. O&M is provided in much the same way as TVI services. Instructional strategies and materials may need to be adapted. The student also can receive both direct service and collaborative consultation.

Some final thoughts regarding mainstreamed students

One area that frequently causes confusion for LEAs is understanding the specially designed instruction for a student that is mainstreamed. Hopefully this training has assisted with this analysis. In addition, the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook also provides guidance in this regard.

4.7.10 Code 40 - Special Education Mainstream

This instructional setting code is used for a student who is provided special education and related services in the general education classroom in accordance with the student’s IEP. The term “special education” means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. “Specially designed instruction” means content, methodology, or delivery of instruction that has been adapted, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, to:

- address the unique needs that result from the child’s disability
- ensure access of the child to the general curriculum.

Examples of special education and related services provided to a student in the mainstream instructional setting include, but are not limited to,

- **direct instruction,**
- helping teacher,
- team teaching,
- co-teaching,

- **special materials or equipment,**
- **consultation with the student and his or her general classroom teacher(s),**
- **staff development,**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpreter, • education aides, • curricular or instructional modifications or accommodations, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and reduction of ratio of students to instructional staff members....
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4.7.10.1 Requirements

For a student to be coded with an instructional setting code of 40 (special education mainstream), the student must have:

- special education and related services provided in a general education classroom **on a regularly scheduled basis;**
- an **IEP** specifying the special education and related services that enable the student to access the general curriculum and to make progress toward individual goals and objectives; **and**
- certified special education personnel involved in the implementation of the student's IEP through the provision of **direct, indirect, and/or support services:**
 - to the student in the general education classroom and/or
 - in collaboration with the student's general education classroom teacher(s) (TEA, 2018, p. 106).

So, all three specially designed instructional components that have been discussed previously also apply to students who are mainstreamed. If they require adaptation of the content (general or ECC), the methodology (instructional strategies or materials) and delivery of instruction (such as services from a TVI), then the student is a special education student who requires specially designed instruction.

Nevertheless, the Student Attendance Accounting Handbook also clarifies that just checking in on a student is NOT specially designed instruction.

Monitoring student progress in and of itself does **not** constitute a special education service. If certified special education personnel are **only monitoring** student progress, **mainstream special education funding must not be generated.** In order to report this instructional arrangement, document the details of the specially designed instruction that is being provided in the student's IEP (TEA, 2018, p. 106).

Thus, there must be an IEP with goals and documented specially designed instruction including the type and amount of services from the TVI. Furthermore, the goal cannot be that the student will "Meet 70% of the TEKS" as this is not specially designed instruction. Students who do not need support from a TVI or other specially designed instruction may need to be considered for 504 services.

Summary

Specially designed instruction for all students who require special education services includes adapting the content, the methodology and/or the delivery of instruction. However, students with visual impairments have some unique IEP considerations that may not be inherently in other students' programs. First, the ARD committee must consider two content areas: general curriculum and the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments. Second, the ARD committee must address adapting the methodology of instructional strategies and materials so that the student may access the curricula visually, tactilely and/or auditorily. Third, the type and amount of support from a TVI (and other related service providers such as Orientation and Mobility specialist) needs to

be documented as part of adapting the delivery of instruction. Thus, if a student with a visual impairment needs specially designed instruction in any of the following areas, the student needs special education services.

<p>Expanded Core Curriculum to meet unique needs of students with VI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensatory or functional academic skills, including communication modes • Orientation and mobility • Social interaction skills • Independent living skills • Recreation and leisure skills • Career education • Use of assistive technology • Sensory efficiency skills • Self-determination 	<p>Access to the General Curriculum:</p> <p>Adapting Methodology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional strategies including AT • Adapting materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ visual adaptations ◦ tactile adaptations <p>auditory adaptations</p>	<p>Adapting Delivery of Instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Settings and services • TVI support • O&M support
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Each component of the student's specially designed instruction must be clearly documented in the IEP so that everyone on the educational team, including the parents, understand what special education services are required for the student to be successful and make continued progress.



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