

# Making sense of it all...



has compiled a resource outlining the definition and scope of educational approaches currently in place for ALL students who struggle.

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## Special Education Key Concepts and Terms

*The following systems are intended to pro-actively identify and remediate skill gaps for students who demonstrate need but who have not been diagnosed with a disability.*

**Response to Intervention (RtI)** - a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both.

**Tier I Instruction** - high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided by qualified personnel to ensure that their difficulties are not due to inadequate instruction. All students are screened on a periodic basis to establish an academic and behavioral baseline and to identify struggling learners who need additional support.

**Tier II Instruction** - increasingly intensive instruction matched to students needs due to inadequate progress in the regular classroom on the basis of levels of performance and rates of progress. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and level of training of the professionals providing instruction or intervention.

**Tier III Instruction** - individualized, intensive interventions that target the students' skill deficits. Students who do not achieve the desired level of progress in response to these targeted interventions are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation and considered for eligibility for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004).

*The following statutes are part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and are intended to protect and ensure the free and appropriate education of students with diagnosed disabilities that affect their learning.*

**Special Education** - specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including— (i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (ii) Instruction in physical education.

**Individual Education Program (IEP)** - a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with specific IDEA requirements.

**Least Restrictive Environment** - to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

**Section 504** - a part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination based upon disability. Section 504 is an anti-discrimination, civil rights statute that requires the needs of students with disabilities to be met as adequately as the needs of the non-disabled are met.

*The following include Instructional Approaches to help teachers design effective instruction for all.*

**Differentiated Instruction** - an approach to teaching that advocates active planning and tailoring *instruction* for student differences in classrooms by altering the **content, process, products, or learning environment**.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** - set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone--not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.

**Accommodation** - a change made by an educator regarding **how** a student accesses material.

**Modification** - a change made by an educator regarding **what** a student is taught or expected to learn.

## Sources and Resources

- [Key Special Education Terms](#)
- [RtI Network](#)
- [UDL Center](#)
- [Differentiated Instruction](#)
- [Understood: Educational Strategies](#)

