

add*Ed Research

What does the past research on curriculum for students with significant support needs look like?

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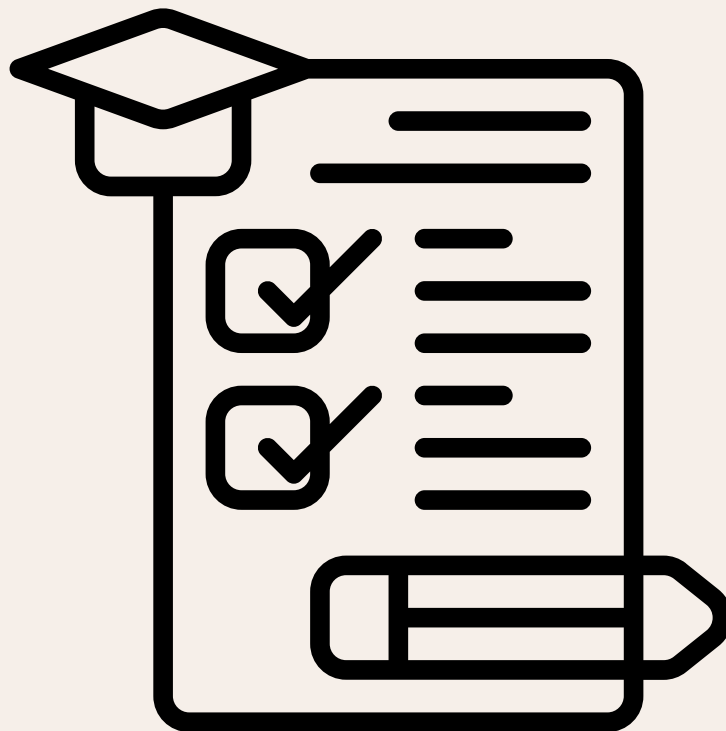
Summary

The curriculum presented to students with intellectual disability can have long lasting effects on pivotal skill development. This systematic review was used to examine the status and trends of curricular research that focused on the content of instruction for students with moderate and severe intellectual disabilities from 1996-2010. Findings from the assessment of the representation, foci, methods, and educational environments highlighted in past research can help to determine what future research is needed to help build the field.



Method

- Examined ten key journals from 1996-2010 that met predetermined criteria
- Curriculum articles were identified and categorized by focus, research methodology, and curricular context (e.g., inclusive or specialized classroom placement).



Method

Curricular focus categories included:

- 1. Functional life skills – Address self-help, community, and vocational preparation and training as well as recreation, health and safety, and leisure skills.**
- 2. Interactions – Intend to enhance interactions of individuals with their peers without disabilities.**
- 3. Communication – Emphasize expressive, receptive, augmentative, and alternative communication.**
- 4. Sensorimotor – Focus on building and maintaining purposeful sensorimotor skills.**
- 5. Cognitive-academic – Address cognitive development and skill building in traditional academic subjects**
- 6. Mixed – Articles with two or more of the seven categories listed**
- 7. Other – Articles that did not clearly fit one of the above criteria**



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Findings

1. The curricular journals published in the fifteen years prior to this systematic review primarily focused on functional life skills. This study found a significant increase in focus on the cognitive academic category.

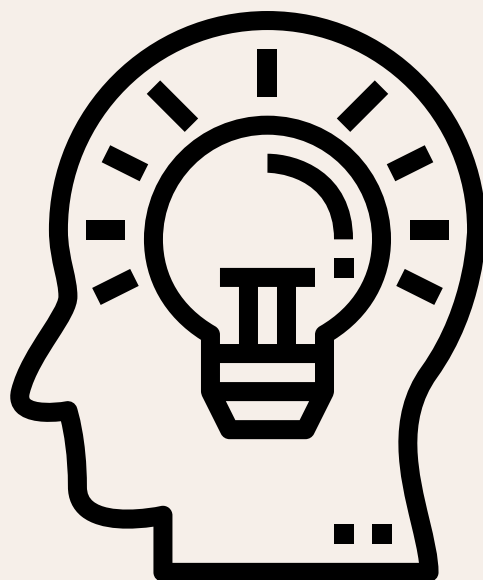
2. The articles primarily used quantitative and non-data-based methods of study



Findings

3. Several journals did not clearly list the educational context of focus or were not specific to a singular context

4. Curricular articles represented a very small portion (2%) of the overall journal literature



Educators Take-Aways

Throughout the years 1996 to 2010 there was an expansion in the knowledge base of curricular research for students with disabilities. This current study shows a continuation of this trend as well as a significant increase in research attention to academic curricular content for students with moderate and severe intellectual disability. For the classroom, this means that now, more than ever, access to such classroom-relevant research is within reach for teachers and can be used to inform and improve practice as well as the learning opportunities for students with extensive support needs.

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Research on Curriculum for Students with Moderate and Severe Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review

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Abstract: Curriculum content is an essential component of the field of special education for students with moderate and severe disabilities. This study updates the twenty-year curriculum content review by Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Curtin, and Shrikanth (1997) and provides an overview of the last 15 years of research on this topic. A hand search of ten relevant journals within the field was conducted to identify and categorize the research on curriculum content for students with moderate and severe intellectual disability. Results indicate a very low percentage of the research literature focused on curriculum content for this population. Curricular articles published in the past fifteen years primarily focused on functional life skills, with a recent increase in cognitive academics. The articles consist mainly of quantitative methods and non-data based studies. Over half did not clearly list the educational context of focus. Implications of these findings for the education of students with moderate and severe intellectual disability and directions for future research are discussed.

Shurr, J., & Bouck, E. C. (2013). Research on Curriculum for Students with Moderate and Severe Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review. Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 48(1), 76–87.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23879888>

