



Group for Optimizing Leadership in Delivering Services

Universal Design



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DEFINITION



Universal prevention-to-intervention program to promote accessibility for all by re-designing or adapting the learning environment, including the physical and social settings



Embedded within tier 1 type of interventions

This principle is one of the 10 evidence-based principles, identified in a scoping review, that can guide the organization and delivery of services for students with disabilities in integrated classrooms.

Examples

Integrating a set of policies, procedures and activities to promote health for students with social, emotional, educational and health-related problems (Henry et al., 2005)

Universal intervention programs targeting the behavioural skills of the whole classroom for students aged 4 to 5 (Han et al., 2005)

Prevention-to-intervention supports, such as modifying helping routines of caregivers and the physical environment of the home and classroom, to accommodate the physical and behavioural needs of students (Bagnato et al., 2004)

Evidence & Outcome

In combination with other principles, universal design:

Facilitates equal and efficient access to services within a Partnering for Change model (Missiuna et al., 2015)

Improves social skills and behaviours in pre-school students as rated by their teachers (Han et al., 2005)

Enables higher academic achievements and decreases number of office referrals for discipline for primary and high school students (McIntosh et al., 2011)

Application Ideas

Providing training and educational workshops for school professionals on how to make learning accessible to all students and on improving classroom management

Setting aside planning time to adapt materials and resources to ensure that they are accessible to all students

Making the playground, library, cafeteria, bus stop accessible for all