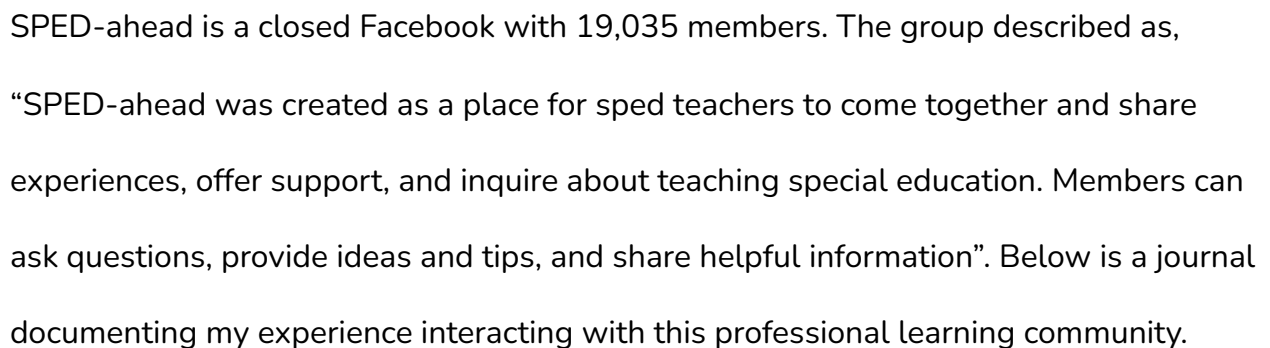




Today, I attempted to join the closed facebook group Sped-ahead. The first step I had in doing this was to complete the following questions. I am hopeful that I will be able to gain access to this group soon.

## Answer Questions



### SPED ahead

Closed group · 19035 Members

Your membership is pending approval. Answer these questions from the group admins to help them review your membership. Only the admins and moderators will see your answers.

#### What do you teach? ...

I teach grades 6, 7, 8, as a Special Education Teacher. Currently I provide support to students through both co-taught classes and pull-out intervention groups.

#### What do you hope to gain from collaborating with other sped teachers? ...

I feel that collaboration is a powerful tool for educators. I hope to share ideas and resources to better support the students in my classroom. I am also currently completing a Master's Program hope to utilize this group as a resource.

#### Are you a student pursuing a career in special education? ...

I am currently a special education teacher

Submit



### SPED ahead

19K members · 10+ posts a day

SPED-ahead was created as a place for sped teachers to come together and share experiences, offer support, and inquire abo...

✓ Request sent

July 29, 2019

After sending my request to join SPED Ahead I received confirmation that I have been permitted to access this group. I was pleased to receive access so quickly after completing the initial questions. After gaining access to the group, I spent time exploring the different types of discussions, questions, and resources that are posted to this community. In my review, it became evident that many of the questions and posts

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were focused on teachers improving planning, instruction, and assessment practices for two main goals. The primary focus of the majority of the questions and posts on this group was heavily student-focused. The teacher often asks how they can adjust lessons or assessment practices in order to best meet the needs of an individual student. For example, there were posts on how to change classroom design in order to allow for more student self-advocacy in the classroom. There were also many questions focused on helping teachers to remain compliant with Special Education Law and regulation from a US perspective. For example, there were resources posted on how to write IEP goals that align with common core state standards. There were also resources on completing the assistive technology assessment. I look forward to continuing to explore the posts, questions, and discussions in this group. I also look forward to sharing insights from this course in order to engage in this PLC.

### August 5, 2019

Today I made my first post to Sped Ahead. I wanted to reach out to the community to get additional ideas, resources, and strategies for co-teaching.



**Chelsea Horsburgh**

New Member · Just now

I am currently a Middle School Sped teacher. As part of my role, I co-teach classes in order to help all students to access grade level content. I am always looking to improve my co-teaching practices in terms of planning, instructional delivery, and assessment. For teachers working to support students through a co-taught model, what do you do to allow for efficient co-teaching and what are your must have resources?

---

**August 6, 2019**

Within a day of posting my first question to the group, I was excited to see that I had multiple responses to my question. I appreciated that the responses were focused on classroom application and how to build and foster a co-taught classroom.

I am currently a Middle School Sped teacher. As part of my role, I co-teach classes in order to help all students to access grade level content. I am always looking to improve my co-teaching practices in terms of planning, instructional delivery, and assessment. For teachers working to support students through a co-taught model, what do you do to allow for efficient co-teaching and what are your must have resources?



1

8 Comments



Like



Comment



**Kristen Leann** Station/group teaching is a MUST. It leverages the power of two teachers. My co-teachers and I set up rotations so that we both see all students through out the week. We start every lesson with stations.

Like · Reply · 1d



**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🌟 Thank you for sharing this idea Kristen, I love the idea of setting up a schedule so that both teachers see all students each week!

Like · Reply · 20m



**Jaime Boyette** Good communication with gen ed teachers. Ensure students know you are a teacher too! Teachers know students accommodations to ensure that students getting what they need.

Like · Reply · 1d



**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🌟 I start a new school year next year, this is a great reminder of setting the tone early in the year that both teachers are resources for EVERY student in the class. How have you found to be the most effective way of sharing student documentation early ... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 15m



**Carolyn Krapfl** No matter how or what you teach both teachers need to have the same e expectations and routines. I have cotaught with a few different teachers and we have done everything from stations to tag team and as long as we keep everything consistent the classes run smoothly

Like · Reply · 23h

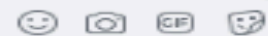


**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🌟 Thank you for this reminder. I agree that consistency is key to helping create clear expectations for students.

Like · Reply · 15m



Write a reply...



**Katelinn MW** Talk with your co-teacher before school starts to establish procedures, routines, and expectations. You need to be on the same page with how the classroom will run. It's easy to accidentally cause a rift if you aren't on the same page. For example, a c... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 23h



**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🌟 Katelinn, you bring up a great point. I think it is essential that co-teachers work together to establish norms and routines in the classroom. Another thing I have noticed is key is to set up a regular time to meet and plan to ensure that both teachers are on the same page.

Like · Reply · 14m



Write a reply...



---

**August 7, 2019**

Today I posed another question to the Sped-ahead group. One question I was interested to discuss is how Sped teachers can work to create IEP's that support the development of 21-century skills. From our earlier readers one quote that resonated with me was from McMillan (2014), "If you want to achieve 21st century knowledge, skills, and dispositions, you must teach and assess in alignment with what we know about how children and adolescents learn and what motivates them" (p.4). Through these modules I have wondered how I can work to improve my curriculum design and assessment practices to help students develop 21-century skills I hoped that the members of this group would respond to my question and provide further resources and clarity about 21-century skills development in Special Education. I also hoped that responses to this question would allow me to further investigate the best way to educate participants in my professional community about conceptions of curriculum, educational philosophies, curricular designs, planning, instruction, and evaluation. My hope was that responses to this question will help give me a better idea of the best format to present my learning.



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Today, I also responded to other posts and questions in the Sped-ahead group:

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**Patricia Orantes**  
8 hrs

I am planning on starting the first day of school with centers and get them used to rotating... is anyone starting centers the first Day and if you are, what do you plan on doing during ELA and math center rotations? I'm in a self contained class grades 3-5.

 1

4 Comments

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 Like

 Comment

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**Brittany West** I do procedures for 2 weeks. I just put busy work at centers they would typically learn at!

Like · Reply · 8h

 3

 1 Reply

**Sarah Williams** I do procedure activities and getting to know you activities while also letting them practice rotations

Like · Reply · 27m

**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🖐️ I agree that it is essential to help students to learn routines and procedures early in the year. At the start of the year, I also try to incorporate games and activities that can help begin to build the classroom community. Last year I used a few of these icebreakers from Cult of Pedagogy. They were easy to prep and highly engaging: <https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/classroom-icebreakers/> ...

**CULTOFPEDAGOGY.COM**  
Icebreakers that Rock

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · 1m



**August 8, 2019**

Today I responded to two posts in the group.



**Kelly Anne** shared her first post.

New Member · 9 hrs

Is scheduling the bane of anyone else's existence? I have a good class schedule but trying to get my para's lunches and two 15 minute breaks each without leaving kids unsupported is killing me! I know it always works out but scheduling is one of my least favorite parts of this job.

34

47 Comments

Like

Comment

View 25 more comments



**Susan Ashe** I would pay somebody to do this. Mine usually takes until Dec to sort itself out

Like · Reply · 16m

1



**Chelsea Horsburgh** Scheduling is so time-consuming. Some years I have had scheduled paras for a 45-minute lunch and a 15-minute break to limit the number of transitions needed throughout the day. When drafting a schedule I also find it helpful to write it on post-it note... [See More](#)

Like · Reply · 5m

1



**Kelly Anne** **Chelsea Horsburgh** unfortunately I can't schedule 45 minute breaks, it all has to be separate. My main thing is that I see ALL the flaws haha I need to learn that it just is what it is and that we always survive

Like · Reply · 1m



**Chelsea Horsburgh** It is incredibly challenging to build a schedule that balances the needs of teachers, paras, and students. I agree that it is essential to remind yourself that you're doing your very best to meet the needs of everyone in your classroom.

Like · Reply · 1m



---

**Kacie Lee**  
10 hrs

Good chapter books to read aloud with 4th and 5th graders??

 230 Comments

 Like Comment

View 25 more comments

**Barbara Blevins Grossman** Goblins in the Castle is one of my favorites.  
Like · Reply · 1h  1

**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🖐️ Some of my favorites are Rules by Cynthia Lord, Belly Up by Stuart Gibbs, Restart by Gordon Korman, The Wishing Spell (The Land of Stories, #1)  
Like · Reply · 1m

## August 9, 2019

Today I received three responses to my question regarding 21-century learning in Special Education. When I read the first question on my post, I felt incredibly discouraged as it was neither kind nor constructive. The other two comments were constructive but also limited. I was hopeful that my question would initiate more dialogue among the members of this group.


**Chelsea Horsburgh**  
 🌿 New Member · August 7 at 9:01 PM

What should Special Education teachers know and do to design IEP goals and instruction that supports students in developing 21st-century skills? How do you work to help students develop transferable skills, including critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, communication, growth mindsets, and self-advocacy?

3 Comments

 Like
  Comment

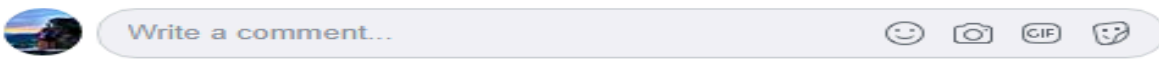

**Jes Ford** This reads like a textbook essay question for a college course I recently took 😊
 

 4

 Like · Reply · 2d


**Michelle Lyon Bragg** Look at individual skills, determine which skills need to be increased, and work on those.
 Like · Reply · 2d


**Jessica Bratsch** I wonder if checking your state's SEL standards would be helpful.
 Like · Reply · 2d



August 10, 2019

Today I received notification that I have been recognized as a “conversation starter” in the Sped-ahead group.



**You're a Conversation Starter**

You're great at making posts that people find valuable. Your conversation starter badge will show up next to your name on comments and posts.

[See How Your Badge Looks](#)

---

Today I added to a conversation on breathing posters for self-regulation.

**Brenda Yarrison**  
☕ Conversation Starter · August 11 at 9:05 AM

Anyone have any calming breathing posters that they can share? I will only print them 8 1/2 by 11. Would like to see ones that don't have printed directions. Thanks!

 Like  
 Loading...

 1 1 Comment

 Like  Comment

**Chelsea Horsburgh** ☕ There are some great ones in the Zones of Regulation book. <http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html>



**ZONESOFREGULATION.COM**  
**The Zones of Regulation: A Concept to Foster Self-Regulation & Emotional...**

Like · Reply · Remove Preview · 2d

Based on my responses to questions I have posted and other responses in this group today, I worked to create a post to share my learning about curriculum design, conceptions of curriculum and educational philosophy with Sped-ahead. Based on my interactions with this group, I decided to use the Popplett that I created with Ashley in module two and three to create a more simplified document as a “quick reference guide” to share ideas about conceptions of curriculum, educational philosophies, and curriculum designs. I decided not to post the entire Popplett as I thought it may be overwhelming to group members. I wanted to create a document which would allow Special Education teachers to quickly ground themselves in research about conceptions of curriculum, philosophy and curriculum design.

[Curriculum Design Quick Reference Guide](#)



**Chelsea Horsburgh** uploaded a file.

New Member · Just now

As a Sped teacher, I have often found myself overwhelmed with the process of designing, implementing and collecting data for effective and meaningful IEPs. This Summer I had the opportunity to take a course which allowed me to re-examine my educational philosophy and curricular design approaches. Through this process, I found that I have a learner-centered approach which exists within the confines of a subject-centered approach. I believe it is my role to help each individual student grow and learn by harnessing that individuals strengths, needs, and interests. I also realize that much of what I do as a teacher is grounded in a subject-centered curriculum design principle as I spend a great deal of time examining a standards-based approach to education.

I found the process of re-examining my educational philosophy and curriculum design to be enlightening as I prepare to enter a new school year. I have attached a document which highlights the different conceptions of curriculum, educational philosophies, and curriculum designs. I would greatly appreciate feedback on this document and to know:

- What are educational philosophies do you relate to?
- What principals of curriculum design do you use?
- How do you create IEP's that meet individual needs and align to Standards?



**Curriculum Design Quick Reference Guide.pdf**  
PDF



Like

Comment

**August 11, 2019**

Today I was pleasantly surprised to see 10 comments and 27 likes on my latest post where I shared my, "Curriculum Design Quick Reference Guide". I was really happy to hear that many of the group members found the resource useful. For example, "Thank you. This is why I joined Sped-ahead". While I did not receive any responses to the questions I proposed it was highly motivating to see that people found the resource I created as a useful tool in their practice



Chelsea Horsburgh uploaded a file.

Conversation Starter · August 10 at 11:42 PM

As a Sped teacher, I have often found myself overwhelmed with the process of designing, implementing and collecting data for effective and meaningful IEPs. This Summer I had the opportunity to take a course which allowed me to re-examine my educational philosophy and curricular design approaches. Through this process, I found that I have a learner-centered approach which exists within the confines of a subject-centered approach. I believe it is my role to help each individual...

[See More](#)



Curriculum Design Quick Reference Guide.pdf

PDF



27

12 Comments



Like



Comment



Miranda Nelson Thank you for this!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



1



Alma Abdelaziz-Nunez Thank you for this great resource!

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Jackie Nellessen Thank you. 😊

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Jennifer Ammons Elizondo F

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Shannon Medeck-Smith Following

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Tammy Shern-Baker Thank you. This is why I joined Sped Ahead.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Dawna Bybee Will look at it more when I get home

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Amanda-Casey Jones Following

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Heather Danna ...

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



LaRue Allee Following

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d



Alise Gay F

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d

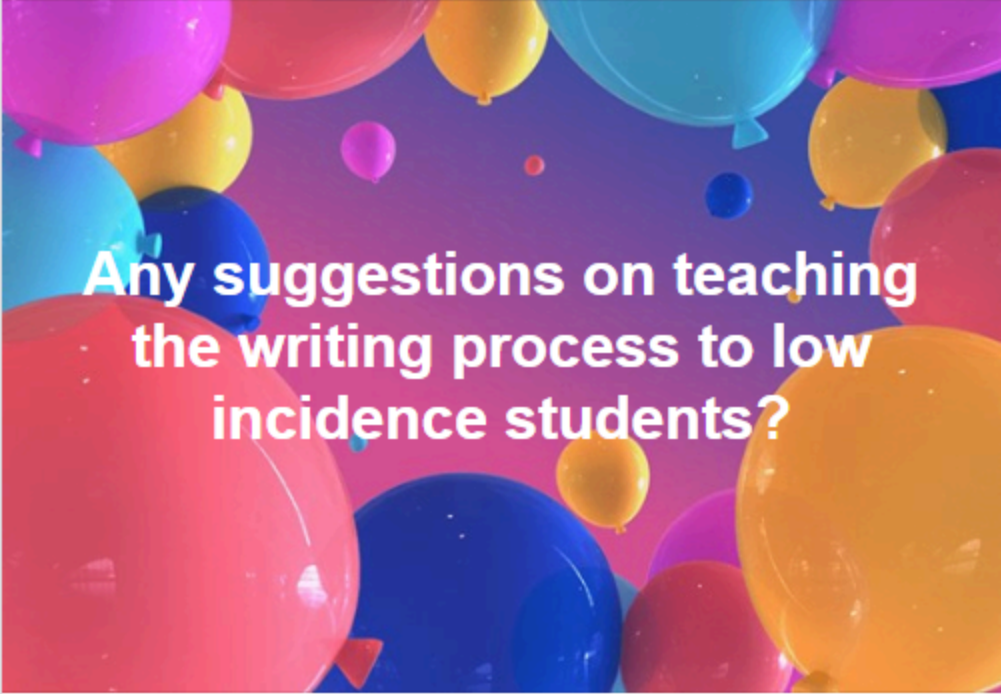


Bethanie Blesing Cody F

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 1d

Today I also responded to a few other posts in the group.

**Renatta Mack**  
19 hrs



**Any suggestions on teaching the writing process to low incidence students?**

 7 29 Comments

 Like  Comment

[View 19 more comments](#)

**Dana Beth** Write from the Beginning (incorporates thinking maps).  
Like · Reply · 8h

**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🍷 I have had success with Up the Ladder by Lucy Calkins. <https://www.heinemann.com/products/e09658.aspx> I work in a school that has adopted the Writing Workshop model. I like that I am able to teach students to write narrative, information, and opinion pieces. The lessons provide foundational writing strategies through content, topics, and mentor texts.  
Like · Reply · 3m · Edited



**Kristine Bautista**

August 10 at 8:11 PM

Good morning and happy new school year to you! We have a few in-service/PD days before the students return. Does anyone happen to have creative ideas as to what you have IA's work on to prepare for the new year? Also, what communication systems or routines do you establish with your IA's (i.e. weekly check-ins, share IEP info and BIP's, share Google Calendar, etc?)? Thank you in advance.

1 Comment



Like



Comment



**Chelsea Horsburgh** ☕ Hi Kristine, I think it is wonderful that you will get time to work with you IA's prior to the start of the school year. If you have time to work with your IA's I would suggest taking time to norm your expectations for different classroom activities and procedures. I think reviewing common behavior expectations and behavior management strategies can always be helpful. If your IA's take data it can also be a great time to norm how data is collected. One year I had my IA's learn how to do running records. I was able to create slides and use videos to help norm our data collection for reading. At the beginning of the year, it can also be helpful to get help with copying, cutting, and laminating. As for communication I usually send out a weekly email to update the IA's about any important events or schedule changes. If you have time I think it can also be helpful to have regularly scheduled meetings to review IEP's and other classroom procedures. Best of luck to you in your upcoming school year!

Like · Reply · 1m

**August 12, 2019**

Today I received feedback on the response I posted to a question on Sped-ahead. I was pleased to see that the information I shared was well-received.



**Kristine Bautista**

August 10 at 8:11 PM

Good morning and happy new school year to you! We have a few in-service/PD days before the students return. Does anyone happen to have creative ideas as to what you have IA's work on to prepare for the new year? Also, what communication systems or routines do you establish with your IA's (i.e. weekly check-ins, share IEP info and BIP's, share Google Calendar, etc?)? Thank you in advance.

2 Comments



Like



Comment



**Chelsea Horsburgh** 🍷 Hi Kristine, I think it is wonderful that you will get time to work with you IA's prior to the start of the school year. If you have time to work with your IA's I would suggest taking time to norm your expectations for different classroom activities and procedures. I think reviewing common behavior expectations and behavior management strategies can always be helpful. If your IA's take data it can also be a great time to norm how data is collected. One year I had my IA's learn how to do running records. I was able to create slides and use videos to help norm our data collection for reading. At the beginning of the year, it can also be helpful to get help with copying, cutting, and laminating. As for communication I usually send out a weekly email to update the IA's about any important events or schedule changes. If you have time I think it can also be helpful to have regularly scheduled meetings to review IEP's and other classroom procedures. Best of luck to you in your upcoming school year!

Like · Reply · 20h



**Kristine Bautista** Thank you so much Chelsea! This is all so very helpful!

Like · Reply · 20h



---

## Final Reflections

When I first began this process, I hoped to find a PLC that would afford me the opportunity to share my learning about conceptions of curriculum, educational philosophies, curricular designs, planning, instruction, and evaluation. I also hoped to see how the curricular designs that I use in my classroom are similar or different than other Special Education Teachers within this group. By interacting with Sped Ahead I had aspired to have the opportunity to engage in meaningful with other Special Education teachers about best practices, resources, and teaching strategies. One area I was hoping to highlight in my interactions was about co-teaching. As I evaluate my progress toward the goals I set out I feel I was able to make measurable progress toward these goals. I was able to engage in multiple conversations with this group by posting my own questions or responding to posts other people had made. Overall, I felt that my interactions with Sped-Ahead were positive and provided me with a valuable group to receive feedback from and discuss concerns related to Special Education.

After interacting with this group I feel the strengths and areas of need of the group are:

| Strengths                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Areas of Needs                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Many active members</li><li>● Multiple posts daily</li><li>● Review of curriculum and resources from teachers using the materials</li><li>● Teachers willing to share personal experiences to help others learn</li><li>● Positive and inviting group</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Could use more research to support ideas</li><li>● Most members are from the USA and questions often relate to IDEA law</li></ul> |

- 
- |                                                                                |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quick responses to questions</li></ul> |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

In the future I plan to remain a member of the group Sped-ahead. I have enjoyed communicating with and seeing posts from Special Education teachers around the world. I have enjoyed the opportunity to expand my network of “job-alike” teachers who I can seek feedback from, voice concerns, and share ideas with.