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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report, July 2023

Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources

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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report July, 2023

Goal 1 Assessment: Assessment plays a foundational role in promoting inclusive education. It allows teachers to identify individual student’s strengths and needs. Inclusive teachers must be able to administer and analyze assessments to provide necessary services and develop individualized education programs. Not only do assessments help special educators identify the strengths and needs of their students, but they also help parents better understand the needs of their children. All PD and CoPs who conducted this study addressed various aspects of assessment.

Goal 2 Collaboration: For teachers, constantly working with a wide range of people—other teachers, school staff, families, and caregivers—is more than part of the job description. Working with these various groups and collaborating with them is essential and ultimately provides many inclusive benefits for the children we work to support. Implementing inclusive and collaborative practices builds effective relationships and creates a better understanding of all students’ needs, which allows everyone to be included and to succeed. All PD and CoPs conducted this year addressed various aspects of collaboration.

Goal 3 Instructional—Teachers should focus on inclusive learning goals, be explicit and flexible, and use various learning tools such as technology. When instruction is well-designed, strategic, and adaptable, teachers have the skills to improve inclusive student learning. All of the PD and CoPs conducted this year addressed various aspects of instruction.

October 2023 – June 2024 Professional Development Online Communities of Practice Update:

October 4th: Maine’s What Really Works for Inclusion Conference with 2Teach Global Strategies, tips, and practical techniques around high-leverage instructional practices and collaboration that work with diverse learners were shared with a sold-out group of Maine educators. Typically held in Los Angeles, California, for the first time the popular What Really Works in Education conference came to Maine in collaboration with MAIER and the Maine DOE. Teachers were engaged around high-leverage practices by national and international experts. Participants left with tips, tricks, and tools to add to their educational toolkit. Each attendee received a free copy of the 2023 book *Connecting High Leverage Practices to Student Success: Collaboration in Inclusive Classrooms* (Jenkins & Murawski).



Day One was a full-day workshop on “Co-Teaching 101.” Participants learned how to co-teach by watching two of the nation’s top experts and book authors model it! Teams at all grade levels were encouraged to attend. Day Two was conference-style, where participants could select from various topics. The day featured strategies on Collaboration and Inclusion for administrators, general and special education teachers, preservice educators, paraprofessionals, and related service personnel.

More than 250 educational professionals were in attendance.

<https://mainedoeneews.net/2023/08/15/what-really-works-in-education-2023-conference-high-leverage-practices-collaboration-for-inclusive-classrooms/>

November 2023 - Culturally Responsive and Inclusive Practices In STEM

Penn State University's Dr. Jonte' C. Taylor (JT), presented a 5-part online learning module series on Culturally Responsive Practices in Special Education. These sessions will provide well-structured content on different pedagogies and how teaching and learning can be conducted by developing strategies that promote environmental characteristics and principles for students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Participants will learn the importance of developing cultural practices in Special Education and how to provide intensive support for students regardless of dis/ability. These sessions will help the participant to develop action points and strategies necessary for incorporating cultural practices into the teaching and learning process.

Dr. Taylor also presented a live webinar on this content. 81 education professionals registered for the webinar, and 14 educators registered for the online asynchronous modules. 100% of attendees rated this content effective in delivering research-based content to support the achievement of diverse students of various abilities. In addition, 100% of participants rated the content as relevant to their professional development needs. Some quotes from attendees are, “I like how he broke supports down by needs level. *I enjoyed seeing the various types of accommodations that can help support students, regardless of ability.*”; “*I learned how to incorporate what I do into helping students learn in STEM classes. I also hope to share this knowledge with the support staff.*”

April 9th: Multilingual Speech and Language Development

This presentation gave participants an understanding of how multilingual people learn and develop in two or more languages. It covered multilingual development and expected interaction between the languages and their respective cultures, and it discussed myths and realities on bilingualism/multilingualism. The session will clarify different concepts that will describe bilingual/multilingual language development across all language domains, list ways there can be interaction between the languages (cross-linguistic influence) and cultures (cross-cultural interactions), and Identify myths about bilingualism/multilingualism. Desi Peña, MA, CCC-SLP (she/ella) is a bilingual speech-language pathologist who has worked with pediatric populations in Maine since 2018. Her clinical areas of interest are multilingual development and disorders,



culturally responsive evaluation and intervention, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Since 2020, she has served as a faculty mentor for the NH-ME LEND program and has presented on the topic of multilingualism to various agencies, and organizations and also at conferences, including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's National Convention.

13 educators attended this live webinar, also available on our MAIER website (recorded). 100% of participants rated the content as relevant to their professional development needs. Some quotes from attendees are, *“I learned that a good way to help Multi-Lingual or ELL learners is to look for resource in the school such as a person who speaks that language. I also learned about the importance of being prepared to help these students succeed. The second thing I learned that really stuck out to me were the amount of Myths and Facts about Multi-Lingual Learners. I will ensure that I look out for these as I continue my education and work as a teacher.”*; *“I was surprised at the number of multilingual households in the US. I realize that I am naive having come from a monolingual family. I appreciated the slides containing the myths, which helped me to have a better understanding. Multilingual and multicultural differences were not a topic heavily covered in graduate school for me, and I have only had a few children that needed evaluations since working as an SLP.”*

May 14: Multi-Tiered Systems of Support & The Role of the SLP

This presentation gave school-based participants ideas for including and re-envisioning the speech-language pathologist's role in the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) framework. SLPs know language and literacy and can be harnessed as crucial partners in the early identification of learning challenges. The session will expatiate on MTSS and identify the tiers of intervention, List ways and opportunities for SLPs to support teachers and interdisciplinary team members in the early identification of learning challenges, and identify ways to balance the SLP's role and responsibilities.

Desi Peña, MA, CCC-SLP (she/ella) is a bilingual speech-language pathologist who has worked with pediatric populations in Maine since 2018. Her clinical areas of interest are multilingual development and disorders, culturally responsive evaluation and intervention, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Since 2020, she has served as a faculty mentor for the NH-ME LEND program and has presented on the topic of multilingualism to various agencies, and organizations and also at conferences, including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's National Convention.

14 educators attended this live webinar, also available on our MAIER website (recorded). 100% of participants rated the content as relevant to their professional development needs. Some quotes from attendees are, *“The use of the tiered MTSS model and promoting language use for AAC users with software that can switch between languages.”*; *“Everything today was new resources for me today!”*



May 13th: Radical Inclusion: Deaf/HH member in Schools

This session provided high-level content on creating awareness and promoting inclusions through sign language among teachers and professionals in Maine. Participants will learn new strategies and inclusive approaches necessary for assisting students with deafness. The session will help the participant to develop action points and strategies necessary for the use of sign language among teachers, educators, and professionals in Maine. Regan A. Thibodeau, Ph.D, CDI, ASLTA: Master, NY: CST ASL, CLIP-R, ASLPI 4+, is the interim current coordinator of USM ITP. She is an outstanding ASL Professor and Interpreter at the University of Southern Maine. Regan has worked as a freelance Deaf Interpreter for 19 years in different geographic locations, taught ASL for 22 years at various school districts and colleges, including her alma mater- USM, and has traveled nationally and internationally, advocating for and educating others via presentations, to improve standards in the fields of Sign Language and Interpreting. For example, she joined a team in 2008 to present before the Congress of Peru the importance of recognizing and officializing the language of their Deaf Peruvians as an economic gain for the country, introduced to the Deaf Community the Deaf Interpreting career, as well as provided a workshop in pedagogy to its Sign Language teachers. A year later, she gave birth to her daughter, Sawyre Lin. Today, she continues to heavily advocate for Language as a Human Right (or Language Rights?) and recently submitted a bill, Kindergarten Readiness for Maine's Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind Children, for the 2019 Legislative Cycle in hopes of ending the prevalence of language deprivation.

11 educators attended this webinar, also available on our MAIER website (recorded). 100% of participants rated the content as relevant to their professional development needs. Some quotes from attendees are, *"Information shared really made me think about how to help support auditory with visuals (ex. Morning announcements, announcements on the intercom, communication in loud environments). Discussion about auditory exhaustion."*

May 16th: High Leverage Practice to Promote Inclusion for Students with IDD and Complex Needs

The sessions provided well-structured content on different pedagogies and how high-leverage practice to promote inclusion can be conducted by developing strategies that promote inclusiveness and principles for students with IDD and Complex Needs. Participants will learn new strategies and inclusive approaches for assisting students with IDD and Complex Needs and how to provide intensive support for students regardless of dis/ability. The session will help the participant develop action points and strategies for incorporating cultural practices into the teaching and learning process.

Robert Pennington, PhD BCBA-D, is the Director of the Center of Excellence on Inclusive Practice for the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence. He has over 30 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities, their families, and teachers. He has published over 90



articles, book chapters, and books on working with persons with ASD and intellectual disability. Monique Pinczynski is a first-generation doctoral student in special education at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. She was previously a classroom teacher in Henderson, NV, where she taught students with autism and extensive support needs as well as students with learning disabilities. Monique earned her B.S. and MEd. in Special Education at the University of Nevada Las Vegas and attained her Board Certified Behavior Analyst certification.

29 educators attended this live webinar. 100% of participants rated the content as relevant to their professional development needs. Some quotes from attendees include, “I like how he broke supports down by needs level. One attendee noted, *“I wish this was a full-day event rather than a 1-hour webinar!”*”

June 6th: Building Relationships with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD)

Families: This presentation provided participants with tools and ideas for building relationships with CLD families through the use of the Funds of Knowledge framework and cultural brokers. We will seek to understand what biases we may carry that may influence how we establish these new relationships and how to mitigate their influence. The session expatiated the ways that implicit bias may influence perceptions and beliefs about other cultures, Identified methods for recognizing and mitigating bias, Described the Funds of Knowledge framework, and defined the role of the cultural broker in establishing new relationships with families.

Desi Peña, MA, CCC-SLP (she/ella) is a bilingual speech-language pathologist who has worked with pediatric populations in Maine since 2018. Her clinical areas of interest are multilingual development and disorders, culturally responsive evaluation and intervention, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Since 2020, she has served as a faculty mentor for the NH-ME LEND program and has presented on the topic of multilingualism to various agencies, and organizations and also at conferences, including the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's National Convention.

Resource Hub via the MAIER website: <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>

Listserv, Newsletter, and Website Update:

Folder with all newsletters put out from October, 2022 through June, 2024 to our 866 contacts via MailChimp is [HERE](#). Overall, about 1/3 of the newsletters are opened (i.e., click rate), which is comparable to other not-for-profit peers. We have added 15 new subscribers/contacts to our listserv/newsletter since January 2023. Using pay-software like MailChimp has increased our ability to release the newsletter more effectively and efficiently, and is more visually appealing to the readers. Using MailChimp has also helped us to keep up to date with our contacts so that we have up-to-date email addresses and can now easily email the whole group or select groups based on how they are “tagged” in the software.



- The MAIER [website](#) is also being iteratively updated. It is monitored and updated with new information and resources almost weekly. A new section on self-advocacy was added to encourage more people to feel welcomed to MAIER if they themselves are identified with a learning difference, are differently abled, or have a special need. Be sure to check out the new offerings and clearinghouse of resources, options, and availabilities, which are added often.
- **Resource Hub via the MAIER website:**
<https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>

Goal 4 Social/Emotional/Behavioral—Teachers want their students to feel included, comfortable, and learn while they are in the classroom. To achieve this, a teacher needs to establish a consistent, inclusive, organized, and respectful learning environment. If this environment is created, it will serve as a strong platform to successfully implement all the other high-leverage practices to promote inclusion.

PEERS Lab @ UMaine: <https://umaine.edu/maier/trainings-2-old/peers-clinic-at-umaine/>

PEERS for School-Based Professionals Research Modules:

- Dr. Howorth has created a series of PD modules that will teach educational professionals how to implement the PEERS® for School-Based Professionals curriculum with associated communities of practice.

Maine Family Partnership Events Fall 2023:

- Sept 9th- Garden exploration and horticultural therapy program at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens
- Dec 16th- Movie Morning with MAIER at Black Bear Cinemas
- April 30th 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Indoor Climbing at Volta climbing in Trenton
- June 3rd 11:00 - 2:00 Family Fun Day at AOEC Center in Brunswick
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Maine Family Partnership Events Update Since April 2024

- ***My Day to Play*** every month at Maine Discovery Museum in Bangor
- December 2024 **Sensory Friendly Movie** at Black Bear Cinema in Orono (2 families participated)
- April 27, ***Horticultural Therapy*** at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens (30 families participated)
- May 18, **Planetarium Show at Versant Power Astronomy Center** (5 families participated)
- June 1 **Family Fun Day at Adaptive Outdoor Education Center** (25 families participated)
- July 13 **York's Wild Kingdom MAIER Family Day** (20 families registered)