

Speaker 1:

Hello, everyone. Welcome back for another guest speaker chat here at the intentional IEP. My name is Stephanie. I'm your founder and host of the guest speaker chats here at TII. And I'm here again with Kristen. And today we're gonna be talking about resource teachers specifically and IEPs, but first, Kristen, will you please share about your teaching experience and your role at the IEP table? I am crystal Lashonz. I am a previous resource teacher and that was my jam for a long time. So I can speak a lot to this. Um, that's where I started in special education and that's where my love for special education came about. Um, then I left my resource classroom and now I am a licensed diagnostician. So now I am still sitting at IEP tables. I'm just on a different inside of it doing evaluations now, but my, my love in my heart is still out there for resource teachers, for sure.

Speaker 1:

Awesome. I'm so excited for this chat and Kristen and I talked a little bit about this beforehand. There's a lot of stuff out there for self-contained and I've taught self-contained, but there's not, there's a lot out there for resource teachers, but not as much as for self-contained. Um, and I've taught resource for a couple of years. It's been a while, but I'm very excited to talk today, just specifically about resource classrooms and IEPs. So let's just start with the big question that everyone asks. How can a resource teacher streamline communication with everyone on the IEP team? Sure. One of my favorite things that I ever implemented as a resource teacher was a consultation model. And when I say consultation, I mean, actual formal consultation services written into the IEP for every student. So people forget that services can be provided direct and they can be provided as consultation.

Speaker 1:

And I think especially if you are in an environment that does a lot of inclusion support, which yay. We love to see that. Um, you have to be very intentional with the time you're spending, communicating with everybody involved, um, with that student. So I know for me, a lot of times I had, I worked with gen ed teachers. I had to communicate with speech therapists, occupational therapists, the physical therapist, the behavior specialists, the, you know, you name it, they're all, you know, in some way involved with that student. And it was kind of like everyone's kind of on their own island doing their own thing. And then when it came time to actually update progress, it was like just scattered everywhere. And that's just not good for the student either because we should all be the same language and using the same types of tools with that student.

Speaker 1:

So when I say consultation, I actually would set aside intentional time during a lot of times the teacher, the gen ed teachers planning period, because that's really the best time for them. And then I would invite all the related service providers and anyone that needed to be, and we actually would go down the goals and accommodations and how are we doing on this one? How are we doing on this one? Have you tried that? Oh, actually, no, he didn't. He is, he stopped using those Unix cubes six weeks ago and he's not touching the manipulatives anymore. So maybe we need to look at removing that, oh actually yeah. Same thing. He's not using the cubes with me, you know? So those kinds of conversations that I can't be with that student everywhere in every setting all the time, and that's a lot to expect of a resource teacher.

Speaker 1:

So making sure you have that time in there with everyone involved is so important. I love that you specifically write it into the IEP. Yes. And so in, when I was in the traditional classroom setting before I left, um, I, I knew you could write like parent trainings into the IEP. I didn't know. You could write teacher tra like teacher trainings into the IEP. So I love that you specifically, because one question is like, when do I do it? Where's the time? Like, when am I, I don't have time in my day, but if you write it into the IEP, then you have to make past to happen. It has to happen. I love that so much. Well, next big question then how can resource teachers bridge that gap between special ed and general ed? So I, I always felt like I was wearing both hats all the time.

Speaker 1:

I felt like I always had to wear a gen ed and a special ed hat because I did a lot of inclusion and, and co-teaching and things of that nature. Um, and one thing I would tell my general education, friends and colleagues is let the general ed teacher be the master of that content and curriculum, right? Like they're gonna teach fifth grade science. That's, that's their thing. They're gonna have that wealth of knowledge of the breadth and depth of, of that. And they're gonna be rock stars as at that, but let the special education teacher let that resource teacher be the master of differentiation and individualization, um, and the accommodations or modifications, let them be the master of that piece. Because I do think, especially when you're teaching multiple grade levels, it's kind of crazy to expect a resource teacher to be the master of every grade level, every subject, all of the things, of course, you're gonna be exposed to it, but that's not where you should be exerting all of your time and energy.

Speaker 1:

You, so making sure everyone's role in that is super clear. And then when everyone can have their clear lane to be the master of, you can bring that to the table and really impact that, that child better. Uh, you just put like, that was like the simplest most effective answer to that ever like, yes, I don't have a, anything to add to that, but yes, like gen ed teachers are the content curriculums, they're the grade level curriculum experts. And I say that, and I tell teachers and train teachers, like y'all have heard me say that before, when it comes to the IEP meeting to get them to feel some sense of ownership over that meeting. Like they're the grade level expert they have to be there. You, that is. But when you put it in terms of that, like, yeah, yeah. We, and that makes sense.

Speaker 1:

Like we are the experts on differentiation, individualizing it, implementing all of those things, not to say gen ed teachers can't do it. And that we can't, and of course they teachers do curriculum, but like we're a team. Yes, definitely. I love that. I love that. Well, another big question, like what recommendations do you have for resource teachers? And I think this is probably maybe the biggest question who are struggling to not only supplement like general education, curriculum, content lessons, and also work on those IEP goals. Like how do you do both? Yes. And that, I mean, that's kind of a never ending question, right? Curriculum's always changing the IEP changes all the time. So it's a living breathing thing. And I think if you are performing all of these things with fidelity, like if you're really implementing those consultations and you're really implementing, like everyone's clear role at the IEP table, you're gonna find that when you marry those together, it's gonna be a lot more seamless.

Speaker 1:

And I'm not saying it's gonna be an easy transition or that it's an easy process to get there. Especially if you're at a particular campus that feel like you're, it's been set in their ways for a long time. So changing

things up might seem like a huge feat, but I, I promise you, it does make your life easier. And it, it, it makes such an impact on student achievement at, at the end of the day. I love that. Well, I have, um, if you watched our previous chat on evaluations, Kristen and I, I went rogue like 12 times. So I'm gonna go rogue here cuz I do have one more question about writing that consultation time into sure. The IEPs that I think maybe other teachers listening may have as well. How specifically do you write that consultation time into an IEP? How do you know how much time to write in?

Speaker 1:

How often are you meeting? Sure. I like to stick with less time. Okay. So start with, and then that way you're not forced to meet for a whole hour if that's not, you know, that usually doesn't, everyone's busy, everyone's got their thing. So sometimes I would make it as little as 15 minutes. Um, but you would be shocked to find how much that 15 minutes can make an impact. And also even with this day, you know, of virtual meetings and things like that, like sometimes it had to be a phone call and that's okay. That still counts as a consultation. So as long as you're getting that input from everyone involved, it matters. I would try to do it at least once per grading period. Um, so for us, our IEP progress reports would come out in concurrence like with report cards or things like that.

Speaker 1:

That seems to be pretty common. So I would try to make sure I would, I would do that consultation at least once within that period. I love that. I love that I'm taking notes actually as that's what I was looking right for. I'm taking notes. Um, well what is your best advice for resource and content mastery teachers just in general, you're amazing. Um, and keep doing what you're doing because you know, that that buzzword of least restrictive environment is thrown around a lot. And I just wanna also offer some encouragement to those resource teachers because you're doing an amazing job at providing that free and appropriate public education to students in that least restrictive environment. And I promise you, you're making a difference with those kiddos and their, and their teachers. So when I was a resource teacher, a lot of times I would say, you know, I'm a resource teacher for students, but I'm a resource to the other teachers too, because you know, they've got a trillion other things on their plate.

Speaker 1:

And so really viewing them as your ally. And you're a member of my team rather than the us versus them. Um, I hope everyone can be in an environment like that because it really is a wonderful place to be when it's that way. I love that. You just gave everyone words of like encouragement. Oh my gosh, we are just on the same wavelength all the time. I love it. And it's, I, I, I love that you brought up like we're allies, it's not you and us and it's not my kids and your kids. And that's a conversation that I've been having on social media, um, recently about, you know, just certain people on IEP teams, not implementing things or doing things and how to, can we help remedy that. And I think I also love that you said we're not just resource teachers for the kids, we're there for the other teachers and team members as well.

Speaker 1:

And I think that goes for any classroom setting teacher. I don't think that goes for just resource. Like that's absolutely. Absolutely. I tried to keep an open door, all see all the time and I'm like, Hey, you know, it's impossible for me to follow that student around every day in every environment. So you, you have to come let me know when there's a particular issue or you want help with a certain idea. And so making sure that you have that level of I'm here for you to make sure you're also not struggling. Like,

Hey, you know, we have a behavior intervention plan for the student and parts of it. Aren't working. He's not responding to the incentives that we thought. So can you please help me? Because I can't get through a math lesson without it. Yes. Like let's talk about that. So keeping that, that open is just, it's a wonderful thing.

Speaker 1:

And seeing the progress it's just makes my heart happy. Yes. And it works both ways. Like if we're struggling teaching a math lesson, grade level math lesson to one of our kids and we feel like we've tried everything, who are you gonna go to? Or you're gonna go to the gen ed teacher and ask, cause they're the grade level content master. Like they're the expert. Yes. Let's stop the, sending the kids to special ed land. And then just hoping for the best when they come back, like you should know what's going on in, in both environments because it's a, it's a seamless transition. So yes, we are allies. We need to work together and be a team. Yes. I'm here for all of that. So I hope, and I do. I agree. I agree with Kristen and I hope that all of you get to work in an environment like that.

Speaker 1:

Um, if you're not currently in, when I promise that toxic and environments and team members not pulling their weight on the team is not, it does happen. I'm not gonna sit here and unicorn and butterflies and rainbows, but it does happen. I've been there. Um, but there is like the grass can be greener as well. There are people who you can work with that you're a great team and you can make it happen. Um, so it just takes little things from everyone on the team to really make it all work. So don't forget about that. Well, thank you again so much for being here and talking about resource teachers. I love that we have a chat specifically for them. I think that's so important. They're going to absolutely love this. I hope that all of you listening really enjoyed it. Can you share with us Kristen, where we can find you, whether it's social media on a website and I'll put links to all of Kristen's things, so you can reach out to her and follow her, um, below this video.

Speaker 1:

Sure. Visit my website@kristenlashon.com and you'll find ways to get in contact with me ways to ask me questions and see what I'm up to. And my Instagram username will be on the screen for you too. So send me a message. Awesome. I will put again, her links will be below. Thank you again, Kristen. So much for being here and sharing your knowledge. Um, not only on evaluations earlier, but also for resource teachers and IEPs. All of those. I think we answered some really important questions and hopefully gave some resource teachers some relief. So thank you so much for being here. Thank y'all for listening and tuning in today. And we will see y'all in the next chat.