

 **AUDIO**  
3:17 min

[Full Details and Transcript](#)



## Increasing Rigor for Special Education Students

Del Valle High School, Texas  
April 2011

**Topic** DROPOUT PREVENTION

**Practice** RIGOROUS/RELEVANT INSTRUCTION

### Highlights

- » Del Valle High School uses a scaffolded approach to inclusion to increase the academic rigor in its special education classes.
- » Special education teachers team and co-teach with content teachers to strengthen their content knowledge.
- » Increasing levels of academic support are provided to meet the needs of all special education students. These range from monitoring with case management, to placing a special education teacher and a content teacher together in the classroom, to a resource class with modifications for students with more significant delays.

**About the Site** **Del Valle High School**  
**Del Valle, TX**

### Demographics:

- » 73% Hispanic
- » 17% Black
- » 9% White
- » 1% Asian
- » 7% English Language Learners

(Texas Education Agency Campus Profile, 2009-10)

Del Valle High School has developed a comprehensive set of policies and supports to prevent students from dropping out of school:

- » A Freshman Academy helps ninth graders transition to high school in an environment that meets their academic and developmental needs
- » Staff use middle school data on incoming students to identify those at risk of dropping out and to guide course placement
- » Regular review of student data allows teachers to track student progress and provide additional supports as needed
- » Standardized course performance expectations encourage academic rigor in every classroom and support teachers through such structures as teaming, professional learning communities, and co-teaching

## Full Transcript



**00:04** I am Derek Eberly, associate principal for special education at Del Valle High School in Austin, Texas.

**00:13** Our special education teachers are teamed with content teachers. So that's really where they get their content strength and are able to increase the rigor. So our math teacher, or my algebra teacher specifically, works all day long in the algebra classroom, from planning to delivering instruction.

**00:35** How do we include special education students from the very low cognitive developed students to those with maybe just moderate learning disabilities? We take a scaffolded approach to inclusion. So the least restrictive and least amount of support are our mainstream students that are assigned to case managers. When we get into the next level, we have support facilitation. Support facilitation puts two teachers in the classroom, one content specialist and one special education teacher who is very strong in the content, in the classroom maybe every other day or two to three days a week.

 **01:18** Co-teaching is the next level. Those students have two teachers in the classroom every day. From co-teaching, we move into our resource section, our resource classes. One of the things that we have done recently has dramatically increased the rigor in our resource classes; so those are our students with moderate or more significant learning delays. Those classes are being taught by the inclusion teachers. So what we do is my Algebra I teacher, for example, will teach three sections of co-teaching throughout the day and then two sections of the resource class. So they get that exposure to the content and to the instruction, and they really and truly are just taking what they did in the regular Algebra I classroom that day and modifying and adapting it for those kids.

 **02:08** Our professional learning communities are really the crux of what makes us a successful campus. Without the PLCs, the special education teachers really would be unable to support the general education teachers in those classrooms, whether it's co-teach or support facilitation, going back to being able to increase the rigor in a resource class, where in the past you would have a math teacher that was essentially isolated from the math department, and they taught math all day long. It makes a lot of sense, and has helped tremendously on having those teachers [as] part of the PLCs.

 **02:41** Looking at our students who want to go to a four-year college straight from high school, we are really looking at ways to figure out how to accommodate them to keep them on the most rigorous path. One of the courses that we are going to offer next year is an inclusion or a co-teach pre-AP course in chemistry. So giving that second teacher is really going to help expose those students to college preparatory courses.