

# Considerations for Special Education within Summit Learning

*This brief includes an introduction to Foundations, plus a theory of action guiding the Summit Learning approach to accelerating outcomes for students with Foundations needs. This Resource also provides sample processes for using the Summit Learning Base Curriculum and Platform to support student needs. Refer to this [glossary](#) for definitions of terminology within the Summit Learning context to ensure consistency in the application of student supports..*



In supporting diverse learners within the Summit Learning Program, intentional design features are integrated into Projects, Content and the Platform in order to reduce barriers to access. This brief will highlight some of these built in resources, define key terminology within the Summit Learning context, and share sample processes for using the Summit Learning Curriculum and Platform to support student needs.

## Foundations

Students come to Summit Learning from a variety of backgrounds. Some students enter Summit Learning with the prerequisite academic, linguistic, cognitive, physical, and/or social-behavioral skills necessary to fully engage with the Summit Learning Components (Projects/Math Units, Self-Directed Learning, and Mentoring) to access and achieve commencement-level Outcomes (Cognitive Skills/Concepts, Content Knowledge, and Habits of Success). Other students enter at a disadvantage: their life experiences and existing skill set means the components alone are not sufficient to access and meet commencement-level Outcomes without additional supports. Foundations support is necessary to ensure that Summit Learning is equitable, accessible, and inclusive for all learners, and that our model closes opportunity gaps. Foundations support is provided throughout Summit Learning components, including:

- Project and Math classrooms in the form of scaffolded learning experiences
- Self-Directed Learning settings through coaching from teachers and mentors
- and through interventions offered outside of the Base Curriculum.

## Theory of Action

Summit's research and development team operates with a theory of action including the following elements that drive accelerated student outcomes: We believe that **if** the following conditions are true...

- Students have **teachers and mentors** that support their literacy and numeracy needs
- Teachers explicitly use **instructional practices** to support **language development** and other **Foundations**
- Teachers and mentors **develop meaningful relationships that build Habits** (mindset/belonging) with their students
- Students have an **accessible and rigorous curriculum** that builds language and skills
- Students receive **interventions** that are targeted to their developmental level and shift their trajectory

**Then** the gap in academic performance data between students who face academic challenges due to Foundations needs and their peers will close.

## Supporting Students with IEPs within Summit Learning

Below is guidance on how to leverage features, resources, and structures within the Summit Learning Base Curriculum and Platform to support Special Education teachers serving students with Individualized Education Plans. It is critical to note that the Special Education teacher and instructional team at a school site has the best knowledge of the individual student needs, and are best positioned to make decisions regarding how to best support a student. Summit Learning does not replace the school based learning team in determining appropriate supports based on a student's Individualized Education Plan. Summit Learning can, however, support with implementation as it pertains to Platform and Base Curriculum integration.

## Serving Foundations in Projects & Math Units

In the work to support Foundations needs within the Summit Learning Program, Projects, Content, and the platform have intentional design features integrated that reduce barriers to access.



Within the Base Curriculum:

- Some scaffolds are embedded in the Projects and Math Units.
- Project/Math Unit Overviews include a note of types of resources and scaffolds included within the project/unit.
- Within projects, teacher and student resources can be found at the checkpoint and daily plans level. In Illustrative Math (IM) based Math Units, "Tips for Students with Disabilities" can be found at the activity level within one daily lesson.
- Project/Math Unit Overviews, Final Products/End-of-Unit Assessments, and Checkpoints include a "Modifications" section with suggestions you may consider if a student qualifies for that significant level of change in curriculum. In Math Units, modification guidance and Modified End-of-Unit Assessments are available in Grades 4-8, and will expand to Algebra 1 in SY 20-21.

Additional resources within the Platform:

- Customization in assigning extended time through individual [due date customization](#) in the Platform.
- The Learners Tab can be used within [Projects](#) and [Math Units](#) to quickly group students by need and assign differentiated resources and scaffolds.
- The [Accessibility Resource Bank](#) includes tools to create necessary scaffolds, view researched-based implementation strategies, and view guidance on scaffold decision-making.
- A [Scaffold-decision making](#) template provides guidance on identifying, developing and deploying scaffolds.
- Depending on school-site level permissions, Notebooks includes embedded [text to speech and voice typing](#).
- Assistive technology tools can be extremely helpful in supporting students in accessing instructional materials (e.g. text to speech); the [Accessibility Resource Bank](#) shares recommended plug-ins.

Example off-Platform practices:

- Collaboration with Project/Math teachers to review student progress in the Platform and plan for scaffolds/interventions.
- For Project/Math Unit work that aligns with IEP goals, a workshop either within the general education setting or within a resource setting can simultaneously move students forward in their Cognitive Skill/Math development as well as on IEP goals.

### Addressing IEP goals in Projects & Math Units

- The [Summit Learning aligned IEP goal bank](#) consists of adaptable goal language developed for a subset of prioritized Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that are addressed in Summit Learning mathematics courses, and for Cognitive Skills in the domains of Textual Analysis/Close Reading and Composing/Writing.
- This resource outlines the [Common Core State Standards that are aligned with each Cognitive Skill](#), which can be helpful in identifying alignment with existing IEP goals if they are also standards aligned.
- Review what [Cognitive Skills and Associated Standards are covered in each Project/Math Unit](#) across all grade levels and subject areas in the Base Curriculum.
- Cognitive Skill and Math scores in the Platform can provide data for both developing baselines and monitoring progress for IEP goals. See the Summit Learning aligned IEP goal-bank implementation guide for more guidance.

**Example - Connecting to Project work in Pull-out/Resource:** 9th grade students are working on the "Defining Self" project in their English course, the cognitive skill of Selection of Evidence is a critical Cognitive Skill assessed in this project during project time. The Special Education teacher knows that five of the students have IEP goals around supporting a claim/main idea with evidence in written products. The Special Education teacher collaborated with the English teacher to identify one of the sample texts to use for a workshop and review the graphic organizer that students will be expected to complete for checkpoint 2. During a Resource period with the students the Special Education teacher leads a workshop for the students on selecting evidence and uses documents and resources from the students' English project for students to apply the skill within the context of the Project.

## Serving Foundations in Self-Directed Learning

Students engage with content by self-directing their learning through individualized pathways. Self-directed learning can happen in a Project/Math setting, or while students are mastering content at their own pace. Although some scaffolds are embedded within Focus Area resources, students with Foundations needs may require access to additional scaffolds that address difficulties with self-direction.



Within the Platform:

- Sample resources to support self directed learning are available on the [“Learning Strategies”](#) tab within the “Educator Tools” menu of the Learning Space.
- Depending on school-site level permissions your students can use [text to speech and voice typing](#) embedded directly in Notebooks.
- Assistive technology tools can be extremely helpful in supporting student executive functioning (e.g. time management, calendaring); the [Accessibility Resource Bank](#) shares recommended plugins that students and teachers can access. (NOTE: the notebook needs to be opened in a new tab to enable a plugin to work)
- The goal-setting feature in the Platform is a powerful tool for student planning and reflection, it also creates a space for the SPED teacher, the student’s Project/Math teacher, and/or the mentor to collaborate in supporting student priorities.
- Weekly calendaring with students to identify priorities and track action items for Self-Directed Learning.
- Content assessments can be [printed](#) for a student who benefits from being able to annotate etc.

Example off-Platform practices:

- Coaching with students around the [Self-Directed Learning](#) cycle.
- Provide a workshop using resources from the [“Learning Strategies”](#) tab.
- Provide the student with a workshop and/or coaching around self-advocacy so they may reach out to their teacher or a peer for support.

### Addressing IEP goals in Self Directed Learning Time

- Consider emphasizing strategies and IEP goal alignment, rather than tutoring a student through playlist content - e.g. provide a workshop on note-taking or study skills to work through a playlist
- For IEP goals related to executive function, gather data on outcomes of goal setting process/task completion. This can be a quick part of a regular student check-in or class structure.
- For self-regulation goals, provide coaching on strategies (e.g. managing frustration or anxiety) In regular check-ins with the student, reflect on their application of strategies and identify needs for further coaching.

### **Example - Connecting to Self Directed Learning in Pull-out/Resource:**

The Special Education teacher includes a workshop around planning SDL time. In the workshop he has students review project and content work that will be due the following week. Together students create a schedule for when they have SDL time, both within project blocks, during a separate designated SDL Period, and during Mentor time. He then guides students through a process of identifying anticipated time required to complete each task, which the students then map onto the SDL time available. Throughout the week he prompts students to note the time that it takes them. In a session the following week the students identify what actions/practices supported completion of tasks and/obstacles prevented completion. Students develop a revised work plan and the teacher coaches students around application of learning strategies they can use to support outcomes of SDL. The students add specific Learning Strategies to their weekly plan. The teacher plans to use the same reflective process in subsequent weeks and lead lessons on the different learning strategies as needed.

### Serving Foundations in Mentoring

Mentoring is a critical space for students to develop their Habits of Success, particularly for many students in the areas of executive functioning and self-regulation. Beyond supporting student's skill development, the role of the mentor serves to provide a further safety net for students with Foundations needs, or other defined learning needs.



On Platform resources:

- Goal setting using the week tab.
- Using the check-in agenda prep protocol to prepare for a mentor check in.
- Adding notes in student progress pages, or edit/add/remove goals after a check-in.
- Coaching around implementation of Learning Strategies

Sample off-Platform practices:

- [Mentoring check-ins](#) to set goals and reinforce strategies to support students with executive functioning (i.e. organization, time management, etc.) and social and emotional needs.
- Collaborating with mentor teacher to identify and integrate strategies to support individual social emotional learning needs based on the Individualized Education Plan (i.e. self regulation strategies to reduce anxiety, or manage frustration, etc.).

#### Meeting IEP goals through Mentoring

- Check-ins within mentoring can include progress monitoring and goal-setting on IEP goals to enhance student engagement.
  - Mentors and Project/Math teachers should have access to IEP goal data for the students they mentor or teach.
  - Special Education case managers can collaborate with mentors by participating in check-ins or providing an additional check-in or small group instruction on needs related to Habits (i.e. social emotional learning, executive functioning)
- In many cases, self-regulation, and executive functioning goals can closely tie to mentoring. Case managers can collaborate with the mentor to:
  - Introduce, and reinforce self-regulation, self-monitoring, and executive functioning strategies that align with a students individualized needs
  - Implement behavior goals associated with a Behavior Intervention Plan, to provide additional coaching and support on replacement behaviors, and communication with team members around progress.

### Serving Foundations in Targeted Interventions [Site Dependent]

Some schools have identified a designated time for interventions in Reading and Math. The annual goals of many students with Individualized Education Plans often closely align with the foundational literacy and mathematics skills that interventions program options address. These intervention blocks thus present a powerful opportunity for students to close skill gaps and master IEP goals using the instructional tools selected by the site.



While the structure of interventions vary across sites, The following recommendations help maximize the potential of this time for students with IEPs:

- Special Education teachers meet initially with interventions teachers to review IEP goals for students that will be in their interventions block.
- Special Education teachers collaborate with intervention teachers to ensure that intervention programming aligns with the student's learning needs in math calculation/fluency, reading decoding/fluency/comprehension
- Continue regular (at least quarterly) progress check-ins between Interventions teachers and Special Education teachers (this can happen through a virtual progress monitoring tool - see this [example](#))

#### Resources Referenced

[Glossary of terms](#)

[Accessibility Resource Bank](#)

[Scaffold Decision Making Template](#)

[Customizing Due Dates](#)

[Using the Learners Tab for Projects](#)

[Using the Learners Tab for Math Units](#)

[Summit Learning Aligned IEP Goal-Bank](#)

[Common Core/Cognitive Skill crosswalk](#)

[Cognitive Skills mapped to Projects and Math Units](#)

[Learning Strategies tab](#)

[Printing Content Assessments](#)

[Self Directed Learning Guide](#)

[Mentoring Guide](#)