The use of online learning and various blended learning models is becoming more and more widespread as education professionals strive to meet increasing standards with fewer dollars. The following best practices can be used to provide high-quality, laser-focused instruction for students receiving special education services, regardless of the instruction model used. Here are a few best practices for special education teams.

1. **Use face-to-face and rotation blended learning models.**
   Our special education students are spending more and more time in the general education setting. While this is extremely beneficial for academic and social reasons, it often adds another layer of complexity to the provision of quality individualized instruction. However, it then becomes important to provide these students with a portion of class time focused on targeted, differentiated instruction that addresses their specific knowledge and skills gaps.

2. **Customize learning plans to directly support standards-based IEPs.**
   Over the past several years, there has been a welcome push to improve the quality of IEP goals to include recognized state and national standards. There is no question that this levels the playing field for students receiving special education services, and it has drastically improved instructional goal setting. However, this makes vital that any tool used for students receiving special education services be flexible enough to provide instruction, assessment, and reporting based on state and national standards.

3. **Use instructional content that engages students through multiple learning modalities.**
   It is essential that classroom instruction appeal to auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Students receiving special education services must be exposed to content that is not simply one modality, such as all text or all auditory. Students need to be exposed to a variety of instructional modalities that engage all learning styles with a pedagogically sound approach that focuses on mastery.

4. **Use assessments that are flexible and diagnostic/prescriptive.**
   Special education programs must measure student gains, and students must demonstrate mastery on foundational learning objectives before moving forward. Therefore, it is critical that programs for students receiving special education services include a robust assessment component that is powerful and dynamic enough to assess a broad range of academic skills and knowledge. It is equally vital that instruction is differentiated based on assessment strengths and weaknesses.
Our Products

**Plato Courseware**

Plato Courseware’s engaging courses include integrated, course-level assessments that ensure concept mastery, a module mastery test that helps monitor progress, and unit post-tests that ensure learners are mastering the unit concepts. Integrated real-time reporting helps educators guide instruction more effectively and facilitates a more efficient IEP process, resulting in more time teaching and less time administering.

**Study Island**

Study Island’s test preparation and standards mastery programs are explicitly designed to help students master the content specified in state and Common Core standards. Study Island is ideal for self-paced, individualized learning for teacher-led, whole-class instruction. Teachers can easily guide students through the program, customize their instruction based on student needs, communicate expectations, and create assignments. The built-in teacher resources and real-time assessment data help teachers differentiate their instruction and promptly respond with the appropriate intervention.

**Edmentum**

**Edmentum Assessments**

Edmentum Accucess is an assessment tool that quickly and efficiently measures grade level reading, writing and math skills in addition to assessing students proficiencies that fills learning gaps and personalizes instruction, bringing students up to grade level.

**EducationCity**

EducationCity allows teachers to individualize their instruction and pinpoint activities linked to specific state standards. The program’s engaging colors, sounds, texts, audio commentary, animated graphics, and interactivity appeal to a wide range of users, and specific features such as changing the mouse pointer size or audio file volume that can be adjusted as needed. The engaging and colorful activities, program features, and teacher support make EducationCity a unique teaching and learning resource for students with special needs.

**EdOptions Academy**

EdOptions Academy partners with schools and districts to deliver rigorous, research-based, and pedagogically sound curriculum and state-certified teachers to all types of learners. Our fully-accredited virtual school solution allows schools and districts to enhance, expand, and extend their program offerings. Give your special needs students the choice of courses they are asking for, including Global Languages, Electives, and an extensive offering of core classes.