Lessons Learned:
A Decade of NSF Research Funding

More Information on the Research in Disabilities Education Synthesis Project is available at: http://oeie.ksu.edu/rde-sp/

“This program has been a great resource not purely in terms of research funding but primarily in terms of creating a community of researchers focused on supporting the needs of students with disabilities.”

RDE Principle Investigator

Research in Disabilities Education Synthesis Project (RDE-SP). Principal Investigators: Cynthia Shuman & Jan Middendorf
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The Research in Disabilities Education Synthesis Project (RDE-SP) looked at a decade in NSF RDE studies to determine common challenges and their solutions, best practices and the lessons learned for students with disabilities (SWD) in STEM education.

**Common Challenges and Effective Strategies**

**Challenges**
- Bias toward SWD capabilities
- Establishing, maintaining, and respecting collaborations and other relations with target communities
- Lack of authentic lab experiences
- Lack of institutional support for projects
- Lack of structural and pedagogical accommodation
- Providing effective training
- Recruiting and identifying from a small population
- Too few resources publicly or easily available

**Effective Strategies**
- Accommodations benefit all
- Contact and maintain relations with your student access or disability services center
- Create and maintain collaborative relationships with the community
- Develop intervention programs
- Develop mentoring programs
- Incorporate inclusive tools and activities for lab experiences
- Provide disabilities training (socio-cultural model)
- Provide inclusive social support
- Provide professional development and support for Universal Design for Learning
- Provide self-advocacy training for students with disabilities
- Provide quality STEM lab, field, and internships

**Resources**
- Association for Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD) [www.ahead.org](http://www.ahead.org)
- Beyond Rigor Website [www.beyondrigor.org](http://www.beyondrigor.org)
- Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disabilities (JPED)
- National Center on UDL [http://www.cast.org](http://www.cast.org)
- Special Education / disability studies faculty
- The Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (CATEA) [http://catea.gatech.edu/](http://catea.gatech.edu/)
- University of Connecticut, Center on Postsecondary Education and Disability (2010) [www.facultyware.uconn.edu](http://www.facultyware.uconn.edu)
- Campus Access Centers
- Council for Exceptional Children [www.cec.org](http://www.cec.org)
- DO-IT at the University of Washington [www.washington.edu/doit/RDE/](http://www.washington.edu/doit/RDE/)
- www.washington.edu/doit/Faculty
- Institute for Accessible Science [www.stemedhub.org/groups/iashub](http://www.stemedhub.org/groups/iashub)