

**Model-Based Approach to Develop Special Education Students
Problem-Solving Skills in Elementary School**

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This unit is designed for fourth grade special education students but can be adapted for students that are struggling in the general education classroom. The lessons incorporate the use of Conceptual Mathematical Model, to help students to problem solve. In this unit the students will be developing critical thinking skills, that will help them with solving problems in other subjects. Using the primary teaching strategy that includes reading a text aloud, the students will listen to a math story and then using the Conceptual Mathematical Models they will solve a series of math word/situational problems. Conceptual Mathematical Models that include $\text{Part} + \text{Part} = \text{Whole}$ and $\text{Whole} = \text{Part} + \text{Part}$ will be the models that the students will use to decide if the problem's operation is addition or subtraction. Students will listen to a math story and then they will be asked to work with a partner to make up their own set of numbers and problems to solve. The students will then be ready to move on to different kinds of problems that will use the same Conceptual Mathematical Models.