



10200 West 75th Street
Suite 281
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204
Phone: 913-384-4848
Fax: 913-384-4949
E-mail: kcdsg@sbcglobal.net

We're on the web!
www.kcdsg.org

IEP Alphabet Soup Posters

DSG's Down Syndrome Specialists asked us to create posters that can be placed in schools with acronyms typically used during IEP meetings. We stepped up to the challenge and made posters and provided them free of charge to our specialists for their districts.

DSG ordered enough copies to have posters available for our families and educators to purchase as well. Posters are formatted uniquely to Kansas and Missouri as each state uses different acronyms.



Posters are \$5.00 each if you pick them up in person at the DSG Center. If you would like a poster mailed to you, please add \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Posters are available on a first come first serve basis while supplies last. Contact DSG today at 913-384-4848 to place your order!

Down Syndrome Specialist Program Modeled in Other Cities

In the last three years DSG has shared information regarding our successful Down Syndrome Specialist Program with other Down syndrome organizations across the country. The program is now up and running in St. Louis and Dallas and will start this fall in Memphis, Atlanta and Austin.

Information on the program has been presented at conferences in Seattle and Honolulu and we receive requests regularly to train groups on how to roll out this program. DSG hopes to see this positive parent/school/Down syndrome organization collaboration take off across the country.

Not sure if your school district currently has an appointed Down Syndrome Specialist? Check out the DSG website in the FOR EDUCATORS section to review our current list of Specialists. Please contact the DSG if your district does not have a specialist and would be interested in naming one. While you are at the website you can also check out some great new resources we have posted to help you in your classrooms! Visit www.kcdsg.org today to learn more.



Thinking College?
Visit www.thinkcollege.net to learn about the 200+ colleges and universities offering post secondary opportunities for students with disabilities.

BEHAVIOR DOCTOR

www.behaviordoctor.org

This site is dedicated to providing proactive strategies and solutions for behaviors that adults wish to target for change in either their personal children or the students that they teach.

The information is based in behavioral theory; however, you will not find all the educational jargon and quotations on this site. This site is written for teachers and parents who are in a hurry, want some help, and have a few minutes to read some ideas.

You will find books, Power-Points, Forms, and Tools. Click the tabs across the top or use the menu section for specific topics.

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Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Spring 2008 Edition



PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Elizabeth Jess Almquist, M.Ed. has been a Special Education Teacher for 29 years to students with global disabilities. She has a wealth of knowledge on how to examine, address, and extinguish challenging behaviors effectively. She will address common behaviors for students in various age ranges, ability level and school experience. Elizabeth offers a light yet no-nonsense approach to working with students in hopes of "seeing behavior from the student's perspective and making it work for you."

In these sessions you can expect to learn:

- Why your student is exhibiting challenging behaviors
- What your student may really be trying to communicate to you
- How to extinguish challenging behaviors
- How to teach appropriate behaviors
- When to stand your ground and have a high level of insistence
- Where you can turn for help if you are continually frustrated

Join us for one of four identical Practical Solutions for Challenging Behaviors seminars being offered during the 2008-2009 school year:

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Thursday, September 18, 2008 | 8:30 am-11:30 am |
| Thursday, November 13, 2008 | 8:30 am-11:30 am |
| Thursday, February 19, 2009 | 8:30 am-11:30 am |
| Thursday, April 9, 2009 | 8:30 am-11:30 am |

All Sessions are held at:
Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City
10200 West 75th Street, Suite 281
Shawnee Mission, KS 66204

Seating is limited! RSVP today by calling 913-384-4848 or via email to kcdsg@sbcglobal.net

Rubrics: A Teachers New Best Friend

What exactly is a rubric? Wikipedia defines a rubric as “scoring tool.....with a set of criteria linked to objectives used to assess student performance”. In her article “Making Room for Rubrics”, Mary Rose defines a rubric as a device for gathering, organizing, and interpreting data on student performance. A rubric is an authentic assessment tool based on a full range of criteria rather than on a single numerical score (Kennesaw, 2008). Simply put rubrics are tools that help to organize educational needs for students and educators.

Rubrics can come in a variety of forms but most fall into two categories holistic or list. Holistic rubrics focus on the “big” picture and include grids and open column rubrics. List rubrics detail expectations and procedures and include checklists (Ten Sigma, 2005). Most rubrics are composed of three essential parts: 1) a stated objective; 2) a range of performance; and 3) characteristics that indicate the degree a standard has been met (Kennesaw, 2008, para 3).

What are some uses for rubrics?

- To determine a score on an assignment
- To help improve students performance through clear expectations
- To provide feedback to parents on their students functioning level
- To reduce time spent evaluating student performance

With a few minor changes one rubric can serve multiple purposes. For example, a rubric can be used to develop a sequential analysis of the required tasks for a skill or concept. Often students aren’t successful because they are missing essential components or subskills needed to achieve a goal.

By using a task analysis rubric, teachers can quickly identify the missing components and develop ways to address this deficit. This type of task analysis can address either academic or behavioral skills.

Rubrics assist educators as they:

- Break down skills in to subgoals and measure ability to perform goal
- Encourage input from IEP Team on academic or behavioral goals
- Prioritize which areas of a goal are most important to overall goal achievement
- Provide a manageable way to collect data and monitor progress
- Assist in developing a checklist for data collection on skill acquisition
- Provide educators the means to assess a skill across several different academic environments

How to develop a task analysis rubric: When developing a task analysis rubric you need to determine the ending objective. Once you have determined that objective you identify the skills necessary to achieve the objective listing all the component skills. You will be amazed at how many steps or subskills there are in any objective. See an example of a tooth brushing rubric here.

| Subskills for Toothbrushing | Can Do | Can't Do |
|---|--------|----------|
| Pick up the tooth brush | | |
| Wet the brush | | |
| Get toothpaste out of cabinet | | |
| Take the cap off the tube | | |
| Squeeze paste on the brush | | |
| Brush the outside of the bottom row of teeth | | |
| Brush the outside of the top row of teeth | | |
| Brush the biting surface of the top row of teeth | | |
| Brush the biting surface of the bottom row of teeth | | |
| Brush the inside surface of the top row of teeth | | |
| Brush the inside surface of the bottom row of teeth | | |
| Brush the inside surface of the top row of teeth | | |
| Spit | | |
| Rinse the brush | | |
| Replace the brush in the holder | | |
| Grasp cup | | |
| Fill cup with water | | |
| Rinse teeth with water | | |
| Spit | | |
| Replace cup in holder | | |
| Wipe mouth | | |
| Screw cap back on tube | | |
| Place tube back in cabinet | | |

Adapted from http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/TaskAnalysis.html (accessed 3/24/2008).

Rubrics provide a way for the educators to communicate the student’s progress with parents and with administrators as well. Rubrics provide a common language to communicate expectations to the students and for reporting progress (Ten Sigma). A visual representation of the student’s progress helps parents see the growth of the student. It also helps parents provide the ongoing support for the student outside of the school environment.

Adapting Commercial Rubrics

Teachers don’t need to re-create the wheel when developing rubrics. There are many commercially rubrics that have already provided the task analysis. Some of the commercial programs have the essential skills checklist and progress monitoring charts already prepared and ready to go as well. However, it is easy to develop your own materials to meet the individual needs of your students, yourself, and the support team for the student. Sometimes this can be accomplished simply by rewording the rubric.

Why Should I Consider Using Rubrics?

- Rubrics make instructor’s expectations clear to students
 - Rubrics show students how to meet the expectations
 - Rubrics help students evaluate quality of their own work
 - Rubrics identify the specific elements an instructor uses to differentiate between the qualities of performances. i.e. it helps the student answer the question ‘why did I get a point taken off?’
- If more than one person is evaluating the performance, it improves the consistency and objectivity (standardization) of grading
- It may reduce the time it takes to grade if there are similarities among comments made to students regarding flaws or excellence in a performance.

As more and more is asked of teachers on a daily basis, we must find tools to increase our productivity and decrease the time spent away from students. Rubrics may be one of those tools. Hopefully this article has given you some information about rubrics and the multiple purposes rubrics can serve.

Here are some websites and resources about rubrics:

www.rubistar4teachers.org

http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/assess.html>

http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas_and_Rubrics/Rubric_Bank/rubric_bank.html

<http://www.theeducatorsnetwork.com/main/rubricfeature.htm>

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/assessment/roomforubrics.htm>

<http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/profdev/rubrics.shtml>

<http://www.rubrics.com/>

www.tensigma.org

Ten Sigma
3320 Mesa Way, Suite A
Lawrence, KS 66049
Phone and fax: 785.830.9900

Submitted By DSG Down Syndrome Specialist, Barb Wright Park Hill School District

Helping Students With Special Needs Maximize Learning From Reading a Textbook

Textbooks can be daunting to students with disabilities; however, educators can assist them in tackling material by using the following strategies:

Using Graphic Organizers to make relationships within domain knowledge explicit. Confusion is conquered when students have visualized relationships before they begin to read. Frustration will be eliminated when confusion is conquered. Completion of the reading assignment is more likely when students comprehend text. Reasoning is supported by comprehension.

Preteaching Vocabulary helps eliminate confusion as students begin reading with the big picture in mind. Vocabulary knowledge is the number one predictor for reading comprehension in any student. Students with special needs are less likely to struggle if they have seen key vocabulary words in advance before seeing them in relation to the other information provided.

Highlighted Textbooks assist with reading comprehension by pointing out key concepts and important text. Students with special needs may have many problems reading an entire chapter due to problems such as decoding text, comprehending text and discriminating important details. Highlighting critical concepts insures that the student is focusing on the most important information.

Recorded Textbooks are a great alternative for students who have difficulty with reading comprehension! Many textbooks are already available in audio formats. Check with your district to see if this is an option for your students with special needs.

Peer Readers can help students with reading problems to learn the textbook content. This is a great option if the textbook in question is not already available in an audio format. Peer readers also provide a social component to learner that many students with special needs will benefit from.

Study Guides are a great way to encapsulate a multitude of information covered in an entire chapter. These condensed versions of the same content make it easier for a student with special needs to not become overwhelmed.

Information adapted from: Successful Inclusion Strategies for Secondary and Middle School Teachers by M.C. Gore. This great resource is available for loan in the DSG Lending Library!